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Title 1 Third-Grade Teachers' Experiences with Writing Strategies to Improve Students' Writing Proficiency

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2025

Abstract

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MA, University of West Georgia, 1998

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Project Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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May 2025

Abstract

Third-grade students are not meeting minimum proficiency in opinion and informational writing, as determined by scores from the annually mandated Georgia Milestones Assessment (GMAS) in the 19 elementary schools in a local school district in central Georgia. Guided by Vygotsky's social-constructivist perspective, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences with using writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the GMAS in the Title 1 elementary schools in a local district in central Georgia. Data were collected using semistructured interviews with 10 third-grade teachers who were chosen from 15 local Title 1 schools using purposive and snowball sampling. Interview data were analyzed inductively to identify five themes: (a) teachers reported that students' limited foundational writing skills made it challenging to implement advanced strategies, (b) teachers identified specific strategies that effectively supported student growth, (c) barriers such as time constraints, curriculum alignment, and standardized testing pressure hindered writing implementation, (d) teachers highlighted authentic writing and student engagement as key to writing development, and (e) most teachers expressed a need for more practical professional development in writing strategies. These findings informed the development of a 3-day summer launch writing training for K-3 teachers, designed to address the challenges teachers experienced in writing instruction and adopting best practices. This study has the potential to promote positive social change by influencing teachers' instructional strategies, which may help improve the writing proficiency of third-grade students in the local setting.

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Dedication

I start by expressing my gratitude to God for His guidance, strength, and constant presence throughout this journey. I dedicate this research to my family, whose love, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the foundation of this work. To my husband Al, thank you for embracing this academic dream with me at a time when others might be slowing down. You've always known that I'm a professional student at heart, and my love of learning has culminated in this project. Your patience and understanding throughout this process have meant more than I could ever express; from putting up with my evening and weekend writing sessions in the "office" to helping me with technology challenges and formatting papers, you have supported my dreams. For that, I thank you. To my sons, Al IV, Reese, and Grant: I want you to know that if you put your mind to it, you can achieve your heart's desires. Please know that you will grow socially, emotionally, and academically throughout your lives, so never stop learning! I am immensely proud of the remarkable young men you've become. May this work inspire you to pursue your own passions and dreams, whatever they may be. Through God's grace and the love of my family, this academic journey has been a meaningful and rewarding experience.

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I would like to thank my first and second chairs, Dr. Don Yarosz and Dr. Grace Lappin. Their guidance and support have been invaluable throughout this journey. Dr. Yarosz's consistent check-ins, through emails and phone calls, kept me on track and ensured that I adhered to the qualitative checklist, while Dr. Lappin's constructive feedback helped me refine my research. I appreciate their time, expertise, and commitment to my academic progress. Their support has played a vital role in completing this work, and I am grateful for their dedication to my success.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Eighty-six percent of the local third-grade students are not meeting minimum proficiency or higher on the opinion and informational writing portions of the annual Georgia Milestones Assessment (Georgia Milestones System, n.d.), and there is little information about the specific strategies teachers use to help students achieve mastery of opinion and informational writing on the assessment. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) emphasize that students create sophisticated writing (Squire & Clark, 2020). Squire and Clark contend that children as young as 5 are expected to express opinions, provide evidence, use linking words and phrases, and organize opinion essays with an introduction and conclusion. Dunn (2021) stated that many students struggle to compose longer prose for academic tasks. Therefore, while current academic standards require students to respond analytically in writing to text as a college and career readiness requirement, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) do not explicitly explain to teachers how to accomplish the goal (Squire & Clark, 2020). Not only do students struggle with writing competencies, but teachers' philosophical views on writing instruction, how writing skills develop, and what constitutes writing knowledge act as interpretive lenses through which they evaluate their teaching abilities (Graham et al., 2022). Thus, Squire and Clark and Graham et al. suggested that the quality of strategies and teachers' experiences using writing strategies likely influence their abilities to assist students in composing complex writing.

This study addressed a local problem by focusing specifically on Title 1 third-grade teachers' experiences with the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the opinion and informational writing portions of the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 schools in a local school district in central Georgia. This unique project addressed local third-grade teachers' experiences unique to the local Title 1 schools. Cox and Mullen (2023) noted that in Title 1 schools where at least 40% of children are from low-income families, Title 1 funds support schoolwide programs designed to benefit the lowest-achieving students. Padilla et al. (2020) found that school effectiveness research addresses the essential qualities of effective schools to see whether school effectiveness correlates uniquely in schools with varying characteristics of staff, students, and community demographics. Padilla et al. asserted that schools with a high percentage of affluent students may have similar correlates that influence school effectiveness; however, the same correlates may differ for schools with a high rate of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Third-grade students are the first to take standardized assessments in opinion and informational writing. This study provided insights into local Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences with the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the opinion and informational writing portions of the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools in a local school district in central Georgia.

Tortorelli et al. (2022) asserted that early writing skills strongly predict future reading and writing success. Similarly, Graham and Alves (2021) argued that writing is an essential, complex skill for students to succeed in education, work, and community

involvement. Strong writing skills are crucial for academic and life success. Therefore, teachers' beliefs and experiences about writing influence how writing is taught (Graham, 2023) and may impact students' writing proficiency in schools.

Rationale

The rationale for the inquiry is that students are not meeting the minimum proficiency in opinion and informational writing as determined by annually mandated criterion-referenced assessments (Georgia Milestones System, n.d.). Recent Georgia Milestones Assessment Spring 2023 extended writing test scores showed that only 13.10% of the local third-grade students met minimum proficiency or higher on the opinion and informational writing portions by scoring a 5, 6, or 7 on the Georgia Milestones Assessment (Georgia Milestones System, n.d.). More specifically, only 77 third-grade students, or 4.85%, met minimum proficiency by scoring a 5. Subsequently, 86.9% of local third-graders did not meet minimum proficiency by scoring below a score of 5, thus revealing evidence of the problem that the majority of local third-graders did not meet minimum proficiency in opinion and informational writing as determined by current scores from the annually mandated Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools in a local school district in central Georgia.

During the past 7 years, the Georgia Milestones Assessment third-grade writing scores for the opinion and informational writing portions have not improved from the previous years (Georgia Milestones Assessment System, n.d.). According to data from 2018 through 2024, the percentage of local third-grade students meeting minimum proficiency or higher on the extended writing portions of the annually mandated Georgia

Milestones Assessment were 9.58%, 14.84%, 7.19%, 8.40%, 13.10%, and 14.98% respectively (Table 1). The assessment was not administered to students in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data shows that there has been little improvement in students meeting the minimum proficiency or higher on the extended writing portions of the Georgia Milestones Assessment (GMAS), exacerbated by the interruption in assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Year	Students	Minimum Proficiency Score of 5	Proficiency Scores of 5, 6, or 7
2018	*1586*	5.11%	9.58%
2019	*1550*	6.00%	14.84%
2020	*Covid No Testing*		
2021	*1335*	3.30%	7.19%
2022	*1607*	2.24%	8.40%
2023	*1588*	4.85%	13.10%
2024	*1429*	5.38%	14.98%

Feedback from the recent local Administration 2023 Summer Workshop revealed that schools in the district continue to find writing instruction an issue and are focusing on it in the school improvement plans (Assistant Principal, personal communication, June 17, 2023). An important implication from the local district's historical data and administrative feedback is that local third-grade students are not meeting minimum proficiency or higher in extended writing skills, and local third-grade English Language Arts teachers are encountering challenges in implementing effective writing instruction to help develop proficient student writers.

Writing proficiency is a local problem and a national concern, with up to 75% of students lacking basic writing skills (National Assessment of Educational Progress for

Writing, 2021). Adopting and implementing the CCSS have emphasized the importance of writing instruction in schools to help prepare students for college, careers, and life. Specifically, the English Language Arts Standards (ELA) stress that students show knowledge and higher-order thinking processes through writing. The ability to write effectively is an essential aspect of academic development for students, and proficient writing skills are linked to academic, professional, and social success (Rodgers & Loveall, 2023). Therefore, addressing writing challenges and teachers' experiences in implementing effective teaching strategies is vital to improving students' writing skills.

Equally important, writing is not emphasized in elementary grades, with teachers spending only 6% of daily classroom time on average teaching writing, and students are given few extended opportunities to practice writing in class (Ryan et al., 2021). Ray et al. (2023) confirmed these findings, revealing that teachers devote inadequate time to teaching extended writing despite its importance, with one study indicating that elementary teachers spent only 38 minutes per week on writing instruction and strategies.

Karakus (2023) contended that writing is a complex language skill that involves organizing content and effectively translating it into diverse written forms. Teachers are tasked to guide and help students develop complex writing skills using effective strategies and promote a writing culture in society (Kardas, 2021). Thus, teaching strategies either enable or constrain students' performance as writers (Khosronejad et al., 2022). Therefore, guided by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, this qualitative study explored Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences using writing

strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools in a local school district.

Definition of Terms

Title 1 Schools: Title 1 schools are educational institutions with a minimum of 40% of enrolled students from low-income households. Title 1 funds support schoolwide programs to benefit the lowest-achieving students (Cox & Mullen, 2023).

Evidence-Based Writing Practices (EBP): Evidence-based writing practices (EBP) are methods and techniques supported by scientific research, demonstrating a positive impact on writing development (Graham & Alves, 2021).

Georgia Milestones Assessment: A comprehensive, summative assessment program starting in third grade to evaluate students' proficiency in mastering the state-adopted content standards across core subjects, including English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. (Georgia Milestones Assessment System, n.d.)

Explicit Writing Instruction: A teaching strategy that involves teaching writing strategies for various stages: planning (generating and selecting ideas, developing a plan), drafting (choosing vocabulary, constructing sentences), revising (ensuring the flow of ideas, checking vocabulary and spelling accuracy), and publishing (Falardeau et al., 2024).

Text-based Essay Writing: Writing in which students analyze and synthesize multiple texts and respond using organized, written paragraphs (Maamuujav, 2021).

Significance of the Study

This study may be significant because there was little information about teachers' specific strategies to help students master opinion and informational writing on the Georgia Milestones assessment. Therefore, the results of this study may impact teachers' instructional strategies, which may help improve the writing proficiency of third-grade students in the local setting. This study was unique because I explored Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences with writing strategies in the local setting to improve third-grade students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment.

The study addressed a local problem wherein eighty-six percent of the local third-grade students are not meeting minimum proficiency or higher on the annual Georgia Milestones Assessment's opinion and informational writing portions (Georgia Milestones System, n.d.). There was little information about the specific strategies teachers use to help students achieve mastery of opinion and informational writing on the assessment. Elementary school students first take the Georgia Milestones Assessment beginning in third grade. Recent Spring 2023 extended writing test scores showed that only 21.82% of third, fourth, and fifth-grade students exceeded the opinion and informational writing tasks by scoring a 5, 6, or 7 (Georgia Milestones Assessment System, n.d.). More specifically, only 13.10% of the local third-grade students exceeded the opinion and informational portions of the Georgia Milestones Assessment by scoring a 5, 6, or 7. Additionally, feedback from the recent Administration Workshop revealed that schools in the district continue to find writing instruction an issue and focus on it in the school improvement plans (Assistant Principal, personal communication, June 17, 2023). The

evidence suggested that the local Title 1 elementary schools are facing challenges in providing proficiency in writing skills to help prepare students for school, college, careers, and life. The results of my study may lead to positive social change by impacting teachers' instructional writing strategies, which may help improve the writing proficiency of Title 1 third-grade students. Additionally, gaining insights into Title 1 third-grade teachers' experiences of the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the opinion and informational portions of the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 schools in a local school district may help in providing more equitable instructional practices for students in Title 1 schools to help close learning gaps in writing proficiency.

Research Question

The problem in the local educational setting is that there is little information about the specific strategies teachers use to help students achieve mastery of opinion and informational writing on the annually mandated Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences with using writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools in a local school district in central Georgia. In alignment with the research problem and purpose, the following research question guided the basic qualitative study:

RQ1: What are Title 1 English Language Arts third-grade teachers' experiences using the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment?

Review of the Literature

The literature presented information regarding effective practices in writing strategies and teachers' experiences. Kraus et al. (2023) stated that the primary goal of a review is to not only summarize the current state of research but also to advance the development of the field. Reviewing the literature was a crucial step when conducting research that guided the study's design and contributed to exploring Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences with using writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools in a local school district in central Georgia.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that supported this study was Vygotsky's (1978) social-constructivist perspective within sociocultural theory, emphasizing that teaching and learning are social processes. Vygotsky stated that learning is a natural consequence of effective interaction and social communication within the environment. Similarly, children learn through social interactions that prioritize the construction of knowledge, highlighting the importance of both personal and social experiences in the learning process (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2022). Phala (2023) agreed that learning does not come from predetermined rules but from people interacting and developing understandings in specific situations. Social engagement between teachers and students allows teachers to

deliver instructional writing strategies to help students learn how to write. A fundamental assumption is that children acquire academic skills, like proficient writing, through problem-solving interactions with teachers or those more experienced within social settings.

Semiotic mediation, involving tools and symbols such as language and written words, is significant within sociocultural theory. Vygotsky (1989) described how humans are transformed through tools and symbols, thereby facilitating the internalization of culture. Vygotsky proposed that learning language and using other cultural tools, such as writing, leads to development. Similarly, Tektigul et al. (2023) asserted that words, symbols, and texts help people communicate and understand their cultural surroundings. Vygotsky and Tektigual et al. suggested that teachers nurture children's developmental writing skills by helping them convert language into meaningful written forms that transfer ideas and experiences.

The relationship between thought and speech is crucial within socio-cultural theory. Vygotsky (1989) found that language development progresses through three stages: external or social speech, egocentric speech, and inner speech. In earlier research, Everson (1991) agreed that external speech is essential in social interaction and communication. Similarly, Everson maintained that social speech interactions are integral to prewriting because students write more proficiently when given opportunities to talk about their ideas before they write. The critical implication is that discussions within social settings help create written language. Likewise, inner speech is crucial to developing written language relying on functional written symbols rather than sounds

(Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers must consider how inner speech interacts with social processes, contributing to the acquisition of new learning of writing skills for children. Children's social interactions and inner speech are essential components of writing development. Thus, understanding the relationship between thought and speech within Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory may help inform teachers' experiences with creating effective writing strategies for children, guiding them in teaching writing skills to their students.

Key concepts emerge within the framework of sociocultural theory. Vygotsky (1978) stated three fundamental principles in a constructivist approach: Social interaction is crucial to development and learning, learning requires a more experienced person, and the teacher or mentor must consider the child's zone of proximal development (ZPD). A constructivist perspective advocates that children learn to write effectively through social interaction and assistance from more experienced people, which aids cognitive processes. Writing proficiently requires active social engagement with experienced individuals who create meaningful writing experiences for children to acquire writing skills.

The social constructivist perspective proposes that to write well, social interaction is crucial to development and learning. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that individuals' cognitive capacity cannot be separated from their social surroundings because people develop cognitively through social interactions. Vygotsky maintained that concepts, social objects, and activities structure human mental performance and perceived thinking not as an individual trait of the child but as a process intertwined with the child's engagement in social activities with others. Likewise, Alkhudiry (2022) agreed that

learning is an interactive process in which the learner achieves knowledge through practical engagement within a community. Cognitively demanding activities such as writing are developed not through individual processes but through the influence of the cultural and social contexts with others. Vygotsky theorized the significance of social engagement in shaping a person's mental capacities. Effective instructional writing strategies are social processes.

Language is vital in the social environment. Vygotsky (1987) highlighted that an individual's cognitive development is influenced by their linguistic interactions with others. Interacting socially using language helps increase conceptual and higher-order thinking, where children must organize information to produce adequate responses. In earlier research, Everson (1991) suggested that organizing conceptual thinking facilitates conceptualizing ideas in written expression, implying that written language evolves from verbal language. Vygotsky contended that oral language is spontaneous, involuntary, and unconscious. However, written language is abstract, voluntary, conscious, and immature at the onset of writing instruction. Everson (1991) agreed that although children can articulate their thoughts orally, in written communication, the elements of syntax, mechanics, usage, and organization interfere with what children are trying to say. Writing text is much more complex than thinking or speaking text. Therefore, teachers' experiences with writing strategies designed to improve students' proficiency in writing should include direct and explicit language-based social interactions that are crucial in teaching children to translate spoken language into written expression effectively.

The social-constructivist perspective proposes that writing well requires that students gain knowledge through explicit instruction, collaboration, mentoring, and feedback from a more knowledgeable person. Vygotsky (1997) asserted that nurturing pedagogical interventions is essential to understanding people's cognitive processes. Graham et al. (2020) agreed that a social-constructivist perspective supports the idea that writing development occurs through instruction. Mercadal (2021) argued that adults or more experienced peers offer support and guidance, serving as role models for the child in the learning process. Mercadal posited that collaborative dialogues between teachers and children lead to internalized information for managing performance. Therefore, educators' experiences should facilitate instructional teaching strategies that help children learn to write skillfully.

According to a social-constructivist perspective, teachers or mentors should consider a child's zone of proximal development (ZPD) during writing instruction. Vygotsky (1989) conceptualized that learners have two levels of intellectual development: actual and potential. When students are left independently to solve a problem, they showcase what Vygotsky termed the actual development. However, Vygotsky argued that actual development does not truly reflect or fairly measure ability. Instead, he introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development: The space where the learner can accomplish a task with assistance. De Kleijn (2023) agreed that the ZPD indicates that new knowledge and skills are created through a combination of social interaction, guided support, and individual self-directed learning processes. De Kleijn asserted that scaffolding, or teacher assistance, helps children reach their learning

potential, or ZPD. This is done by providing clear, step-by-step feedback during collaborative writing tasks. Over time, the scaffolding is gradually removed, allowing students to develop independent problem-solving skills as writers. During writing instruction, teachers provide incremental support to children, allowing them to practice existing skills while acquiring new ones in writing. Teachers who create writing experiences that support students in their ZPD foster new learning while minimizing frustration. Identifying and working within a child's ZPD adjusts teaching to their current abilities, fostering gradual growth in writing skills.

A social constructivist conceptual framework encourages teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. Olds et al. (2021) maintained that teaching from a socio-cultural perspective implies that learning is a social process guided by interactions with one's environment, people, and culture. Olds et al. stated that this perspective provides insight into the cognitive processes in teaching and learning. Hunter (2021) concurred that reflecting on teaching practices holds significant value but emphasized that it should be achievable and plausible. Through reflection, teachers evaluate their instructional writing strategies. Critical reflection regarding the challenges and successes in teaching writing enables teachers to position themselves within the profession. Reflecting on experiences with writing strategies initiates the responsibility for promoting best practices in writing instruction.

The social constructivist conceptual framework guided and structured this study's purpose, research questions, interview protocol, and data analysis approach. This perspective advocates explicit instructional writing strategies, viewing learning as a

social process. The social constructivist approach involves meaningful interactions between children and more knowledgeable teachers, targeting children's zones of proximal development (ZPD) to enhance their writing skills, leading to improved writing success. A social constructivist framework provided an understanding of how teachers' experiences of writing strategies that integrate social interaction, teaching within children's ZPD, and instructional scaffolding may impact students' writing proficiency and cognitive development.

Review of the Broader Problem

Three themes emerged within the literature: teacher experiences, which are essential for understanding the teaching strategies used by educators (Graham, 2023); writing strategies, including evidence-based writing strategies supported by scientific evidence, and positively influencing practice (Graham & Alves, 2021); and student writing challenges that may impact their learning success (Rediani et al., 2023). Within the teacher experiences, themes and subthemes such as Common Core State Standards (CCSS) writing requirements, time constraints, teacher confidence, authentic writing experiences, and professional development were identified. The theme of writing strategies generated subthemes, including evidence-based writing practices (EBP), explicit instruction, and approaches such as self-regulated strategy development, text structure intervention, and collaborative strategies. Within the writing challenges theme, my research focused on cognitive difficulties and writing challenges in Title 1 schools and how teachers' experiences with writing strategies may impact students' writing challenges. I searched for relevant literature in academic databases using the keywords

primary and elementary writing instruction, third-grade, writing strategies, evidence-based writing practices, explicit instruction, text-based essay writing, informational and opinion writing, writing challenges, authentic writing experiences, low socio-economic status (SES), Title 1 schools, and *teachers' perspectives and experiences*. I reviewed the following databases for relevant literature: Education Source, ERIC, EBSCOhost, SAGE Journals, and Taylor and Francis Online. I utilized Google Scholar searches and citation chaining to discover recent articles related to my research topic. Additionally, I reviewed the following peer-reviewed journals: *Reading & Writing Quarterly, Journal of Research in Childhood Education, Classroom Discourse, Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, Reading & Writing, Literacy Research & Instruction, Journal of Educational Psychology, and Journal of Writing Research.* Except for seminal sources, peer-reviewed articles were published within the last 5 years.

Teachers' Experiences

In examining teachers' experiences, Ryan et al. (2021) asserted that teachers are motivated to teach writing and use reflective and collaborative approaches. Similarly, Tavsanli and Kaldirim (2020) argued that teachers' writer identities, attitudes, and perceptions about writing play an important role in selecting instructional/pedagogical methods and approaches to improve students' writing. Graham et al. (2023) agreed that teachers' beliefs are essential in understanding the teaching processes of writing, while Traga Philippakos et al. (2023) revealed that professional development, along with ongoing support, gradually improved teachers' confidence and attitudes in teaching writing and enhanced student's writing quality. The researchers found that teachers with

self-confidence in their writing abilities devote more time to teaching it. Teachers who dedicate quality time to writing instruction positively influence students' writing capabilities.

Still, many teachers experience challenges when teaching writing. Ryan et al. (2021) found that teachers struggle with effective ways to implement Common Core Writing Standards, time management, confidence in their teaching abilities, and a lack of professional support for effective writing instruction. Like Ryan et al., Gardner and Kuzick (2022) argued that high-stakes assessments limit writing instruction in schools, which prioritize test performance over other aspects of writing. Although teachers are committed to and use various strategies to improve writing instruction, they face various challenges, including pressures from standardized testing, which may impact the overall effectiveness of writing education.

Common Core State Writing Standards

Teachers are required to follow the Common Core State Standards during writing instruction. (CCSS). The CCSS focuses on the importance of writing instruction in schools to help prepare students for college, careers, and life. The English Language Arts (ELA) standards emphasize that students share knowledge and higher-order thinking processes through writing. Tortorelli et al. (2022) argued that since writing skills are crucial for future success, comprehensive teaching strategies should guide learning standards to support students' writing. Similarly, Dunn (2021) highlighted that it is vital to prioritize argumentative writing in writing standards in a knowledge-driven economy focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math. Furthermore, Benko et al. (2020)

proposed that CCSS allows teachers to instruct students in various writing genres, including informational, argumentative, and narrative. The CCSS emphasizes that writing is essential in education. Effective teaching strategies are valuable, and knowing how to write different genres helps students succeed. Teachers should concentrate on effective ways to teach the rigorous writing requirements of the CCSS.

Teachers experience challenges when implementing the CCSS. Squire and Clark (2020) argued that the CCSS does not explicitly explain how to accomplish writing goals. Complex milestones cause teachers to think there is a single path and end to writing improvement rather than recognizing that writing progress does not always follow a linear and forward trajectory (Graham, 2022). CCSS assessments do not adequately measure students' writing skills. Subsequently, Nagrotsky and Grullon (2020) observed that students have greater language and writing abilities than current curriculums and CCSS assessments recognize. Fellowes (2021) agreed that giving students a real audience and purpose for their writing, rather than limited essay prompts, is an effective strategy and makes the writing task more meaningful to children. Nagrotsky and Grullon found that under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), goal setting has resulted in target school intervention using standardized ELA and math test data to assess school quality, student learning, and teacher effectiveness. Educators lack a clear course for implementing CCSS to improve students' writing skills and meet the rigorous demands specified in the writing standards. CCSS assessments hinder students' writing creativity by requiring rigid writing standards that are inequitable to diverse populations. To improve students' writing success, educators must focus on understanding the CCSS and

implement experiences that utilize evidence-based writing strategies. Likewise, education systems need to recognize and nurture students' full range of language and writing abilities.

Time Constraints

Teachers experience time challenges in writing instruction. Ryan et al. (2021) proposed that writing demands high mental effort from children and takes time to improve. Graham (2022) agreed that children improve their writing skills as they write more. Likewise, Ray et al. (2023) determined that the complexity of writing demands consistent teaching and practice, yet only 20-25 minutes per day are dedicated to writing in the elementary grades. Hsiang et al. (2020) conducted a survey and found that Taiwan teachers in first through third grades taught narrative every two months and opinion and informative writing several times a year. Hsiang et al.'s findings also showed limited time was spent encouraging collaboration and providing extra writing assistance to students. Graham et al. (2023) reported results consistent with Hsiang et al.'s findings, revealing that general and special education teachers use various writing instructional strategies and accommodations for students with lower writing skills. Still, Graham et al. observed that writing instruction occurred infrequently. The researchers revealed that teachers encounter difficulties devoting sufficient time to writing instruction, and lack of time impacts students' abilities to apply cognitive effort and maintain consistent practice to improve writing skills.

Various factors may contribute to inefficient time for writing instruction. Hsiang et al. (2020) argued that some teachers view reading as more important than writing.

Likewise, Ray et al. (2023) reported results consistent with Hsiang's findings that suggest that reading and math are prioritized due to time constraints within the instructional school day. Ray et al. proposed that there should be a greater emphasis on integrating writing instruction within content areas, and not doing so may convey to students that writing is not considered an important priority. In a similar study, Graham (2022) observed that teachers who provided exemplary writing instruction dedicated significant time to teaching writing and applying EBPs. However, Graham maintained that teachers who failed to provide students with a strong writing program and spent minimal time on writing instruction had students who engaged in writing activities infrequently. Teachers invest various amounts of time and effort into their approaches to teaching writing. Implementing effective writing practices requires significant commitment. Therefore, teachers must consider experiences that integrate adequate time devoted to writing instruction to enhance students' writing skills.

Teacher Confidence

Even when adequate time is available for writing instruction, teachers experience a lack of confidence in teaching writing effectively. Tavsanli and Kaldirim (2020) demonstrated that teachers' views of themselves as writers significantly influence the instructional strategies and approaches, they choose to improve students' writing skills. Therefore, teacher confidence is crucial in empowering students to see themselves as writers with a clear audience and purpose (Ryan et al., 2023). Likewise, Dunn (2021) suggested that teachers have a crucial role in helping students improve by deciding what to teach, choosing materials, tracking progress, offering support, and evaluating students'

writing skills. To effectively teach children to become proficient writers, teachers must have confidence in their experiences with writing pedagogy and the ability to impart meaningful writing skills to children.

Several studies highlight the significance of teacher confidence in writing instruction. Ryan et al. (2021) conducted a study that found that teachers displayed motivation to teach writing and used reflective approaches but also noted that they were constrained by a lack of confidence, which prompted them to depend on commercial programs to support their writing. Ryan et al. asserted that teachers had gaps in metalinguistic knowledge or a deeper understanding of language in relation to writing. In a subsequent study, Ryan et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study within a third-grade setting. Teachers and researchers collaboratively worked to design writing experiences centered around reflective practices. Reflexivity is the ongoing, critical self-examination by researchers of how their perspectives and contexts influence each stage of the research process (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). Ryan et al. observed that as teachers reflected upon their writing practices, they developed greater confidence in providing authentic, context-specific, and creative approaches to teaching writing. An increase in reflective practices led to teacher confidence and improved student writing outcomes.

In a similar study, Khosronejad et al. (2022) sought to understand how classroom talk between teachers and students results in how students see themselves as writers. Khosronejad et al. discovered that children form writing identities categorized as autonomous, communicative, meta-reflexive, or fractured writers. However, there was a lack of attention to meta-reflexive writing practices. Khosronejad et al. concluded that

teachers' talk is a powerful force that shapes and guides students' writing identities in the classroom, thus suggesting that more confident teachers may help guide students to become meta-reflective writers. Unlike Ryan et al.'s study, Tavsanli and Kaldirim (2020) conducted a study using purposive sampling with six teachers using semi-structured interviews and found that teachers considered themselves neither successful nor unsuccessful writers but at a medium level. This contrasts with findings from Hsiang et al. (2020), who surveyed 782 Taiwan first through third-grade teachers and found that they rarely enjoyed writing, and 96% relied on textbooks for writing instruction. Kaldirim and Tavsanli noted that teachers considered verbal communication easier than written communication and realized the importance of high-level written skills in educational settings. Khosronejad et al. and Ryan et al. suggested that teachers' attitudes toward writing impact students' writing identities and that confident and skilled teachers foster quality student writing practices.

Writing for Authentic Purposes

Teachers experience challenges in teaching students to write for authentic purposes. Ryan et al. (2023) revealed that current assessment practices limit the opportunities and time for students to create written work meant to be read for purposes other than system evaluation. Gardner and Kuzich (2022) agreed with Ryan et al.'s findings but proposed that if high-stakes tests impose limitations on writing, teachers must go beyond the test by developing a strong and meaningful approach to writing instruction. Still, Gardner and Kuzick found that as national standardized test scores decline and international comparisons show lower achievement, there is governmental

pressure on schools to raise achievement. Their research implies that teachers prioritize strict writing guidelines to prepare students for assessments instead of engaging them in authentic writing activities aimed at real audiences. Khosronejad et al. (2022) argued that teachers prioritize writing through rigid and formulaic structures for narrative, opinion, and informational essays. Khosronejad et al. asserted that formulaic writing restricts students' creativity, reduces their motivation to write, and can impact the development of students' identities as writers. Ryan et al. (2021) found results consistent with Khosronejad et al.'s findings, indicating that in formulaic writing, students lack the freedom to select their topic; instead, they receive prompts. Students lack an authentic audience, and the time needed to go through the planning, drafting, editing, and revising stages. Teachers experience a lack of confidence in teaching writing due to government pressure from declining test scores. Current assessments restrict meaningful writing opportunities. Gardner, Kuzich, and Khosronejad et al. suggested that teachers create experiences incorporating a more flexible, creative approach to teaching writing.

Writing authentically increases children's motivation to write. Ryan et al. (2021) proposed that children should be encouraged to write using a variety of multimodal formats that connect with their experiences and serve a meaningful purpose to engage them effectively. Land (2020) suggested that writing tasks with authentic purposes and target audiences can help create opportunities for teachers to resist the limitations of standardized testing and accountability. Similarly, Fellowes (2021) agreed with Ryan et al. and Land, emphasizing that offering students an authentic audience and purpose is an effective teaching strategy. However, Chen et al. (2022) found that students' poor writing

performance and low motivation to write can be linked to the absence of authentic writing experiences. Teachers who promote authentic writing experiences that connect to children's real-life situations can help engage students in meaningful writing that is not limited by standardized testing constraints.

Authentic writing experiences described in the literature have proven effective. Li et al. (2023) found that integrating an augmented reality (AR) tool with motivational learning techniques (MAR) helped students engage themselves in a three-dimensional (3D) environment. They interacted with realistic scenarios within the environment, including the birth of a brachiosaurus, and wrote about their experiences. Li et al. argued that interacting with virtual objects helped students internalize their learning, connect it to their existing knowledge, and motivated them to participate in creative writing. In a similar study, Chen et al. (2022) reported that an SVVR (spherical video-based virtual reality) tool immersed children into diverse scenes that inspired their interest and assisted them in composition writing about topics that appealed to them. Chen et al. claimed that although the SVVR promoted deep learning by enabling learners to link experiences with their writing topics, it also increased cognitive load for some students, thus limiting its effectiveness. Li et al. and Chen et al. demonstrated how augmented reality and virtual reality tools help create authentic writing experiences for students despite initial challenges in using these tools.

Some authentic writing experiences for children involve action research. Weber and Harris (2022) defined action research as a critical self-reflection on the teaching and learning approach. Kinberg (2020) engaged six students, aged ten to twelve, in real-life

nature experiences to inspire their poetry and short story writing. Kinberg found firsthand nature experiences and animal interactions increase the children's writing engagement and motivation. Curiel and Ponzio (2023) reported results consistent with Kinberg's, however they wanted to enrich the authentic writing experiences of third-grade emergent bilingual students by incorporating cultural writing activities. Curiel and Ponzio reported that children composed calaveras, or literacy poems inspired by the Day of the Dead Hispanic holiday, emphasizing a key Latin American cultural celebration and promoting cross-cultural awareness among students of diverse backgrounds. Incorporating culturally relevant topics allowed students to integrate their personal experiences into creating the calaveras, enriching the writing experience. Likewise, Weber and Harris (2022) conducted action research to determine if using authentic text and reading aloud positively impacted students' story writing. Weber and Harris contended that exposing children to model texts provided examples of effective writing they could emulate in their work. Weber and Harris' research indicated that when students used authentic models of exemplary writing, they exhibited more precise word choices, a deeper grasp of tone and mood, and a more confident narrative voice in their compositions. Teachers facilitating real-life experiences, cultural activities, and exposure to model texts can provide students with authentic writing experiences that improve children's engagement, motivation, and writing quality.

Writing Professional Development

Teachers need writing professional development (PD). Ryan et al. (2023) asserted that teachers influence student writing outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted

professional learning beyond general pedagogical knowledge (Gore et al., 2021) to ensure an improvement in student performance. Likewise, Ryan et al. proposed that PD approaches should consider teachers as active agents and professionals rather than passive receivers of reform changes, whereas Juuti et al. (2021) suggested that teachers, learners, and researchers collaborate in designing educational PD opportunities. Teachers need training to improve how they teach writing, and it is essential to view teachers as capable professionals rather than individuals who follow directions with little input about their writing expertise or insights. Quality PD will empower teachers to use their time more effectively, leading to improved student writing experiences.

Various studies in the literature support the importance of writing PD for teachers. Gardner and Kuzich (2022) conducted a study that examined teacher candidates' readiness to teach writing. The findings revealed that most candidates rarely engaged in essay writing across different genres but frequently wrote informally through digital texts such as emails and media posts. Gardner and Kuzich's results indicate significant gaps in teachers' candidates' writing skills upon entering teacher education programs, leaving them inadequately prepared to teach writing. Professional development opportunities for teachers and teacher candidates may help address gaps in writing pedagogy and instruction. Ryan et al.'s (2023) research differed from Gardner and Kuzich's study. Instead of focusing on teacher candidates, third-grade teachers participated in a PD co-design program between teachers, researchers, and learners that empowered them to teach authentic writing experiences to children, thus leading to increased authenticity in children's writing, improved collaboration among students and more dedicated time for

student writing. Moreover, Ryan et al.'s study revealed that students produced written texts with meaningful content rather than for assessment preparation purposes. The studies emphasize the importance of offering writing-focused PD for teachers to improve their instructional practices and better support student learning in writing.

Research supports integrating digital processes and PD programs for teachers. Howell et al. (2021) found that integrating PD focusing on digital tools into teachers' instructional writing strategies improved their ability to foster authentic and collaborative writing experiences by emphasizing that students create rather than consume information. In Howell et al.'s research, fourth and fifth-grade teachers participated in a gradual release inquiry through explicit and guided instruction, including PD, in-service learning, observations, coaching, and classroom collaborations. Throughout Howell et al.'s study, teachers explored methods to expand digital writing beyond the publication process, utilizing tools such as Google Documents, StoryJumper (a digital book creation tool), and Seesaw (a platform facilitating collaborative writing opportunities for students. In contrast to Howell et al.'s study, which offered in-person PD, Regan et al. (2023) conducted research demonstrating the integration of PD into a digital platform through modules that teachers could reference throughout writing instruction. Fourth and fifth-grade students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder (ADHD) were instructed in persuasive essay writing using a Text-Based Graphic Organizer (TBGO). The TBGO digital tool included text-to-speech, color coding, drop-down menus, and instructional video writing models to help support students. Regan et al.'s findings revealed that teachers using the digital PD modules and students using the TBGO digital

tool led to improvements in student writing. Integrating digital processes and PD can enhance teachers' abilities to provide authentic writing experiences and support students with diverse learning needs, improving students' writing outcomes.

Effective Writing Strategies

Effective writing strategies use evidence-based practices. Graham and Alves (2021) contended that evidence-based writing practices (EBP) are methods and techniques supported by scientific research, demonstrating a positive impact on writing development. Similarly, EBP writing approaches provide teachers with various techniques for teaching writing that have been proven effective in other teachers' classes and situations (Graham, 2020). However, Kallitsoglou and Mahmud (2023) and Graham and Alves' findings affirm that to address the complexity of writing, it is essential to integrate EBP writing methods with teachers' best knowledge approaches acquired through their roles as teachers and learners. The key implication is that EBP writing methods with teachers' acquired knowledge are crucial to facilitating improved writing instruction. Therefore, teachers' experiences combining EBP writing strategies with their expertise are vital in enhancing students' writing skills.

Explicit Instructional Strategies

Explicit instructional strategies and scaffolding seem to be critical in helping students learn to write (Salas et al., 2023). Explicit instruction requires addressing writing stages: planning by generating ideas, drafting vocabulary and sentences, revising for coherence and accuracy, and publishing. (Falardeau et al., 2024). Known in some of the literature as Strategy-Focused instruction, teachers begin by teaching precise writing

skills that improve writing fluency while gradually reducing instructional support. (Datchuk et al., 2022). The goal is to transition from full teacher support to students taking control of their writing behaviors. A key implication is that teachers' experiences integrating explicit instructional writing strategies may improve students' writing proficiency through structured, direct instructional writing activities.

In earlier research, Lopez et al. (2017) found that explicit instructional writing approaches were effective. Lopez et al. conducted a study that divided direct instruction into two experimental groups. The first group received all the components of the direct instruction conditions, including graphic organizers and mnemonics. In contrast, the modeling group of students received instruction using a writing model in which they had to observe and emulate themselves. Both experimental groups instructed using variations of strategy-focused writing showed more significant gains in the quality of their writing than a control group that did not receive explicit instruction. Thus, writing methods and models incorporating explicit instruction and scaffolding help support the critical thinking characteristics of common core writing standards. Tsiriotakis et al. (2020) stated that explicit instructional strategies enhance students' metacognitive knowledge and ability to use effective writing strategies. Therefore, explicit instruction serves as a sequential process of building students' writing capabilities, guiding them toward independence in writing. Teachers who incorporate explicit instructional methods into their writing strategies may positively impact students' writing proficiency.

Writing strategies in the literature involve explicit instruction but differ slightly in their approaches. Hochman and Wexler (2024) described the need to explicitly teach

basic sentence construction first to aid in decreasing the cognitive load, even among middle and high school students, in developing the writing revolution method. Similarly, Smith et al. (2021) proposed that students, especially those with learning disabilities, be initially given sentence-level assessments to determine whether they may benefit from targeted instruction. Teachers used an explicit instructional framework with a highly structured sentence frame format to help students build sentences. Explicitly teaching children to write complete sentences and sentence types and use conjunctions within subjects such as social studies, science, and mathematics can provide essential writing skills and subject knowledge (Chandler & Sayeski, 2021). Explicit instructional writing methods may help students advance to more complex writing when they first improve their foundational sentence skills. At the same time, teachers reduce scaffolding, transitioning from substantial to minimal support.

Other writing strategies support explicitly teaching lower and higher order writing skills concurrently. Ahmed et al. (2022) argued that the not-so-simple-view of the writing conceptual model emphasized explicit instructional strategies that deliver not only lower-level transcription skills, such as spelling and handwriting, but also higher-order writing processes, such as planning and revising that interact to produce more quality writing. Similar to Hochman and Wexler's (2024), and Smith et al.'s (2021) sentence level instructional approaches, Ahmed et al. proposed that although lower and higher-level writing components are essential, they must be treated as separable processes to provide targeted interventions for students with and without learning disabilities. Although all three studies emphasized explicit instructional strategies through teacher modeling and

direct instruction, the writing revolution method and sentence level approach focused more on transcription than process writing skills. In contrast, the not-so-simple view of writing's conceptual model focused on teaching lower level and higher order skills. Study results emphasized the importance of using explicit instructional writing strategies in writing instruction, regardless of the targeted writing skills or the order in which the skills are introduced to students during writing instruction. The findings of the studies suggest that teachers experienced in using explicit writing strategies may assist children in becoming proficient writers through direct and teacher-modeled methods.

Approaches to Writing Strategies

Various instructional EBP writing strategies were examined to determine their effectiveness in improving students' writing proficiency. These strategies include the self-regulated strategy development method (SRSD), the text structures intervention, and collaborative strategies. Each strategy presented a unique way of teaching writing. In contrast, Graham and Alves (2021) argued that while research findings may positively impact practice, EBPs offering insights into teaching writing are not broad, deep, or rich enough to tell us all we need to know about writing. Still, teachers experienced in using EBP writing strategies may find opportunities to address the diverse writing needs of their students.

SRSD. Self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) emphasizes explicit teaching of writing and self-regulation skills to help improve writing. Salas et al. (2023) explained that SRSD is a process-over-product approach to writing, while Ray et al. (2023) clarified that effective writing instruction should help students break each phase into manageable

tasks, allowing them to focus on one aspect of writing at a time with targeted strategies that help children cope with the writing process. Similarly, Torres and Ray (2022) reported that SRSD offers a structure for teaching students about the foundational expectations of academic writing and for specific genres of writing. Teachers use explicit writing strategies to teach children how to plan, organize, revise, and edit written activities. At the same time, strategies also give students tools to use throughout the writing process. The teacher and students read, analyze, and discuss model texts in informative, persuasive, or narrative essays (Harris & McKeown, 2022), emphasizing their use in various writing genres. Integrating SRSD approaches into teachers' experiences with writing strategies may help teachers target mastery of writing skills to help prepare children for standardized assessments and to help them achieve writing proficiency.

SRSD is an effective approach to teaching writing. Fernandez and Guilbert (2024) revealed that several recent studies have shown that SRSD-type interventions improve text quality for students compared to those receiving standard writing instruction. Positive effects of the SRSD intervention on text quality have been found in China (Chen et al., 2022), Canada (Klein et al., 2022), New Zealand (Finlayson & McCrudden, 2021), Spain (Fidalgo et al., 2021), and the United States (McKeown et al., 2023). The studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) intervention in improving writing quality across various countries, highlighting its broad relevance and value in diverse educational settings.

Similarly, a meta-analysis revealed SRSD was particularly effective in improving writing skills for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Rodgers & Loveall, 2023). Rodgers and Loveall found that the SRSD studies were significantly associated with larger effect sizes (SMD=1.66, SE=0.41, p=.00467) than non-SRSD studies. The evidence demonstrates that the SRSD model may be essential in addressing the writing challenges faced by students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in writing. A meta-analysis by Kim et al. (2021) demonstrated that SRSD, consistent with previous meta-analyses, had positive and large effect sizes for students in primary grades, specifically 1.04 in writing quality, 0.72 in writing, and 0.59 in writing productivity. The findings indicated that SRSD was highly effective across diverse student populations, affirming its effectiveness as a method for teaching writing and is supported well through research. Title 1 schools focused on improving students' academic achievement, and teachers' experiences using SRSD writing strategies, may help facilitate writing skills for students to prepare for state assessments and writing proficiency within the classroom.

SRSD writing methods encompass six sequential stages: teaching prerequisites for using the strategy (develop background knowledge); description and discussion of the strategy (describe it); demonstration of its use (model it), memorization of it by the student (memorize it), the student's supported use of it (support it); and the student's application of it with little or no support (independent use) (Ralli et al., 2023). Harris and McKeown (2022) explained that the SRSD stages are learner-centered but teacher-guided. Similarly, Alyson et al.(2021) asserted that the SRSD approach involves engaging in discussions between teachers and students. Likewise, it is centered on

students and promotes collaboration, offering an integrative view of writing instruction. Teachers with experience implementing SRSD writing strategies that combine explicit instruction and self-regulation strategies in educational settings may enable children to navigate complex writing processes, thus improving their writing proficiency.

SRSD, an evidence-based writing model, shares similarities and differences with alternative writing models. Harris and McKeown (2022) noted the learner-centered yet teacher-guided nature of SRSD instruction, emphasizing social cognitive processes. Likewise, Horowitz (2023) describes Graham's writer-within-community model, which views writing as specific, recursive processes that are situated within a communicative social context. In contrast, a traits-based writing model emphasizes a product-oriented approach, where students generate ideas, compose, revise, and assess their writing based on a model text, unlike the process-oriented approach of SRSD methods (Rowland et al., 2022). A shift in effective instruction involves teaching children to improve their writing through social and cognitive processes rather than focusing on the characteristics of model writing products. Productively struggling through writing processes helps children acquire a metacognitive awareness, resulting in writing proficiency. Teachers' experiences with SRSD writing strategies and alternative writing models may impact students' writing skills, improving their writing proficiency.

In studies examining the effectiveness of SRSD across diverse student populations, Salas et al. (2021) found that although all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, who received SRSD writing interventions outperformed the control group, those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds exhibited more significant

improvements in text quality compared to their more advantaged peers. Ralli et al. (2023) reported results consistent with Salas et al.'s (2021) findings but investigated the impacts of integrating SRSD writing strategies with collaborative approaches among students facing writing challenges within a Tier 2 intervention program. Ralli et al. asserted that in a response to intervention model, students receive more prescriptive and individualized instruction integrated with differentiated teaching to address learning challenges. The Strategic Planners of Writing program, utilizing SRSD writing strategies, positively impacted students' writing quality. This was particularly significant when combined with collaborative writing activities, providing children with opportunities to collectively build knowledge with student work groups. Salas et al. and Ralli et al.'s findings suggest that SRSD can particularly benefit students facing socio-economic challenges in their academic writing. Therefore, teachers in Title 1 schools with experience using SRSD writing strategies may offer a supportive learning environment for students who face socio-economic and learning challenges that may help boost students' writing skills.

Different variations of SRSD appear to be effective in helping students 'writing proficiency. Rodrguez-Malaga et al. (2021) reported results consistent with findings in Salas et al. (2021) and Ralli et al.'s (2023) studies, however, students were randomly selected for two specific strategy-focused writing interventions: the full and the brief cognitive self-regulation instruction (CSRI). The full-CSRI approach used all of the components of self-regulated strategy instruction, while the latter removed teaching students planning procedures directly. The brief CSRI intervention encouraged students to utilize different planning techniques by eliminating advanced planning for writing.

Although both experimental groups surpassed the control group, the full-CRSI writing intervention students demonstrated greater writing quality due to its explicit advanced planning instruction, indicating that the brief CSRI experimental group might have faced cognitive overload by lacking pre-planning processes. Likewise, Salas et al. (2023) observed that SRSD strategies improved students' writing but also discovered that integrating language instruction within an SRSD writing model improved children's written expression in opinion essays and advanced foundational language skills compared to conventional isolated language learning methods. Graham (2022) agreed that language and writing are interconnected, suggesting that language proficiency can equip writers with beneficial strategies for written expression. Graham's research suggests that writing relies on language, and the two activities interact and complement each other during the writing process. Teachers' experiences integrating writing and language strategies with SRSD instruction may help offer students additional writing practice tailored to their needs.

Text Structures Writing Intervention Model. Text structures intervention models guide children in creating informational essays in an evidence-based approach for improving elementary students' ability to read and write about informational text (Strong, 2023). Meta-analyses have shown that teaching informational text structures had a moderate positive effect on students' writing, with an average effect size of 0.39, which is statistically significant (Graham et al., 2023). Although text structure intervention research is substantial, limitations exist that affect applying the instructional method to all classroom settings, and there is significant variability in how the instructional methods

are used (Strong, 2023). Teachers' experiences using text structure intervention models, supported by empirical research, may be beneficial in improving students' reading and informational writing skills. However, the current research revealed challenges in applying the findings across diverse educational settings.

During text structure intervention strategies, students use five key organizational text structures: description, comparison and contrast, sequence, problem and solution, and cause and effect. The text structures are instrumental in helping children organize informational writing. Herbet et al. (2021) claimed that the text structures model educates children in understanding the purpose of informational writing. Herbert et al. asserted that the model focuses on organizational structures, transitional words, overcoming background knowledge deficits, minimizing reading volume, and providing vocabulary and spelling scaffolding. Erbasan (2023) noted that young students are less exposed to informative texts, while Herbet et al. stated that expository writing is challenging for students because of unfamiliar text structure and limited background knowledge compared to narrative writing. Writing informational text can be challenging. Teachers' experiences using text structure intervention models may help lessen the cognitive load for children by offering clear steps and graphic organizational models for composing informational essays.

Text structure writing intervention models in the literature have proven effective. In a pilot study, Herbet et al. (2021) implemented a structures writing intervention for fourth graders, teaching them to recognize informational text structures, use transitional words, and apply informational frames to assess its impact on writing proficiency and

reading comprehension. This approach was intended to minimize reading volume and offer scaffolding for background knowledge, vocabulary, and spelling, enabling students to focus on the writing structure. Herbet et al. found that students who underwent the structured writing intervention significantly surpassed the control group in writing quality but showed no significant improvement in reading comprehension compared to the control group. Although Herbert et al.'s text structure study showed promising results, the intervention was conducted with a limited number of students and may not be generalized to other settings. Erbasan (2023) carried out a similar read-to-write text structure intervention for third graders to improve their ability to write informative texts using chronological order and sequencing. Similar to Herbet et al.'s research, Erbasan's text structure intervention involved a reading phase, where students identified the structure of a text, and a writing phase, where they chose a topic, recorded information on a graphic organizer, and organized it into sentences, using transition words and paragraphs. Unlike Herbert et al.'s study, which covered more complex structures such as comparison-contrast, cause-effect, and problem-solving structures in informational writing, Erbasan's text structure writing intervention used sequencing or ordering structure. The results showed that the read-to-write strategy increased the quality of informative chronological order writing of third-grade students.

However, teaching only one text structure type may not transfer learning to other structure types. Erbasan reported that the experimental group improved the quality of their sequential informative writing, as evidenced by increased use of sequence words, a higher total word count, correct use of capital letters, greater inclusion of introductory

and concluding sentencing, and improved editing skills. Teachers with experiences using text structure intervention models, emphasizing text structure and reading strategies, and utilizing explicit instructional delivery along with effective strategies may improve students' abilities in writing informational text.

The effectiveness of text-structure writing interventions can be compared to writing interventions without a text-structure component. Strong (2023) compared the Read STOP writing method, designed to help children identify text structures and improve reading comprehension and writing quality, with the RARE Reading and Writing intervention, which emphasized students answering questions and summarizing without text structure interventions to write informational essays. The results showed that students who learned the Read STOP Write intervention outperformed those who learned the RARE Reading and Writing intervention using a graphic organizer to organize ideas and details. However, both interventions were performed similarly using a paraphrasing strategy where students identified and summarized the main idea and details. This suggests that although both approaches benefit different writing skills, the Read STOP Write method's inclusion of text structure elements provided an additional benefit in organizing ideas in composing informational essays.

Strong's (2023) research had similarities and differences with other studies. Unlike Erbasan's (2023) study, which focused on a single text structure, Strong's research involved teaching multiple text structures. Interventions focused on teaching students to use multiple text structures when writing have found mixed effects on text structure identification, significant effects on writing quality, and no effect on

comprehension (Herbet et al., 2021). Teaching children to use multiple text structures in reading and writing generates the cognitive knowledge essential for their reading and writing proficiency growth. Although Erbasan (2023) suggested using signal and transition words to improve writing quality in informational essays, Strong's Read STOP Write intervention instructed children to use structure-specific questions before using signal words to help identify text structures. Both Erbasan and Strong agreed that signal words, regardless of their sequence of practice in informational essays, assist in organizing writing about a topic. Strong proposed using graphic organizers to teach informational writing text structure and summary writing. In contrast, Herbert et al. (2021) proposed a knowledge-transforming approach over a knowledge-telling one, thereby supporting a structured writing intervention that emphasized the purpose of informational writing beyond a simple summary. Erbasan's, Strong's, and Herbet et al.'s studies explored variations of text structure writing interventions and strategies with varying outcomes. Still, the different methods suggest various effective strategies for teaching informational writing, each having strengths and areas of focus. Teachers' experiences using various text structure writing intervention strategies may improve students' skills in composing informational essays, thereby enhancing their writing proficiency in the classroom and on state assessments.

Collaborative Writing Strategy Models. A trend in evidence-based writing instruction is the focus on collaborative writing. Collaboratively writing text represents a shift from writing as an individual task to understanding it as a social activity. Shimizu and Santos (2022) claimed that writing is commonly viewed as an independent activity to

measure students' topic mastery. In contrast, Bruyère and Pendergrass (2020) argued that students need meaningful interactions with others about their writing. Svenlin and Sorhaug (2023) suggested that collaborative writing (CW) comprises pre- and post-task activities, forming teams, and planning while participating in non-linear phases such as brainstorming, outlining, drafting, reviewing, editing, and revising. During collaborative writing, children share in composing text. Meaning and knowledge are co-constructed as proposals and suggestions are made, and knowledge is generated between children during the writing process (Herder et al., 2020). A shift to CW in writing instruction suggests that writing is a skill and a collaborative process where communication, teamwork, and writing skills are equally essential. CW supports the idea that cooperation is a life skill; therefore, adopting the writing approach improves writing and prepares students for real-world collaborative environments. Teachers who engage students in collaborative writing experiences may help enhance their writing proficiency.

The research on CW is significant but limited. Svenlin and Sorhaug (2023) reviewed and synthesized 107 peer-reviewed scholarly articles on CW. They found that most empirical studies (63%) were conducted in primary schools. The studies analyzed aspects of CW related to peer response, group dynamics, collaborative revision processes, and using digital, web-based platforms where students collectively create, edit, and organize their writing. Svenlin and Sorhaug's research contributed to understanding collaborative writing as a teaching strategy. In an earlier meta-analysis, Graham et al. (2012) found an average weighted effect size of 0.89 for four studies on peer assistance in elementary school writing. More recently, Graham et al. (2022) examined a meta-analysis

involving 77 experimental studies in Turkish schools, revealing an average weighted effect size of 0.92 for peer assistance. CW research is increasing, demonstrating its effectiveness as a teaching method for writing. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of CW and teachers' experiences of the diverse ways it can be applied is essential to exploring its impact on students' writing skills and proficiency.

During collaborative writing, students interact using revision tools that impact their writing proficiency. Green et al. (2021) conducted a study with fifth graders comparing two teaching methods for compare and contrast essays: one integrating SRSD and peer review and another without peer review. Students applied the Re-read, Evaluate, Alter/Delete(REA/D) mnemonic technique for peer revisions with a partner. In contrast, students in the control group practiced the Big Writing program method, which emphasizes foundational writing skills and individual writing voice. Moreover, the students worked individually and received written feedback but did not revise their work. Green et al. found that students engaged in peer revision started with lower language scores but ended with higher average scores than the control group, suggesting that peer revision improved the quality of the compare-and-contrast essays. Mayo et al. (2022) reported findings that differed from Green et al. Students used a paper rubric (CR) or digital comment bubbles (CBB) for collaborative revisions. However, they failed to provide effective constructive feedback or suggestions for improvement due to inadequate training and support in using these tools. Despite this, 92% of CR users and 77.3% of CCB users offered changes. Mayo et al. revealed that students applied revisions at similar rates in both groups: 52.8% for CCB and 51.9% for CR. However, there was

minimal improvement in the quality of the essays after the collaborative strategy. Both Green et al. and Mayo et al.'s studies emphasize the impact of effective collaborative writing and revision strategies among students while also noting the potential limitations when students lack the proper guidance when using these methods.

Students' verbal interactions during collaborative writing influence their writing experiences. Matos (2021) discovered that sixth-grade students improved their argumentative writing by using more evidence-based arguments through verbal dialogue instructional interventions, compared to a group that only wrote essays. Moreover, improving argumentative writing skills transferred to a new writing topic. Matos asserted that collaboration helped students improve their argumentative dialogue, strengthening their position and weakening counterarguments. However, students' goals may change as the discussion progresses. Likewise, Jaeger (2021) explored the co-composing collaborative interactions between third-grade boys working on a collaborative superhero story and reported findings consistent with Matos's findings. However, Jaeger's study was unique in that it focused on a long-term narrative writing project, included analysis of students' texts, audio recordings, and field notes, and involved multiple students' co-composing. Jaeger's findings revealed that students' text was multi-voiced, incorporating negotiations, gestures, sequence, parallel processes, and the group's daily interactions throughout the composing process. Although Matos suggested using explicit instructional interventions integrated with collaborative argumentative writing, Jaeger proposed the importance of student choice and agency during collaborative writing experiences over strict adherence to explicit writing procedures. Both studies highlight the impact of verbal

interactions on students' writing proficiency when collaboratively composing text. However, there may be differences between following explicit writing procedures and allowing students more freedom and choice when verbally collaborating to compose written pieces. The implication is that subtle variations of teachers' explicit instructional strategies over freedom and student choice can impact how students write together.

Collaborative writing experiences can create challenges. Simms (2022) argued that a social approach to writing may not be appropriate for every learning or teaching context. Some students find it challenging and prefer to work on writing tasks independently. In earlier research, Bakhtin (1981) maintained that heteroglossic written and spoken communication that expresses two or more viewpoints in a text might create tension in a collaborative writing task. Jaeger (2021) agreed that there may be pressure to conform to others' way of writing during collaborative writing, thereby suggesting that collaborative writing can hinder the writing process. In collaborative writing, conflicts may occur related to cooperation, compromise, and fairly distributing the workload to ensure each member equally contributes to the writing process. Further research could clarify the transmission and transcription of joint knowledge in writing. Teachers should explore effective strategies to address these challenges.

Technology and Writing Strategies. Researchers have examined the role of technology during collaborative writing activities. Unlike the research conducted by Matos (2021) and Jaeger (2021), which was conducted in physical classrooms, Shimizu and Santos (2022) studied how small groups of third-grade students collaborate in writing using digital tools like Zoom, Google documents and screen-sharing in an online setting

during the Covid 19 Pandemic. Shimizu and Santos discovered that multiple interactions between students using digital spaces enhanced the collaborative writing experience, enabling them to make critical decisions about their narrative choices during composing without the teacher's approval. Shimizu and Santos claimed that students' collaborative writing skills improved from learning metacognitive skills such as listening, cooperating, compromising, and problem-solving. Jaeger agreed, observing students take a metacognitive approach and openly discuss their writing process during co-composition. Like Matos's research on collaborative argumentative writing, Shimizu and Santos's study involved students collaboratively writing a tall tale, differing from Jaeger's approach, which gave students the freedom to choose their writing topics. Technological advances have impacts on how children write. Mayo et al. (2022) asserted that digital resources are becoming more popular due to their ease of use. Shimizu and Santos contend that methods supporting online classroom communities and collaborative writing activities emphasize positive, student-led interaction and parallel powerful writing instruction practice as both call for positive student interactions. Limited literature exists about the impact of technology on collaborative writing, indicating a potentially continuing shift towards student-led, technology-enhanced collaborative writing processes. Teachers' experiences using various digital tools during collaborative writing activities may impact students' writing proficiency by fostering metacognitive skills and providing students with opportunities to collaborate during writing experiences.

Writing Challenges

Elementary school students experience writing challenges that affect their writing skills. Writing, a complex skill, allows children to express ideas using organized written words; therefore, mastering and practicing writing skills is crucial as it can improve a child's thinking abilities and communication skills (Rediani et al., 2023). Still, Rediani et al. proposed that writing literacy is not acquired quickly but takes time. Similarly, Tortorelli et al. (2022) argued that early writing skills predict future reading and writing success, yet they are overlooked in early childhood classrooms, whereas Graham and Alves (2021) agreed that students need to have proficient writing skills to make the most of their education, job opportunities, and civic duties. Elementary school students encounter writing challenges that impact how well they do in school and their future jobs and lives. Early writing development is vital to children's current and future success. Therefore, teachers' experiences with writing strategies designed to address students' writing challenges and improve students' writing proficiency are vital in helping students acquire proficient writing skills.

Cognitive Difficulties

Writing inadequacies may arise from cognitive difficulties. Dunn (2021) proposed that writing challenges may occur from ineffective executive functions, such as paying attention and understanding new information, connecting it to what children already know, and using information to learn and remember during writing processes. Similarly, Oddsdottir et al. (2020) agreed that executive functions help writers stay focused during the writing process, pay attention to metalinguistic and metacognitive

tasks, and engage cognitively to improve writing performance. Problems with cognitive skills can make writing hard, showing how important it is to have proficient executive functions to get better at writing. Similarly, Graham (2022) proposed that children's cognitive resources involve text production, access to stored knowledge in memory, and direct writing processes such as paying attention, using working memory, and self-regulation skills. Still, Graham asserted that cognitive difficulties may cause children to approach writing as a single process, leading them to conclude it before they share all of their knowledge. Teachers who understand the cognitive writing challenges of students may be able to take different instructional approaches and strategies geared toward students' cognitive difficulties. Teachers' experiences with writing strategies that target students' cognitive challenges may help address students' writing deficits and help them develop into more proficient student writers.

Writing and Title 1 Schools

Students in Title 1 schools face writing challenges. Title 1 schools receive federal funds for high-poverty students to help provide extra programs, more prescriptive instructional time, and smaller class sizes to address the achievement gap. School effectiveness researchers address the essential qualities of effective schools to see whether school effectiveness correlates uniquely in schools with varying characteristics of staff, students, and community demographics (Padilla et al., 2020). Schools with a high percentage of affluent students may have similar correlates that influence school effectiveness; however, the same set of correlates may differ for schools with a high rate of socioeconomically disadvantaged students (SED) (Padila et al., 2020), thus suggesting

that Title 1 schools, serving SED students, may require tailored approaches to writing strategies. Graham (2022) observed that SED children in Title 1 schools face difficulties in writing. He found that these students tended to start opinion essays with yes or no, wrote whatever they thought without planning, and ended their writing abruptly without an effective conclusion. Likewise, SED children did no advanced planning. Ray et al. (2023) suggested that children from lower-income backgrounds do not face an achievement gap but rather a gap in opportunities, making it difficult for them to meet academic writing expectations in schools. Padilla et al., Graham, and Ray et al. discovered that SED children in Title 1 schools face more writing challenges than their peers, which can be attributed to limited opportunities rather than innate writing deficiencies. Thus, teachers' experiences in understanding the context of poverty and situational challenges of Title 1 schools may allow them to tailor their instructional writing strategies to address the unique challenges of students in Title 1 schools.

Implications

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences with using the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools in the local setting. The local school district recently adopted the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company reading program (HMH Into Reading), which has a supplemental writing curriculum. The HMH reading and writing may offer a structured approach to improving writing proficiency among students by integrating reading and

writing, exposing them to various genres, and providing a clear writing process framework.

However, the effectiveness of the HMH reading and writing curriculum depends on proper implementation, teacher training, and the ability to meet diverse student needs. Challenges include a potential focus on mechanics over creativity, limited feedback, and the risk of a one-size-fits-all approach. Kallitsoglou and Mahmud (2023) asserted that addressing the complexity of writing requires integrating evidence-based practices (EBP) with teachers' best knowledge approaches gained from their experiences as teachers and learners. To maximize the HMH program's impact, it is essential to invest in professional development, encourage differentiated instruction, foster meaningful feedback, and monitor student progress regularly. Considering third-grade English Language Arts teachers' writing experiences, both with and without the supplemental HMH writing curriculum, may lead to developing additional writing strategies.

Summary

In Section 1, I discussed the problem in the local setting that the majority of the third-grade students are not meeting minimum proficiency or higher on the opinion and informational writing portions of the annual Georgia Milestones Assessment (GMAS), and there is little information about the specific strategies teachers use to help students achieve mastery of opinion and informational writing on the assessment. I described the purpose of the study, which was to explore Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences with using writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools in

the local setting. Furthermore, I discussed the conceptual framework of this study through Vygotsky's social-constructivist approach within sociocultural theory (1978), emphasizing that teaching and learning are social processes. In section 1, I synthesized and reviewed recent literature on elementary writing instruction to identify a gap in how third-grade English Language Arts teachers approach writing instruction, which my study addressed.

Section 2 detailed the study's methodology, including the research design and approach, potential participants, data collection methods, and data analysis. Additionally, I addressed the steps I implemented to protect the well-being of my participants. I examined my role as a researcher and how positionality was carefully considered to ensure I was appropriately situated within the study context and able to manage any biases effectively. In Section 3, I outlined and described the project, including the literature review generated from the data analysis. In Section 4, I described the project's strengths and limitations, discussed its potential for impacting positive social change, and offered recommendations for practice and future research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The systematic approach I used to conduct my research was a basic qualitative study with semistructured interviews. Wilson and Anagnostopoulos (2021) stated that qualitative research is a social phenomenon that provides understanding from people's perspectives in specific settings. Additionally, the complexity of human social nature is captured through the study and collection of interviews, conversations, and recordings that reflect authentic points of view, resulting in unique and interesting findings rather than generalized observations (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Prescriptive, individual experiences bring insights and knowledge to the researcher. Moreover, Ravitch and Carl contend that qualitative research is a common approach in educational research. Qualitative methodology aligned with my problem, purpose, and research question. This approach allowed me to immerse myself in the school environment and actively learn about Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences of the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the opinion and informational portions of the Georgia Milestones Assessment in a rural school district in central Georgia. I used a basic qualitative design (Creswell & Creswell, 2022) with a purposive referral sampling of participants since I was specifically interested in Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences and strategies of effective writing from the local district. I chose this sample population because it is the first-year students who take the annually mandated Georgia Milestones Assessment are assessed on extended writing skills. A basic qualitative study allowed me to understand Title 1 third-

grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences of writing instruction by examining their practices and strategies in teaching writing. A purposive sample involved pursuing participants I was interested in, specifically, Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers from the local district and their experiences of the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the opinion and informational portions of the Georgia Milestones Assessment.

Unsuitable Research Designs

A quantitative research design was not suitable for this study. Quantitative research that organizes, summarizes, and communicates numerical data to answer research questions and test theories (Frankfort et al., 2021) would not be appropriate for this study because I did not analyze and interpret numerical data. Rather, I was interested in qualitative inquiry, which allowed me to understand the complexity and subjectivity of people's lived experiences and values (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Therefore, a qualitative design aligned better with the goals of my study.

Various qualitative research designs were not appropriate for this study. Grounded theory research, a qualitative approach that goes beyond description to construct a theory about a particular phenomenon (Baker et al., 2023), did not suit my study because I did not seek to develop theories, concepts, or ideas from collected data. Narrative research, which focused on understanding human experiences through participants' lived stories (Malik & Kunhke, 2020), was unsuitable for my study because I did not document teachers' life stories but their experiences with writing strategies. Similarly, ethnography, involving researchers immersing themselves in the research

context to understand the perspectives of the sample population within a natural environment (Yanik, 2024), would not be appropriate for my study because I did not immerse myself in and study a particular cultural group. Instead, I explored the experiences of third-grade teachers to get their insights about the topic of interest. Case study research involves studying an in-depth case or multiple cases within real-world contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) using data sources such as direct observations, interviews, focus groups, documents, and artifacts. My study was unsuitable for a case study because I used interviews to collect data without incorporating other sources. Therefore, a case study was rejected for this study.

Storing and Organizing Data

I considered how I would organize and store the data I collected. Saldana (2021) asserted that the data and multiple generated codes will need a tightly organized framework for qualitative analysis. Therefore, I organized and stored the research data in files and password-protected all devices and drives. (Walden University Institutional Review Board, n.d.). I used a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet with color-coded tabs for each participant, containing interview transcripts and assigned codes that were generated. Dating, color-coding, labeling incoming data, and keeping multiple digital and hard copies as backups were crucial (Saldana, 2021). Thus, keeping my research data organized and safe by following specific steps such as labeling files, using passwords, and keeping backups helped ensure that my study was reliable and trustworthy.

Coding Procedures

Coding helped me assign meaning to the data and assisted in interpreting and analyzing the data into In vivo, descriptive, concept, and pattern code categories and themes. Saldana (2021) posited that creating codes in qualitative data analysis helps researchers construct interpretations, giving meaning to repetitive patterns, categories, themes, theory building, and other analytic processes. Similarly, Saldana and Omasta (2018) revealed that human interactions involve repetitive action patterns and consistencies. Therefore, coding helped confirm the description of people's routines, rituals, roles, and relationships. Coding is fundamental in qualitative research in understanding and interpreting data.

I explored the data inductively, creating codes as I reviewed the data (Saldana, 2021). I used In Vivo Codes to capture participants' exact words and descriptive codes, which provide one-word summaries of each transcript excerpt. Concept codes offered short phrases that captured broader meanings beyond single items (Saldana, 2021), while pattern coding allowed me to identify patterns and similarities across participants. Since I interviewed third-grade teachers from various schools about their writing strategy experiences, attribute, and magnitude coding were appropriate. Codes, categories, and themes are essential parts of data analysis research. I summarized and analyzed the data using an Excel coding document (Walden, 2022). Using the spreadsheet assisted me in establishing relationships between the data (Appendix D). The synthesis of categories and analytic synthesis of emergent themes helped me draw conclusions that helped me

answer my research question (Appendix E). The data were displayed on a table or graphic for easy readability.

Participants

The interview participants were chosen using purposive sampling since I was specifically interested in Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers' experiences and strategies of effective writing from the local district. Ravitch and Carl (2021) asserted that qualitative researchers use purposive sampling to select individuals based on their unique ability to answer a study's research questions. Given my interest in the experiences of third-grade writing teachers using writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment (GMAS), purposive sampling was appropriate. I was limited to gathering a sample number of teachers from fifteen Title 1 schools. Since I needed 10-12 participants, and feasibly, only a small number of participants were interested in participating in my study, I considered how to ensure an appropriate sample size. The participant third-grade teacher pool in the local district was approximately 70 teachers. However, I needed to determine whether the Title 1 third-grade teachers at the local elementary schools were self-contained or departmentalized, which likely affected my participant pool even further. I considered these issues and constraints when I recruited participants for my study.

Procedures for Recruiting Participants

Recruitment of participants began in July 2024 and ended in August 2024. After IRB approval, I completed the research application for the local school district to conduct a study. An email was sent through the local school system's professional network to

potential candidates requesting their participation in the study, along with an informed consent form. The email only included key information about the study and a time frame for data collection. Additionally, I provided a $35 Amazon gift card for each participant as a token of appreciation for their time. I sent a follow-up email to participants who had not responded 1 week later. Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling. I did not recruit participants from the school where I am employed.

Demographics

Interview questions helped determine the participants' educational background (Table 1). Participants were nine third-grade English Language Arts teachers and one K-3 Writing Teacher from the local Title 1 elementary schools labeled T1 through T10. All 10 female teachers were full-time employees in the local district. The teachers had varying levels of experience and education in teaching third grade. Their teaching experience ranges from 2 to 25 years, with most having between 3 and 12 years of experience, specifically in third grade.

Among the participants, eight teachers held master's degrees, and three had specialist degrees. In addition to early childhood education specializations, three teachers held specialized degrees in instructional technology, and one had a degree in business administration. The teacher participants had various endorsements and certifications, including educational leadership, gifted education, science, math endorsement, STEM, and Orton Gillingham training. As shown in the following table, the group represented a range of experiences with writing instructional strategies.

Table 1

Educational Backgrounds of Participants

Teacher	Years Taught	Highest Degree	Educational Endorsements
T1	12	Master's Degree	Early Childhood
T2	18	Specialist's Degree	Master's in media technology
T3	25	Bachelor's Degree	
T4	3	Master's Degree	Tier 1 Educational Leadership
T5	10	Master's Degree	Early Childhood
T6	5	Master's Degree	Business Administration
T7	10	Master's Degree	Gifted Education
T8	9	Specialist's Degree	K-5 Science K-5 Math
T9	3	Master's Degree	STEM Certified Orton Gillingham
T10	3	Bachelor's Degree	

Researcher-Participant Relationship

Establishing a researcher-participant working relationship was crucial. During the interviews, I warmly greeted my participants, reiterated the purpose of the study, and emphasized the significance of their input. Active listening and genuine concern for participant's experiences were crucial (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Similarly, Khalil and Cowie (2020) reported that participants perceived the researcher as attentive and understanding when observing the researcher's facial expressions and nonverbal cues. Moreover, Khalil and Cowie revealed that participants formed a connection when observing the researcher's nonverbal feedback. Building rapport, establishing a reciprocal relationship, and asking effective questions helped me gather rich, detailed, unique experiences from the participants in a courteous but professional way.

Protecting Participants

I implemented measures to protect participants' rights, including confidentiality, informed consent, and preventing harm. Establishing rapport helped support respectful engagement throughout the interview process. Building connections with participants was an essential multifaceted process at the core of qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In contrast, creating pressure or coercion and compromising confidentiality would have demonstrated beneficence, causing harm to participants. Ravitch and Carl asserted that it would be crucial to phrase interview questions nonjudgmentally and avoid making participants feel marginalized or distressed. I maintained a positive and reflective tone and was aware of my assumptions and biases about writing strategies during the interview.

Similarly, other ethical concerns I noted included considering research boundaries, whether research choices were appropriate personally and contextually (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) and obtaining informed consent for interviews. Thinking about reciprocity more fundamentally, inviting my participants to interpret the data through member checking, and contributing directly to data analysis helped build trust and a reciprocal research relationship. I ensured transparency throughout all aspects of the study with my participants, including the purpose of the research, their role, confidentiality and anonymity, and the data collection methods processes. Therefore, it was essential to maintain thoughtfulness, respect, reciprocity, engagement, and relationship nurturing with my participants before, during, and after the research study to help make my study ethically sound.

Data Collection

Semistructured Interviews

I designed the instruments to collect the data in the qualitative inquiry. I used semistructured interviews with 10 third-grade teachers from the local district's Title 1 schools for my planned research design. Interviews provided deep, rich, individualized, and contextualized data that focused on capturing insights into an individual's lived experiences about phenomena (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Specifically, focusing on third-grade teachers' experiences of writing strategies provided contextual insights into current writing strategies designed for third-grade students in the local Title 1 schools. Additionally, conducting semistructured interviews allowed me to plan questions but with the option to use probes to gather deeper insights (Burkholder et al., 2020). Gathering additional data that diverted from the originally planned questions provided additional discoveries that could not be considered from the initial questions. Semistructured interviews helped me collect dynamic and emergent data rather than fixed rigid information and helped provide reciprocal communication, assisting me and the participant in constructing a meaningful narrative.

The Interview Process

Effective interviews depend on how well the researcher prepares beforehand (Harerimana et al., 2024). Therefore, it was essential to acquire skills, choose methods, and create interview protocols with questions that align with the research purpose (Shoozan & Maslawati, 2024). Shoozan and Maslawati argued that improving the interview protocol helps ensure accuracy and relevance and is crucial for maintaining the

credibility and quality of collected data. Applying the Interview Protocol Refinement (IRP) Framework (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) involved aligning my interview questions with my research questions, fostering inquiry-based conversation with my participants, seeking feedback on the interview protocol from experts, and piloting the interview protocol. Shoozan and Maslawati (2024) asserted that receiving feedback involves having a colleague review the interview plan to check its structure, length, writing style, and clarity. Marcus et al. (2023) reported that researchers felt better prepared and more confident in their interviewing skills after completing a mock interview. Using Castillo-Montoya's IRP framework beforehand helped strengthen the quality and trustworthiness of my interview protocol.

Interview Protocol

An interview protocol helped me stay focused and organized during the interview process. Building rapport and trust and asking questions that helped provide deep, rich, individualized, and contextualized data was crucial (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Similarly, Leong and Said (2024) agreed that interview protocols guide researchers in gathering rich, relevant data to understand participants' insights and answer research questions effectively. Leong and Said, asserted that questions are written in an open-ended, non-judgmental manner. A series of main questions helped guide the interview and permitted me to consider the codes and themes of Title 1 third-grade teachers' experiences using writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency. If responses were unclear, question strategies helped. The protocol's follow-up questions helped me search deeper into the participants' experiences, while probing questions helped me gather more

in-depth information. While the interview guide outlined a suggested order for the questions, probes led to adjustments (Leong & Said, 2024). Probing questions were based on the participant's initial responses and were not used with every participant or for every question. Leong and Said contended that an interview protocol serves as a tool for guiding conversations on a particular topic during the interview process. Questions in the guide helped me to search deeper into the participants' experiences, encouraging more clarity, detail, and depth. Building rapport, establishing a reciprocal relationship, and asking effective questions helped me gather rich, detailed, unique experiences from the participants.

Analytic Memos

Interviews and analytic memos are effective qualitative data collection methods. They enable dynamic and emergent data collection, foster critical thinking, and provide researchers with a comprehensive understanding of people and phenomena (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Whereas interviews provide reciprocal communication, assisting the participant and interviewer in constructing a meaningful story, analytic memos permit the researcher to note thoughts, impressions, personal reflection, or what is going through the researcher's mind (Saldana, 2021). Writing memos during the interviews helped ensure that my thought processes about the research were not lost but captured in written form, helping me to personally reflect and expand upon the interview data. Unlike interviews, analytical memos are one-sided, offering insights only known to the researcher and helped me confront challenges and assumptions during data collection. However, analytic

memos are only helpful if they can be interpreted and analyzed in ways that contribute to the data analysis.

Videoconferencing and Phone Interviews

I used Google Meets videoconferencing and phone interviews with 10 participants to record data. Rahma et al. (2021) asserted that researchers select video conferencing interviews to accommodate various factors, such as overcoming time and space constraints, cutting travel costs, and involving international participants. Still, Thunberg and Arnell (2022) noted that while digital interviews can improve long-distance participation and may be cost-effective, technical issues can impact interview quality, and limited visual cues may create challenges as the camera captures only the participants' upper body. Therefore, I needed to consider the benefits and limitations of video conferencing during my research. Likewise, phone interviews provided an alternative data collection method when video-conferencing was not possible. Rev Recording services transcribed the recorded data. Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated that transcripts of interviews produce real-time data and are helpful for accurate and rigorous data analysis. Transcribing the interview from an oral to a written form permitted me to closely analyze the participants' responses about writing strategies and the support participants needed to better implement writing strategies for third-grade students. Each participant was emailed a copy of the interview transcript to review and make corrections. After the initial transcripts were shared with participants and returned to me, I used the revised transcripts to create interpretative summaries. I shared my feedback from the interview through a process known as member checking. Member checking is a vital instrument in qualitative

research that involves participants' approval of data accuracy (Sahakyan, 2023). Through member checking, both the researcher and the participants agreed that the data was accurate.

Role of the Researcher

Positionality was a critical consideration during my research study. Since I was an active participant in acquiring knowledge about teachers' experiences with writing instruction, a topic that I am passionate about, it was essential that I positioned myself in a neutral stance and remained unbiased when interacting with participants so I would not sway perceptions. To maintain objectivity, I used analytic memos to document my thoughts and potential biases, used a structured interview protocol with open-ended questions to ensure consistency, and conducted member checks by sharing transcripts with participants to verify the data. Likewise, my participants may have had preconceived notions of my abilities as a writing teacher, making them less receptive to sharing authentically. Burkholder et al. (2020) asserted that researchers are inherently influenced by their personal experiences, memories, and biases that can unconsciously shape their interpretation of data. Therefore, I considered how I would manage these biases. Since the researcher is the primary instrument, Ravitch and Carl (2021) contended that it is an ethical imperative to consider the role of the researcher throughout all phases of the research process. Being aware of and managing biases and considering possible solutions to any limitations or barriers helped strengthen my study. Research is trustworthy when the researcher can establish that the findings are authentic to participants' experiences, thus adding to the quality and rigor of a study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Addressing biases,

limitations, and barriers enhanced my study's trustworthiness by improving its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Data Analysis Results

Qualitative research methods help explore people's experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena through in-depth analysis of interviews, observations, and transcribed written content (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The data was carefully examined to understand its deeper meaning (Ivey, 2022). I analyzed the context of the data to find meaningful patterns and insights. I reviewed the problem that in the local educational setting, there is little information about the specific strategies teachers use to help students achieve mastery of opinion and informational writing on the annually mandated Georgia Milestones Assessment in Title 1 elementary schools. This led me to develop the question: What are Title 1 English Language Arts third-grade teachers' experiences using the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment? Data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 third-grade English Language Arts teachers. In the first coding cycle, In Vivo, descriptive and concept coding methods were used. During the second cycle, patterns and similarities across participants were analyzed, resulting in five main themes regarding teachers' experiences with writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment. Themes were revealed by connecting multiple concepts and considering how they might go together. However, themes only emerged with the researcher as the primary instrument for actively constructing and developing them (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Thus, researchers played a

crucial role in interpreting and synthesizing the data into meaningful patterns. The research question was as follows: What are Title 1 English Language Arts third-grade teachers' experiences using the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment? The following themes emerged.

Table 2

Themes Identified from Data Analysis for the Research Question

Research Question	Themes
What are Title 1 English Language Arts third-grade teachers' experiences using the writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment?	70% of teachers experience difficulties with writing strategies caused by students' lack of foundational writing skills. 50% of teachers experience effective writing strategies. 60% of teachers experience challenges in teaching writing strategies. 50% of teachers shared experiences with authentic writing and student engagement. 60% of teachers need effective professional development experience in writing instruction.

Theme 1: Teachers Experience Difficulties with Writing Strategies Caused By Third-Grade Students' Lack of Foundational Writing Skills

Title 1 English Language Arts third-grade teachers experienced difficulties teaching essay writing strategies because students lacked foundational writing skills. Data analysis revealed descriptive and concept codes highlighting foundational skill deficits, including challenges with basic sentence construction and skill gaps from earlier grades. These codes identified patterns and subthemes, such as gaps in sentence structure and grammar and a lack of consistent writing curriculum across grade levels. Chandler and Sayeski (2024) emphasized that mastering sentence construction is crucial in early grades. Similarly, Datchuk et al. (2021) found that elementary school is a pivotal time for

developing key writing skills, including spelling, sentence construction, grammar, and usage. Focusing on sentence construction and foundational writing skills during elementary school is crucial, as these skills are critical for students' overall writing development and future academic success.

Gaps in Sentence Structure and Grammar. Seven third-grade teachers (T1, T2, T5, T6, T8, T9, T10), representing 70% of the participants, had concerns about students' lack of basic writing skills. Insufficient knowledge of the basics caused students to struggle with more complex tasks such as essay writing. Third-grade teacher T1 revealed, "I have to always go back and reteach the basics of what is a noun. What's an adjective? adverb? and then how do we put that into a sentence because third graders have not truly grasped it and couldn't apply it in their writing." Similarly, Third-grade teacher T8 stated, "Because if you can't write a sentence, how are you going to write an essay? If you can't write a sentence, how are you going to write a paragraph? Carvalhais et al. (2021) noted that writing a text requires sentence-level abilities as children must convert their ideas into sentences, while Maltepe (2022) suggested that grammar instruction uses specific instructional methods to help students understand the phonetics, stylistic, and sentence structures of the language. Local third-grade teachers experienced challenges bridging the gap between basic grammar and sentence structure skills and complex writing tasks, emphasizing the need for targeted instruction in sentence construction and grammar to help students advance to essay writing.

Inconsistency in Writing Curriculum across Grade Levels. Local third-grade teachers experienced sharp shifts in expectations between second and third-grade writing

skills. A spiraling curriculum enables teachers to build on students' previous knowledge and skills, revisiting and exploring the same topics in greater depth (Falk & McNamara, 2018). Similarly, Tortorelli et al. (2022) asserted that "because teachers focus on standards for their students' age group, it is essential for the standards to be arranged in a sequence that helps students build the skills needed for current and future performance. Still, interview participants felt that because extended essay writing skills are not assessed in the earlier grades, less emphasis was placed on teaching the writing process or essay writing at that level.

Third-grade teacher T5 commented that "a big challenge is that [writing] structure has not been taught… [the] structure is not as rigorous or as explicit in k-2, and it's all a huge shock to them [third graders]." Similarly, Third-grade teacher T6 asserted that "students are struggling with sentence structure and things like that, and then you're jumping into third grade, and you go from some little components to full information and opinion essays." Likewise, Third-grade teacher T10 explained that there have been "year-to-year variations [in writing instruction] that have led to inconsistencies in student preparedness." Interview excerpts revealed that local third-grade teachers are concerned about the lack of emphasis on essay writing and the writing process in earlier grades, and inconsistencies in writing instruction, which leave students unprepared for the more demanding writing activities they encounter in third grade.

In summary, Title 1 English Language Arts third-grade teachers experience challenges in teaching writing because students lack foundational skills in sentence construction and grammar, which hindered their ability to tackle more complex writing

tasks like essay writing. Teachers pointed out inconsistencies in the writing curriculum across grade levels, asserting that the sudden increase in expectations from second to third grade leaves many students unprepared. To bridge this gap, there is a need for targeted instruction to teach foundational writing skills to ensure students are prepared for the demands of essay writing in third grade and beyond.

Theme 2: Teachers Experience Effective Strategies for Teaching Writing to Third-Graders

Title 1 third-grade English language Arts teachers shared their experiences with various strategies and approaches they have found most effective in their classrooms. The data revealed varied approaches to writing instruction, including structured writing techniques, visual organizational tools, and consistent writing practice routines. Samosa et al. (2021) argued that writing involves generating ideas and effectively composing the various elements of writing, thus suggesting the importance of effective writing strategies that help students create text. Specifically, teachers believed that their experiences using the color writing technique in conjunction with whole-brain teaching, teacher modeling and scaffolding, and daily writing practices created a positive and productive writing environment for third-grade students.

Experiences with Color Writing. Teachers reported their experiences using color writing, a multi-sensory, whole-brain teaching technique that starts with oral writing and then moves into written form. Aulina et al. (2024) found that whole-brain teaching is a pedagogical approach designed to enhance children's cognitive abilities by improving concentration, quick and accurate thinking, and effective execution of

instructions. Whole-brain teaching involves activating various portions of the brain during learning to help keep students active and engaged (Biffle, 2021). During color writing, children first speak sentences and paragraphs before writing them, engaging in the brain's kinesthetic, visual, and auditory areas. Thus, oral writing precedes and facilitates physical writing (Biffle, 2021). During color writing, children transition to physical writing using color-coded patterns that help them effectively organize and write essays.

Five third-grade teachers (T2, T3, T4, T5, T10), representing 50% of the participants, shared positive experiences with color writing, whereas one teacher (T9) expressed skepticism. Third-grade teacher T7 described color writing as a "total game changer," while third-grade teacher T6 commented, "Color writing made it easier; students began to soar." Similarly, third-grade teacher T5 maintained that "I've never had as many students at the end of third grade be able to write a five-paragraph essay. It's huge." The positive feedback from most teachers suggested that color writing had significantly improved students' writing skills. Cameron et al. (2020) demonstrated that multi-sensory learning environments with visual stimuli help significantly improve children's attention and concentration. Using visual cues in color writing helped organize and structure essays and supported better engagement for children during the writing process.

Still, there were discrepant cases, and not all teacher participants found the color writing technique effective. Third-grade teacher T9 clarified, "We spent a lot of time verbally writing before putting pen to paper, but we didn't see that transfer once they

started writing." She continued, "When we did start writing, I felt it was very dry and, I guess, very formulated." Overall, participants' experiences with the effectiveness of color writing in conjunction with whole-brain teaching techniques may vary depending on the teacher, students, and implementation.

Experiences With Modeling and Scaffolding. Third-grade teachers shared their experiences modeling writing strategies and scaffolding instruction for their students. Salas et al. (2023) explained that explicit instructional strategies and scaffolding are critical in helping students learn to write. Similarly, Utthavudhikorn and Soontornwipast (2024) highlighted that modeling is a form of scaffolding in which teachers share their thoughts or ideas, providing examples for students to follow and incorporate into their learning, thus emphasizing the importance of teacher modeling explicit instructional strategies to teach students how to write.

Six third-grade teachers (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T8), representing 60% of the participants, mentioned using modeling and scaffolding strategies to teach writing to third graders. Third-grade teacher T3 stated, "When we're doing opinion, I do a lot of just modeling. Okay, this is, you know, how you do it." Likewise, T4 asserted that "I would teach them again, just the, I Do, We Do, You Do, showing them what a full essay should be." Meanwhile, T8 commented, "I do a lot of modeling. And sometimes I even pull small groups to scaffold and give a really detailed, guided writing session to those who, especially my lower kids who, don't exactly know how to write sentences and things of that nature." The third-grade teachers felt it was essential to provide clear, structured support to help students develop their writing skills. Modeling and scaffolding

approaches show clear examples and hands-on support that are key to teaching writing effectively.

Modeling and scaffolding align with a socio-constructive conceptual framework. The social-constructivist perspective proposes that writing well requires that students gain knowledge through explicit instruction, collaboration, mentoring, and feedback from a more knowledgeable person (Vygotsky, 1978). Mercadal (2021) argued that adults or more experienced peers offer support and guidance, serving as role models for the child in the learning process. During teacher modeling, teachers model the writing process and provide a concrete example of effective writing. Additionally, during scaffolding, teachers support children within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where the learner can accomplish a task with teacher assistance (Vygotsky, 1989). Collaborative dialogues between teachers and children lead to children internalizing information to support learning. Facilitating instructional strategies like teacher modeling and scaffolding helps children learn to write proficiently.

Experiences with Daily Writing Practices. Five of the ten participants (T2, T4, T5, T7, T9), representing 50% of the participants, emphasized the importance of daily or frequent writing practices. Third-grade teacher T5 explained, “So I have a timer, and especially during that first week of modeling and practicing together, I make sure to dedicate 25 minutes [for writing] out of my day.” Similarly, T7.” emphasized a strong belief in the importance of daily writing practice. “I think providing them with simple graphic organizers that they can understand, and then also, I feel like they have to write every single day. That was my thing; we might be writing in different ways, like journal

writing as opposed to an essay, but we're writing every single day that we're in class." Third-grade teacher T2 indicated that "every child in my class has a notebook for science and social studies where they do write every day.", while T9 commented, "I think they should be writing more often." The responses from the third-grade teachers revealed a critical emphasis on the value of consistent writing practice. The teachers' use of tools like timers, graphic organizers, and writing notebooks indicated that teachers strived to use structured strategies to reinforce writing skills through daily routines.

Ray et al. (2023) argued that most teachers do not devote enough time to writing despite its complexity requiring extensive, sustained instruction and practice, while Dunn (2021) found that regularly reading and analyzing texts boosts students' confidence in drafting essays of their work.s Despite half of the third-grade teachers recognizing the need for consistent writing instruction and practice, the implementation of writing practices varies, demonstrating the challenge of dedicating sufficient time to writing in the classroom.

In summary, theme two revealed teachers' experiences with effective writing strategies for teaching writing to third graders. The teacher participants found that multi-sensory strategies such as color writing and whole-brain teaching can engage students and help with writing organization. However, opinions on its effectiveness varied amongst the teachers. Modeling, scaffolding, and daily writing practice were essential to several teachers, although these routines varied across classrooms. The data suggested that while effective strategies exist, the challenge is dedicating time and resources to writing instruction.

Theme 3: Teachers Experience Challenges Teaching Effective Writing Strategies

Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers discussed their experiences with challenges teaching writing to third graders. Early writing skills are strong predictors of future reading and writing success, but they are often overlooked in early childhood classrooms (Tortorelli et al., 2022). The data analysis revealed key issues, including time constraints, significant skill gaps between second and third grade, and the impact of standardized testing. These challenges were categorized into descriptive and concept codes, which led to pattern codes and subthemes. Emerging patterns included the need for a systemic approach to writing education, test-driven student disengagement, and tension between curriculum demands and available instructional time.

Systemic Approach Experiences to Writing Education. Teacher participants expressed concerns about the inconsistency of shared writing curriculum goals within the local school system district and across district schools and grade levels. Systemic change refers to a fundamental school system transformation that affects all levels, including states, local districts, and schools, impacting every student and staff member to achieve common educational objectives (Babajide & Smith, 2022). Likewise, Babajide and Smith argued that teachers play a crucial role in systemic school change, making their perspectives essential. Systemic change to writing instruction suggests fixing approaches to teaching writing across all levels to align with common educational writing goals. Similarly, teachers are instrumental in ensuring systemic changes are practical and effective in the classroom.

Experiences with Vertical Alignment of District Writing Curriculum. Five third-grade teachers (T1, T3, T5, T6, T8), representing 50% of the participants, highlighted the need for systemic change within the local district to improve the vertical alignment of writing curricula across different grade levels to ensure a more cohesive and continuous progression in writing instruction. Varying views on early writing development in preschool and early elementary settings can lead to confusion about the writing process, age-appropriate expectations, and learning experiences needed to support children's writing development (Tortorelli et al., 2022). The lack of consensus on early writing development led to inconsistencies in instruction and expectations and may hinder children's progress, thus highlighting the need for clear, developmentally appropriate guidelines.

Third-grade teacher T1 asserted, "Okay if you ask a school as a whole, the number one challenge would be the idea of a set writing curriculum." Similarly, T3 argued, "First of all, we need to come up with an overall curriculum as a county. Yes, I know we have it in our scope and sequence, but you have teachers who do not know how to teach writing. So, we've got to find something that works." T3 explicitly called out for a county-wide curriculum, highlighting that current resources are insufficient and that many teachers struggle to teach writing. Likewise, third-grade teacher T5 stated, "I actually took a highlighter, and I highlighted the second-grade writing standards and what was expected of them. And then I went to our [third grade] standards and highlighted our writing standards, and I can tell you there was a whole lot more highlighted on our third-grade standards than second-grade standards." Third-grade teacher T5 observed the need

for spiraling skills and expectations across grade levels, a vital aspect of a systemic approach.

Meanwhile, participant T2 mentioned the use of inconsistent resources. “We had [writing] graphic organizers that everybody was supposed to be using, but everybody wasn’t using them.” Third-grade teacher T8 commented, “I feel like there should be one thing in place that everybody is held accountable for doing. I think things should be scaffolded from kindergarten to fifth grade, beginning in kindergarten with the ideas and just moving from there.” Third-grade teacher T8’s comments suggest a consistent writing plan from kindergarten to fifth grade so that all teachers follow the same approach and students gradually improve their writing skills.

The participants’ thoughts highlighted a critical need for improved vertical alignment in the local school district’s writing curriculum to ensure consistent and cohesive instruction across grade levels. Babajide and Smith (2022) argued that for systemic change to be effective, all components of a school system- including employers, teachers, students, parents, the community, and other stakeholders- must be involved. The participants’ comments indicated the lack of a unified, effective writing program and the need for a structured, scaffolded approach from kindergarten through fifth grade.

Experiences with Test-Driven Disengagement. Title 1 third-grade teachers expressed concerns that a test-driven writing curriculum negatively impacts students’ willingness to engage in writing. Teachers are required to follow the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) during writing instruction. The English Language Arts (ELA) standards emphasize that students share knowledge and higher-order thinking processes

through writing. Students are evaluated on writing standards during the annual Georgia Milestones State Assessment. (GMAS). Complex GMAS writing milestones cause teachers to think there is a single path and end to writing improvement rather than recognizing that writing progress does not always follow a linear and forward trajectory (Graham, 2022), while students may have greater language and writing abilities than current curriculums and CCSS assessments recognize (Nagrosky & Grullon, 2020). The CCSS and GMAS may not effectively assess students' writing skills and may contribute to their disengagement from writing.

Six third-grade teachers (T1, T3, T5, T6, T7, T9), representing 60%, noted that standardized testing harms students' attitudes toward writing and affects the quality of writing instruction. Third-grade teacher T9 stated, "I think because of testing, it [writing] becomes so dry and boring, and the kids hate it." Likewise, third-grade teacher T3 argued, "I think it's very unfair. Like I said before, you've got kids coming from different backgrounds. You know, we have to differentiate in our classrooms all the time. But, yeah, we make these babies take the same test and expect the same thing." The teachers' comments revealed concerns that standardized testing hindered students' enthusiasm for writing and failed to account for the diversity of students' needs. As a result, standardized testing conflicted with the differentiated instruction required in the classroom, leading to a disconnect between educational writing practices and assessment methods.

Similarly, third-grade teachers observed that a sudden increase in developmentally inappropriate rigor to prepare students for state assessments led to students' disengagement from the writing process. Third-grade teacher T7 commented, "I

personally do not feel like third graders should have to type an extended essay response for the Georgia Milestones Assessment (GMAS). I do not feel like that is age-appropriate for them." Likewise, T5 asserted, "The rigor went through the roof, and it was only three weeks before testing. So personally, I felt like we waited too long to do that, and it was very hard." At the same time, T9 argued, "Once we got to that test prep, it was just way harder than anything they had ever done." The teachers' comments revealed a deep concern about the disconnect between standardized testing requirements and the developmental readiness of third-grade students. Teacher participants expressed frustration with how to add rigor to writing strategies without affecting students' enthusiasm for writing. The teachers highlighted the conflict between the need to prepare students for standardized tests and the adverse effects test preparation had on students' engagement and the quality of writing.

Experiences with Time Curriculum Tension. Title 1 Third-grade teachers expressed significant concerns about their experiences with the time constraints they face when teaching writing strategies. Ryan et al. (2021) proposed that writing demands high mental effort from children and takes time to improve. Similarly, Graham (2022) agreed that children improve their writing skills as they write more, thus emphasizing the importance of teachers providing consistent practice for skill improvement.

Six third-grade teachers (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T9), representing 60% of the participants, felt they had inadequate time teaching writing strategies to third-grade students. Third-grade teacher T5 asserted, "Time is a huge obstacle, of course." indicating insufficient time to cover all the required writing curriculum. Similarly, third-

grade teacher T3 argued, “I just feel like we have so much on our plate that we have to do in the ELA section that we are not doing anything well. It’s just a splatter of information, and we hope that the kids, you know, get enough practice and they get it.” revealing that teachers felt overwhelmed by the amount of expected content to cover. Likewise, third-grade teachers discussed their experiences with unrealistic time expectations, such as when T1 commented, “There was one program that specified that we were supposed to have 60 minutes for writing, and that was never going to happen, and to do this program with fidelity.” Third-grade teacher T6 was concerned that the curriculum pacing may not be appropriate, stating, “It’s a lot at one time and for teachers and students. I mean, I don’t know why Georgia feels like it [writing] has to all be thrown at them in third grade.” The third-grade teachers expressed frustration over the unrealistic expectations for covering writing content within a limited time, thus suggesting the need to adjust the curriculum to align more realistically with the time available for writing instruction, allowing teachers and students to engage in more meaningful and effective writing strategies

In summary, Title 1 third-grade teachers experienced significant challenges such as unrealistic curriculum expectations, time constraints, standardized testing pressures, and a lack of cohesive writing instruction across grade levels. The issues led to student disengagement and affected the quality of writing education. The data analysis revealed the need for local systemic changes that align practical, developmentally appropriate instructional writing strategies for children across all grade levels in the local school district.

Theme 4: Teachers' Experiences With Authentic Writing and Student Engagement

Title 1 third-grade English Language Arts teachers shared experiences with authentic writing and student engagement. Authentic writing increases children's motivation to write. Ryan et al. (2021) suggested that using multiple writing formats linked to real-life experiences engages students, whereas Chen et al. (2022) found that poor writing performance and low motivation to write come from a lack of authentic writing experiences. The data analysis revealed descriptive and concept codes such as real-world learning, virtual field trips, and student-centered writing. These codes identified patterns and subthemes, such as authentic engagement and fostering student ownership of writing.

Authentic Engagement Experiences. Five third-grade teachers (T2, T4, T5, T7, T9), representing 50% of the participants, discussed student engagement and authentic writing skills. Fellowes (2021) argued that giving students an authentic audience and purpose is an effective teaching strategy. Third-grade teacher T2 explained, "We go, and we write about, either outside or inside, what you notice, what you wonder, what do you want to know?" suggesting that children's surroundings engage children by offering writing opportunities connected to real-world experiences and personal curiosity. Similarly, T6 maintained, "Virtual opportunities are huge and give them [students] experiences if they can't have them firsthand. Hands-on and then the virtual are definitely tools for writing that I've used a lot." T6's approach created authentic writing experiences even when physical field trips were impossible, giving students a context for authentic writing experiences.

Experiences Fostering Student Ownership of Writing. The third-grade teachers emphasized the importance of giving students a choice in writing. Third-grade teacher T9 suggested that students choose their writing topics, stating, "We can write about things we love." Third-grade teacher T2 noted, "They love their [writing] notebook at the end of the year and enjoy taking it home," highlighting students' pride and ownership when they make personal choices and create writing they are proud of. Land (2020) argued that writing tasks with real purposes and target audiences can help create opportunities for teachers to resist the limitations of standardized testing and accountability. Student choice and ownership in writing promote intrinsic motivation and a personal connection to the learning process. Children who demonstrate ownership and student choice begin to see writing as a form of self-expression tied to their interests.

The data analysis revealed a strong connection between authentic writing experiences and increased student engagement, focused on student choice and ownership. The teacher participants expressed the need to use real-world experiences and writing strategies to tap into students' interests and encourage motivation when writing. By giving students opportunities to take ownership and choose writing activities, teachers provide students with writing experiences that shift from a standardized, rigid approach to one that encourages self-expression and connecting to the world around them.

Theme 5: Teachers Need Effective Experiences With Professional Development in Writing Strategies

Title 1 English Language Arts third-grade teachers expressed a need for more effective professional development experiences focused on teaching essay writing

strategies. Data analysis revealed descriptive and concept codes highlighting the need for classroom demonstrations, peer learning, and sufficient training for new programs. These codes identified patterns and subthemes, such as the practical application of writing strategies, peer learning effectiveness, and ongoing professional growth.

Teachers need writing professional development. Ryan et al. (2023) argued that teachers influence student writing outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted professional development beyond general pedagogical knowledge. Six third-grade teachers (T1, T4, T7, T8, T9, T10), representing 60% of participants, reflected on professional development experiences, demonstrating a significant topic of interest for most of the teachers interviewed. The data highlighted the essential link between teacher training and students' writing success and emphasized the importance of professional development to improve writing strategies for students.

Experiences With Practical Application of Writing Strategies Vs. Practice Gaps. The teachers strongly preferred professional development that offered them experiences to see practical writing strategies in the local Title 1 third-grade classroom settings. Still, traditional professional development focuses on delivering knowledge without giving adequate time or opportunities to practice (Owens, 2024). Third-grade teacher T1 commented that teachers need someone to "come in the classroom and actually show how it [writing] can be done." and continued by stating, "I think the most beneficial [professional development] would be not just showing us the platform where to go and what to see, but actually showing us what it looks like through a [writing] unit or that type of thing." Similarly, third-grade teacher T9 contended, "I think finding good

strategies and having them [teachers] do the strategy like a student and really modeling it for them as the teacher and having them play the role of a student helps them."

The teachers' views on practical writing professional development contrasted with theoretical approaches, which often lack practical application and can be challenging to implement in the classroom. Harris et al. (2022) argued that practice-based professional development (PBD) helps teachers improve their writing instruction by including relevant content, addressing teachers' needs, modeling instruction, giving teachers opportunities to practice strategies, and providing expert feedback. The teachers felt they needed more experiences with effective professional development that connects abstract, theoretical ideas about writing pedagogy with practical, concrete teaching strategies.

Experiences with Peer Learning Effectiveness. Third-grade teachers valued experiences where they could learn from teachers who have effectively implemented effective writing strategies. Ryan et al. (2023) proposed that professional development (PD) approaches should view teachers as active participants and professionals, not passive receivers of change, whereas Juuti et al. (2021) emphasized collaboration between teachers, learners, and researchers in creating educational PD opportunities. Third-grade teacher T4 reflected on how she assisted other schools in learning about the color writing strategy. "A friend of mine and myself trained five other schools in color writing. We are really hoping that a lot of kids are going to benefit from it." This peer-led approach may be effective because it is supported by real classroom experience. Similarly, third-grade teacher T6 asserted, "I've heard certain schools have these teachers

who are really great at writing. Finding those teachers whose students are consistently making the threes and fours on the Milestones Assessment, we need those teachers helping us." T6 reflected on identifying expert teachers within the local school system, suggesting that skilled writing teachers could serve as valuable professional development resources. Meanwhile, third-grade teacher T9 recognized the value of practical professional learning from peers by stating, "I'm a professional development junkie, and what I have found is that the teachers will not be a fan of it at first, but you get so much more when you make them [teachers] do it [the writing strategies]." Hands-on, peer-led writing experiences can change initial resistance into meaningful engagement, suggesting that teachers may benefit from professional development where they actively participate in learning writing strategies alongside their peers.

Experiences with Ongoing Professional Development. Title 1 third-grade teachers wanted more professional development opportunities in writing instruction. Third-grade teacher T10 clarified, "I think that I could be provided with more professional development with writing because even as weeks went on, I was reading more things or changing different strategies, just tweaking things within my classroom, just trying to learn as much as possible." T10 expressed a need to continuously learn and adapt writing strategies. Similarly, third-grade teacher T7 asserted, "Well, I feel like the professional development is definitely lacking, "thus suggesting that current professional development (PD) is insufficient and needs more continuous support.

Likewise, teacher participants felt they needed training to use new writing programs effectively. Title 1 third-grade teacher T7 expressed frustration by stating,

"Last year, we had Write Score, which I've heard really good things about, but we didn't receive any training on it. So, I really did try to use it, but it was very overwhelming," highlighting the challenge of receiving resources and programs without adequate training on how to use them effectively. Similarly, third-grade teacher T8 argued, "We get these things [writing resources], but we don't have the proper training," while third-grade teacher T6 suggested, "So we've got to find something that works." The participants felt that current approaches and programs might not be working, possibly due to inadequate understanding or implementation, and that writing strategies should involve ongoing learning and development rather than being limited to one-time training sessions.

In summary, Title 1 third-grade teachers expressed the need for more effective professional development in teaching writing strategies. The participants preferred practical, hands-on experiences over traditional theoretical approaches, which they found difficult to implement in the classroom. The teachers recommended peer-led learning, where experienced writing teachers shared successful strategies, highlighting the value of collaboration in professional development. The teachers expressed frustration with insufficient training in new writing programs and emphasized the need for ongoing professional development in writing instruction.

The five emerging themes revealed that Title 1 third-grade teachers' experiences with writing strategies are complex and varied. Teachers experience challenges because third-grade students lack basic writing skills, which impacts their ability to implement effective writing strategies to prepare for the Georgia Milestones assessment. Although the third-grade teachers highlighted their experiences with several effective writing

strategies, the lack of foundational writing skills limited their success. The data analysis and themes demonstrated that teachers were concerned about needing more effective professional development experiences to help them implement the writing strategies and improve student performance on the Georgia Milestones. Similarly, participants strongly believed that peer-to-peer learning and collaborating with expert writing teachers could support the development of effective writing strategies. Likewise, with the growing pressure of test preparation, teachers expressed the need for more authentic writing experiences that engage third-grade students and offer them choices in writing, thus helping balance standardized writing approaches with authentic writing practices.

Discrepant Cases

Cases that deviate from patterns in the data are referred to as disconfirming evidence, negative cases, discrepant data, or outliers (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The data contained discrepant cases. Third-grade teacher T9 reported that the widely used color writing strategy was ineffective, which contradicts the findings of several other teacher participants. T9 argued, “I did not find that any of that [color writing and whole brain teaching] really worked well personally. I do whole brain teaching, and I like the idea of it, but in combination with the writing we were doing, it didn’t transfer to physical writing for the kids.” This analysis suggests that teachers’ experiences with writing strategies can vary significantly, further highlighting the complexity of implementing writing strategies and the need to adapt instructional strategies based on the needs of the students.

Similarly, third-grade teacher T6 mentioned using generative artificial intelligence (AI) as a writing strategy, stating," Magic school AI has become a powerful tool and one of the things that the kids started to love, and I was honest with my administration, and they were all for it." This discrepant case introduced AI as a tool for writing instruction and assessment, which was not mentioned by other teachers in the data. The teacher stated that using AI to create rubrics and grade writing based on Georgia standards represented an innovative approach to writing instructional strategies.

Overall, the discrepant cases from the data highlighted some of the diversity of teachers' experiences with writing strategies. While common challenges and widely used strategies may exist, individual teachers' experiences can vary significantly. Ravitch and Carl (2021) argued that identifying discrepant cases or outliers challenges the researcher's preconceived ideas and emerging themes, thus challenging us to question what we consider the norm and why. Exploring discrepant cases helps researchers to consider the diversity of experiences within the data.

Trustworthiness

Research is trustworthy when the researcher can establish that the findings are authentic to participants' experiences, thus adding to the quality and rigor of a study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Similarly, Stahl and King (2020) stated that trustworthiness is a shared subjective reality where readers and writers find commonality in their constructive processes. Ensuring trustworthiness during my study required checking for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Using an effective research design and instruments added credibility. It helped me connect emergent themes, commonalities, and

patterns that were not easily explained about Title 1 third-grade teachers' experiences using writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency. I used member checking to ensure credibility, allowing my interview participants to analyze the transcript data, codes, and categories collaboratively and resulting themes. Stahl and James (2020) stated that member checking should lead to trust in the researchers.

Similarly, methodological and perspectival triangulation (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) aided me in considering the different data collection methods in my study, such as the analytic memos and the in-depth interviews regarding the overall data set. Triangulation processes assisted in determining whether I had effectively used enough data sources to provide me with the quality and depth of information I needed to answer my question about teachers' experiences with writing strategies. Meanwhile, perspectival triangulation gave me valuable feedback from my committee chair and colleagues, thus adding credibility.

Transferability proved more challenging since qualitative studies use specific, purposeful population samplings rather than generalizing the findings to larger populations. Using phone and video conferencing interviews with third-grade teachers about their experiences with writing strategies afforded a highly prescriptive, purposeful sample of the elementary population of teachers. Still, it may be worth considering whether a qualitative study can apply to a broader population while maintaining context-specific depth (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Therefore, the reader must determine whether the findings about third-grade teachers' experiences with writing strategies may transfer to other situations. Similarly, Stahl and King (2020) stated that the researcher cannot

distribute the transferability of the results. However, the results must be meaningful to readers who wish to compare the research with their personal contexts.

When the data are dependable, it is consistent and stable. Dependability is trust in trustworthiness (Stahl & King, 2020). Ensuring dependability meant that I had a robust research design determined through triangulation and sequencing of methods. Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated that establishing a rationale for the sequence of data collection methods is crucial to the data quality and the study's validity. I used an interview guide, analytic memos, and member checks during my research study. I conducted in-depth interviews using transcription services and analyzed them using coding, categorization, and themes. The sequence of methods was appropriately planned to warrant dependability.

Lastly, confirmability affirmed that my study was trustworthy. Using researcher reflexivity assisted me in observing any biases in interpreting the data and allowed me to thoughtfully consider how to mediate those using reflexive processes. Ravitch and Carl (2021) asserted that when analyzing data, we must recognize and address our biases and prejudices so that our thoughts do not influence how we interpret the data. Managing my biases when analyzing data helped ensure my findings' integrity and credibility.

Conclusion

This section outlined the research methodology, data collection, and analysis. A basic qualitative study using semi-structured interviews helped answer the research question. The data analysis revealed five key themes. While some teachers successfully implement effective writing strategies, many experience challenges caused by students'

lack of foundational writing skills, limited exposure to authentic writing practices, low student engagement, and a need for effective professional development in writing instruction. The local problem is that 86% of third-grade students are not meeting proficiency standards on the opinion and informational writing portions of the Georgia Milestones assessment. Furthermore, there is little information about teachers' specific strategies to help students achieve mastery. This gap led to the research question: What are Title 1 English Language Arts third-grade teachers' experiences using writing strategies designed to improve students' proficiency on the Georgia Milestones assessment?

Seventy percent of the interviewed teachers reported experiences that students lack basic writing skills, hindering the implementation of more advanced strategies. The analysis aligned with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) within a socio-constructivist framework, suggesting that teachers may struggle to scaffold writing strategies due to gaps in students' abilities. These findings reflect national concerns, as highlighted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress for Writing (2021), which reported that up to 75% of students lack basic writing skills.

Despite these challenges, 50% of teacher participants reported positive experiences with writing strategies, and 60% emphasized the importance of modeling and scaffolding, consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of learning from more knowledgeable others within the ZPD. Teachers who reported positive experiences with writing strategies may have benefited from adequate training, student readiness, access to resources, positive personal experiences in teaching writing, and supportive

environments. Teacher participants reported challenging experiences such as time constraints, curriculum alignment issues, and standardized testing pressure.

Teacher participants highlighted the role of authentic writing experiences and student engagement, reinforcing Vygotsky's socio-cultural conceptual view that learning is most effective when socially and culturally relevant. Sixty percent of teacher participants expressed the need for more practical professional development experiences related to writing strategies, aligning with Vygotsky's emphasis on social learning. The five themes identified from the data analysis informed the project deliverable for this study. Section 3 will describe the project in detail, including a literature review linking the project type to the study outcomes.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Title 1 third-grade English Language arts teachers' experiences with using writing strategies designed to improve students' writing proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment in the Title 1 elementary schools in a local school district in central Georgia. The project developed from the findings of this study was a comprehensive three-day Summer Launch writing training designed to align writing skills for kindergarten through third grade. The findings from this study indicated that to strengthen third-grade writing instruction, k-3 teachers required a more systemic approach within the local school district to improve the vertical alignment of the writing curriculum. This alignment was essential for ensuring consistent instruction in foundational skills, effective writing strategies, daily and authentic writing experiences, and standardized test preparation. This systemic approach to writing strategies formed the foundation for the recommendations in the three-day Summer Launch Writing Training professional development (PD) program designed to support third-grade teachers. Section 3 outlined the description of the three-day Summer Launch Writing Training PD, the rationale for choosing a three-day format, a review of relevant literature, and the implications of the project.

Description of Goals

The project deliverable for this study was a three-day Summer Launch Writing Training professional development program (PD) for k-3 teachers in the district to address vertical alignment and improve writing instruction. The study's findings and the

local district's focus on writing instruction in the improvement plans for Title 1 schools informed the project goals. This initiative sought to build teacher capacity and instructional effectiveness, leading to sustained student achievement in writing in support of the following project goals:

1. Build a clear understanding of writing skill progression from kindergarten to third grade.
2. Implement vertically aligned writing strategies appropriate for each grade level.
3. Close foundational writing gaps through scaffolded instruction.
4. Promote authentic writing experiences and student engagement at all grade levels.
5. Establish a systemic approach to writing instruction with vertical collaboration across grades.
6. Provide ongoing, practical professional development for teachers.

Rationale

Teacher professional development is essential for equipping students with 21st century skills like critical thinking, complex problem-solving, effective communication, collaboration, and self-direction (Erawan & Erawan, 2023), which can help address low writing test scores. The rationale for the inquiry was that students are not meeting minimum proficiency in opinion and informational writing as determined by annually mandated criterion-referenced assessments (Georgia Milestones System, n.d.). Recent Georgia Milestones Assessment Spring 2024 extended test scores showed that out of

1,429 third graders in local Title 1 elementary schools, only 214, or 14.98%, met proficiency in extended writing on the Georgia Milestones Assessment. The remaining 85.02% failed to meet minimum proficiency in opinion and informational writing, highlighting a significant problem with writing skills among the majority of local third-grade students.

During the past 7 years, the Georgia Milestones Assessment third-grade writing scores for the opinion and informational writing portions have not improved from the previous years (Georgia Milestones Assessment System, n.d.). According to data from 2018 through 2024, the percentage of local third-grade students meeting minimum proficiency or higher on the extended writing portions of the annually mandated Georgia Milestones Assessment were 9.58%, 14.84%, 7.19%, 8.40%, 13.10%, and 14.98% respectively (Table 1). Feedback from the recent local Administration 2023 Summer Workshop revealed that schools in the district continue to find writing instruction an issue and focus on it in the school improvement plans (Assistant Principal, personal communication, June 17, 2023).

Table 3

Third-Grade Georgia Milestone Assessment (GMAS) Extended Writing Scores

Year	Students	Minimum Proficiency Score of 5	Proficiency Scores of 5,6 or 7
2018	*1586*	5.11%	9.58%
2019	*1550*	6.00%	14.84%
2020	*Covid No Testing*		
2021	*1335*	3.30%	7.19%
2022	*1607*	2.24%	8.40%
2023	*1588*	4.85%	13.10%
2024	*1429*	5.38%	14.98%

Writing-focused professional development (PD) is essential for teachers. Ryan et al. (2023) emphasized that teachers directly impact students writing outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted professional learning beyond general pedagogical knowledge (Gore et al., 2021) to improve student writing performance. The goal of this professional development program was to provide local k-3 ELA teachers with ongoing, targeted learning in writing instruction. Strengthening teachers' skills and effectiveness was to improve student writing achievement in these grades and beyond.

Review of the Literature

This section reviewed the literature on professional development (PD) for writing instruction. It also provided information on the conceptual framework guiding the project. I examined the literature concerning educators' views on PD, their understanding of its objectives, principles of adult learning, and the characteristics of effective professional development. I explored relevant literature in the following databases: SAGE Journals, Taylor and Francis Online, EBSCOhost, ERIC, and Education Source. I reviewed the following peer-reviewed journals: *The New Educator, Professional Development in Education, Literacy Practice and Research, Teacher Development, International Education Studies, Early Years, Research in Social Sciences & Technology, and the Journal of Educational Change.* Except for seminal sources, all peer-reviewed articles were published within the last 5 years.

Professional Development

Skilled teachers help students learn. Quality education relies on high-quality educators who provide knowledge in supportive learning environments (Viviv Krabonja

et al., 2024). Similarly, Arzonetti Hite and Donohoo (2020) identified educators as key to improving teaching quality. Dubey (2024) argued that teachers must be equipped with skills and attitudes to support diverse students in inclusive classrooms. Thus, quality education depends on continuously developing teachers' skills to support students' diverse learning.

Teachers develop skills through professional development. Owens (2024) asserted that school reforms rely on changes in practice, with professional development driving these changes and improving student outcomes. Engaging in professional development (PD) may provide teachers with opportunities to explore innovative ideas and diverse perspectives that can enhance and inform their teaching practices. Blanusa et al. (2021) argued that professional development is essential for all educators, not only those who are highly motivated. Similarly, Viviv Krabonja et al. (2024) emphasized that in addition to high-quality university education, an effective system of lifelong training is crucial to equip educators with the knowledge and skills needed for success. Thus, professional development should be an ongoing, integral part of teachers' careers to help them stay effective and adjust to changing demands. Furthermore, continuous professional development in writing instruction permits teachers to build upon foundational knowledge of writing pedagogy to develop more effective approaches for teaching various writing genres.

Communities of Practice Social Theory of Learning

The conceptual framework that supported this professional development project was Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice social theory of learning (CoPs),

asserting that learning is a process of collective, relational, and social processes. Similarly, Sarid and Levanon (2022) highlighted that CoP theory builds on other social learning theories by focusing on social participation and the co-construction of knowledge through interaction and engagement with others. Lave and Wenger conceptualized learning as a process of situated cognition- legitimate peripheral participation- in communities of practice, meaning that learning is a social process where both novice and established members learn by sharing similar challenges, interacting regularly, and seeking to accomplish their objectives (Buch, 2021). A CoP framework, which examines educational contexts like teacher professional development, demonstrates its value within the educational field (Bickmore et al., 2021). The theory suggests that professional development of teachers is not isolated learning of skills but is accomplished through collaborative learning, where educators can engage through social interactions with others. The communities of practice theory is relevant to writing instruction professional development because collaborative knowledge amongst teachers is needed to help improve writing instructional practices.

Communities of Practice, Competence, and Knowledgeability

Wenger-Trayner (1998) expanded the communities of practice theory (CoPs) beyond its original scope, recognizing that learning occurs within defined communities and in broader social contexts, between, outside, and beyond CoPs. Specifically, learning occurs in other diverse social spaces when learners demonstrate three key characteristics: they care to make a difference, engage in uncertainty, and maintain attention (Wenger-Trayner, 1998). This expanded version of CoP theory demonstrated that learning is not

confined to a specific community but occurs whenever learners are invested, willing to take on uncertainty, and maintain focus regardless of the social context.

Within communities of practice (CoPs), there are differences between competence and knowledgeability. Wenger-Trayner (1998) explained that members' competence is practiced when participating in a single community of practice. However, when members interact across multiple and diverse communities and institutions, they develop knowledgeability or an understanding of practices even when they cannot claim competence (Wenger-Trayner, 1998). According to Wenger-Trayner, solely focusing on competence within a learning community narrows our learning capability. However, knowledgeability is claimed when we span our learning across broader contexts and landscapes.

Teachers' professional development requires competence and knowledgeability within and beyond a community of learners. A balance of competence or expertise within teachers' specific teaching skills, with a broader understanding of the knowledgeability of educational practices within different contexts, helps broaden learning and skills. For example, writing teachers must develop competence in writing instruction within grade levels but may also benefit from knowledge about writing practices across grade levels and other educational contexts. Wenger-Trayner's (1998) communities of practice (CoPs) theory contended that learning is a collective, relational, and social process and provides a framework for understanding how to effectively implement professional development in writing instruction.

Professional Development Approaches

Teachers use various professional development (PD) approaches to enhance teaching and learning practices. Effective methods include practice-based approaches, professional learning communities, teacher coaching, and strategies that promote autonomy and collaboration. These approaches are increasingly important in helping students develop the complex skills needed for 21st-century success (Erawan & Erawan, 2023). More specifically, using various professional development approaches may help teachers determine how to improve their teaching and support diverse student populations in developing writing skills.

Practice-Based Professional Development

Practice-Based Professional Development (PBPD) is an approach that assists teachers in strengthening their skills and knowledge. The purpose of PBPD teams is to create a supportive environment for collaboration, sharing insights, and deepening understanding of evidence-based writing strategies (Sims et al., 2022). Unlike traditional PD, which focuses on teachers obtaining knowledge without sufficient time for practice (Owens, 2024), Sims et al. argued that PBPD in groups helps to build a learning community and is more effective. Owens agreed, noting that PBPD closes the "knowing-doing gap" by combining knowledge acquisition with practical application in PD. In contrast, Meyer et al. (2022) emphasized that collaboration drives changes in school culture and teaching practices. Thus, PBPD addresses a key limitation of traditional PD by prioritizing collaborative learning practices among teachers that reshape teaching strategies and school dynamics.

Practice-based professional development approaches in the literature have proven effective. Owens (2024) studied the effects of practice-based professional development (PBPD) that scaffolded evidence-based writing strategies for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) in general and special education classrooms. Owens found that PBPD approaches allowed special and general education teachers to learn and co-teach, simultaneously addressing students' academics and behaviors.

In a different study, Walker and Jensen (2024) conducted a two-year practice-based continuous educational quality development (EQD) initiative in a daycare setting with children ages 0 through 6. Walker and Jensen concluded that practice-based approaches were most effective when teachers learned hands-on practical strategies and were supported to reflect and discuss practices together. Similarly, Marshall (2019) maintained that helping teachers reflect is most effective when teachers build good relationships, set positive examples, and focus on the needs of students. In contrast, Ray et al. (2024) used online PBPD writing methods combined with instructional coaching to help middle school students' writing skills. This combination effectively supported teachers in implementing writing strategies. The studies demonstrate that practice-based professional development (PBPD) works well in different educational settings, helping teachers improve by using hands-on strategies, working together, and reflecting on their work. PBPD supports teachers in meeting various student needs, from behavior to academics to specific skills like writing.

The principles of practice-based professional development (PBPD) aligned with this project. The data analysis revealed that 70% of local third-grade teachers struggle

with students' lack of foundational writing skills, while 60% expressed the need for more effective professional development focused on practical classroom demonstrations. The proposed professional development curriculum project emphasized hands-on practice, collaborative learning, and classroom application of strategies. Instead of focusing solely on theory, teachers actively implement writing strategies. The project supported teachers' preference for practical learning approaches where they actively practice and implement new writing strategies. The project also addressed the "knowing-doing gap" discussed by Owens (2024) by engaging teachers in grade-level modeling of strategies, participating in vertical team collaboration, and receiving ongoing support through peer learning communities. The approach aligned with the team of teachers needing systemic change and vertical alignment of writing instruction across grade levels. A comprehensive practice-based approach helps teachers learn about effective writing instruction and develop the practical skills to implement it successfully in classrooms.

Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning communities (PLCs) help teachers work together to improve teaching and student learning. Mariana-Petroze (2023) explained that teachers meet with grade-level partners during sessions to examine student data from common formative assessments and plan instruction to meet student needs. In contrast, Paltiel (2024) noted that PLCs differ from traditional teacher professional development, which often depends on outside expertise. Krabonja et al. (2024) agreed that PLCs promote continuous, reflective, and collaborative development among educators. In writing professional

development, PLCs enable teachers to analyze student writing data, share strategies, and refine practices to improve writing skills across grade levels.

Professional learning communities focus on fundamental principles: ensuring student learning, building a culture of collaboration, and maintaining a focus on results (Mariana-Petroze, 2023). More specifically, in a high-performing PLC, schools focus on learning for students and teachers by examining whether students are learning and how teachers know that learning has occurred (Dufour et al., 2021). Likewise, vertical PLC models spanning grade levels help teachers have school-wide conversations to align content areas and identify gaps in instructional sequence (Mariani-Petroze, 2023). PLCs help create a collaborative, data-driven approach that prioritizes student learning and teacher growth and aligns instruction across grade levels. In writing professional development, PLCs could help teachers coordinate instruction across grade levels, assess progress, and refine techniques across grades.

Various studies in the literature support professional learning communities (PLCs). Plank et al. (2024) studied how school leaders create, support, and use PLCs to help teachers learn and collaborate more effectively. Plank et al. found that while structural factors, like scheduled time, clear roles, and organized processes, are vital for PLCs, other elements, such as collaboration, engagement, and leadership support, are equally crucial to help teachers learn and improve together. Still, plank et al. argued that school administrators should avoid adding excessive structure that could make collaboration feel forced and unauthentic. Instead, support should be given to the natural communities of practice and organic learning already happening in schools.

In a similar study, Mariani-Petroze (2023) sought to understand if implementing the vertical professional learning community model positively impacted student achievement and professional practice in a private small school setting. The private school's principal, with 135 students, implemented PLCs to support data-driven, vertical curriculum changes across K-8 grade levels. Mariani-Petroze concluded that the vertical PLC model helped teachers identify curriculum gaps and understand how work aligned with teachers in adjacent grade levels. Paltiel (2024) researched how early childhood leaders who also teach kindergarten perceive the PLCs they lead and the factors that support or hinder success. Paltiel observed that PLCs promoted productive discussions on practice and real-life challenges, encouraged active teacher participation in community meetings, and built a culture of trust and closeness. However, time spent transferring information from superintendents and a lack of collaboration among teachers outside of meetings were identified as obstacles.

Effective professional development through PLCs works best with a balance of structure and natural collaboration. Teachers benefit when PLCs provide time and support for working together without feeling restricted by too many rules. Trust and relevant discussions within PLCs are essential, as is ensuring that practical, relevant activities support teacher growth. This approach makes PLCs more meaningful and connected to real classroom needs.

This initiative implemented year-long professional learning communities (PLCs) to support the professional development of K-3 teachers. Teachers attend a three-day summer writing training, with sessions in June, July, and August, followed by monthly

focus meetings with PLCs and vertical teams from September to May. Topics include foundations of vertically aligned writing instruction, effective writing strategies and skill progression, and training in informational and opinion writing, informed by data analysis and third-grade writing instructional needs. The PLC model enabled cross-grade vertical planning, making it an effective approach to ensure continuity in writing instruction. It also supported ongoing professional learning with monthly workshops throughout the year.

Challenges

Professional learning communities (PLCs) have implementation challenges that can impact school effectiveness. Dufour et al. (2021) emphasized that shifting from isolated teaching to collaborative practice requires educators to rebuild their professional identity, thus marking a fundamental cultural change. Likewise, schools may struggle to schedule regular collaboration times, and teachers may feel burdened by data analysis requirements that must translate into instructional changes; some may resist change with skepticism, while leadership quality greatly influences the success of PLC efforts (Dufour et al., 2021). Similarly, Mariana-Petroze (2023) agreed that implementation problems might fail to achieve the desired results, whereas Paltiel (2024) explained that teachers might have challenges leading PLCs as a collaborative entity. The challenges described indicate that PLCs require structure and an environment where teachers feel genuinely supported and engaged. Addressing time constraints, data demands, and resistance is essential for PLCs to become impactful practices that enhance teaching and learning.

The principles of professional learning communities (PLCs) aligned with this project. The curriculum project was structured around ongoing, collaborative learning experiences that reflect Mariana-Petroze's (2023) fundamental PLC principles of ensuring student learning, building collaboration, and focusing on results. The vertical PLC models helped teachers identify curriculum gaps and understand grade-level alignment, addressing theme three's evidence about the need for a systemic approach to writing instruction. The project fostered a collaborative learning environment essential for effective PLCs through summer training, monthly workshops, and regular PLC meetings. PLCs support theme four's emphasis on authentic writing and student engagement, where 50% of teachers shared experiences creating meaningful writing opportunities for students.

Social Network Professional Learning Communities

Social media has transformed how educators engage in professional development in the 21st century, creating new opportunities for virtual collaboration and learning (Hensley et al., 2023). Social media-based professional learning communities (SMB-PLCs) allow educators to share ideas, connect with peers, seek support, and promote teaching values and beliefs (Chen & Xie, 2024). Chen and Xie asserted that virtual communities help reduce common PLC challenges like location constraints, limited perspectives, and inflexible interactions. Similarly, Krismanto et al. (2022) explained that teachers engage in informal professional learning through social media by gathering, interacting, and building community. Social media-based PLCs offer teachers flexible, continuous collaboration without location and rigid schedule limitations. In the context of

writing instruction, teachers may gain more access to diverse strategies and support for skill progression and genre-specific writing practices through peer-supported professional development, which is crucial for effective writing instruction.

Social media-based professional learning communities (SMB-PLCs) approaches have had various results in the literature. Chen and Xie (2024) conducted a study investigating both opportunities and challenges of SMB-PLCs for physical educators. Chen and Xie concluded that social media platforms help facilitate resource sharing and professional connections. However, they also have a lack of quality control and difficulties for teachers in sharing reflective dialogue. Similarly, Carpenter and Harvey (2020) noted that public conversations and lack of personal relationships in SMB-PLCs stifle critical dialogue. Meanwhile, van Bommel et al. (2020) found that while 85% of threads contained professional knowledge, only 10% resulted in knowledge transformation. A key challenge of using SMB-PLCs is that, while expanding access to resources and teacher networking, they may limit the depth of professional learning by hindering reflective dialogue and deep learning essential for professional development.

Research in the literature has explored the dynamics of different types of participants using social media-based professional learning communities (SMB-PLCs). Viviv Krabonja et al. (2024) developed and tested the professional learning community model for innovative pedagogy (PLC_IP) model that combined traditional PD structures with digital elements. Viviv Krabonja et al. found that newer teachers were more likely to participate in social media PLCs, and successful implementation requires both top-down support from school management and bottom-up teacher autonomy. The researcher

concluded that the PLC_IP model supported sustainable teacher professional development and promoted innovative teaching practices with digital technologies. In a different study, Zhu and Dawson (2023) examined the perceptions of active posters and passive observers in SMB-PLCs and found no significant difference in learning perceptions between the two groups. Still, Zhu and Dawson concluded that the qualitative analysis revealed that users and observers reported learning practice knowledge, but only active posters demonstrated deeper understanding. The studies revealed insights about who participates in social media professional learning and how the difference in learning outcomes is essential in understanding how educators engage with professional development on social media platforms.

Social media-based PLCs present both opportunities and challenges in teacher professional development. While these platforms provide accessible, flexible networking, ideas exchange, and peer support—which can be valuable for writing instruction—studies highlight limitations, such as reducing reflective dialogue and less in-depth knowledge transformation due to the informal nature of interactions. In sum, using SMB-PLCs in teacher professional development may require more added structure to support deeper learning.

While this project included an online resource hub for access throughout the year, it did not use social media-based professional learning communities (SMB-PLCs). Unlike the virtual communities Chen and Xie (2024) discussed that focus on flexible, location-independent collaboration through social media platforms, this project emphasized in-person professional development through summer training, monthly workshops, and

face-to-face PLC meetings. While the project could benefit from incorporating elements of SMB-PLCs to improve resource sharing and expand professional connections, its current structure aligned more closely with traditional PLCs, focusing on structured, in-person collaboration.

Teacher Coaching and Peer Learning

Instructional coaching strengthens professional development by promoting collaborative, content-focused support, where knowledge is co-constructed between coaches and teachers (Kho & Ismail, 2023). Coaching's hands-on, relationship-based model helps educators adapt to evolving methods, content, and curricula (Giordana et al., 2021). Giordana et al. contended that organizations like the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Head Start, and state departments of education support coaching as an effective way to assist teachers during instructional adaptations as internal coaches within schools collaborate with colleagues.

Benefits

Coaching offers professional benefits, including collaborative reflection, accountability, and peer connections, helping teachers refine practices and engage with new strategies (Edwards & Steed, 2021). For instance, adding coaching after workshops increased knowledge transfer by 95% (Giordana et al., 2021). Edwards and Steed argued that internal coaching is a viable model that embeds support within the teacher community. Similarly, Giordana et al. (2021) stated that coaching enhances efficacy and fosters a supportive workplace culture, creating a stronger learning environment for educators and students. Thus, coaching improves individual teacher performance and

contributes to a lasting culture of growth and support within schools, likely to affect students' outcomes in critical skills like writing proficiency.

Challenges

Peer coaching faces several challenges in educational settings. Authority relationships hinder coaching success, as teachers view coaches as evaluators rather than supporters (Kho & Ismail, 2024). Likewise, conflicts increase when administrators who control hiring serve as coaches (Edwards & Steed, 2021). Practical obstacles also impact coaching effectiveness. External coaches struggle with scheduling, understanding school climate, and building trust (Giordana et al., 2021), while Giordana et al. noted that schools struggle with scheduling coverage and paying teachers for coaching time. Teachers request more extended observations and more efficient post-observation feedback (Edwards & Steed, 2021). Still, peer coaching is a potential solution to these challenges using teachers' established relationships and school expertise (Giordana et al., 2021).

Coaching Models and Outcomes

Coaching approaches in the literature had various impacts on teacher professional development. Kho and Ismail (2024) and Giordana et al. (2021) found non-hierarchical coaching relationships most effective, with coaches purposefully stepping back from authority roles to support teacher autonomy. Similarly, Giordana et al. (2021) found internal peer coaches more effective at implementation support due to daily classroom presence and non-evaluative status. Consequently, coaching models built on equality and

peer support can equip teachers more successfully, fostering lasting changes in practice and supporting a culture of autonomy and collaboration in schools.

In contrast, Edwards and Steed (2021) studied coach program features like coach selection and feedback methods, while Reddy et al. (2021) studied a systematic coaching framework with specific observation tools and protocols. Edwards and Steed found that teachers were most comfortable with self-selected peer coaches, suggesting the importance of choice in coaching relationships, while administrator coaches were noted to provide more specific feedback. Using a more systematic approach through the classroom strategies coaching model, Reddy et al. demonstrated significant improvement in instructional quality (d= 0.52) and behavior management (d=0.60) through a data-driven methodology. The different approaches show that while collaborative, non-hierarchical, peer-based coaching may support effective teacher engagement, structured frameworks and clear feedback remain essential for achieving measurable improvements in teaching practice.

While the project included opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing, it did not have the key coaching elements that Edwards and Steed (2021) highlight as essential, such as structured observation cycles, specific feedback protocols, and designated coaching roles. Likewise, the project did not specify the non-hierarchical coaching relationships that Giordana et al. (2021) found effective, nor did it outline a systematic coaching framework with specific observation tools and protocols described by Reddy et al. (2021). This limitation failed to address theme two's evidence that 50% of teachers found peer learning and modeling highly effective, particularly when

experienced teachers could demonstrate successful writing strategies. Thus, the project would need to incorporate coaching structures, observation opportunities, and feedback protocols more specifically to align with teacher coaching and peer learning approaches.

Balancing Teacher Autonomy and Collaboration in Professional Development

Schools must balance teacher autonomy and collaboration in professional development. While teaching has historically been an autonomous profession with educators working in isolation (Plank et al., 2024), recent educational changes emphasize collaboration to change school culture and teaching practices. Subsequently, there is often tension between teachers working independently and collaboratively during professional development initiatives.

Autonomy and collaboration play essential roles in teacher growth and retention. Amels et al. (2020) asserted that classroom autonomy allows teachers to make bottom-up decisions and incorporate insights from professional learning, thus leading to school innovation and increased teacher confidence. Similarly, collaboration is a form of professional development, motivating teachers to pursue innovative practices through increased self-efficacy (Randall & Marangell, 2021). Thus, balancing teacher autonomy with collaboration is critical to creating a supportive, innovative school environment.

Autonomous and collaborative professional development can strengthen, improve, and enhance the teaching environment and positively impact student learning and culture. Jang et al. (2024) argued that any improvements to the teaching practice from collaborative PD opportunities could be lost if teachers lack the autonomy to innovate within their classrooms. Similarly, Fang (2022) found that teachers were more

likely to use innovative teaching methods when they had both classroom autonomy and access to professional development activities. Consequently, professional development is increasingly characterized by teacher autonomy and collaboration (Lambirth et al., 2021). Balancing teacher independence with collaboration allows educators to effectively integrate new ideas and methods, which can lead to meaningful improvement in student learning and the overall school environment.

Implementing a balanced approach that combines teacher autonomy with collaboration can be challenging. School structures often allow limited time for teacher collaboration, leading to resistance as teachers may have to give up personal time for these activities (Vangrieken & Kyndt, 2020). Additionally, Plank et al. (2024) asserted that teachers may hesitate to collaborate due to uncertainty about its benefits for practice and student achievement and may feel intimidated by the loss of privacy over teaching methods. These challenges indicate that effective professional development programs must balance autonomy with collaboration while addressing structural and cultural barriers to successful implementation.

The proposed project demonstrated an effective balance between teacher autonomy and collaboration. Teachers can adapt strategies to specific classroom needs while participating in structured collaborative activities through PLCs and vertical team meetings. Instructional flexibility is crucial given theme four's finding that 50% of teachers value authentic writing experiences and student engagement, requiring the freedom to adapt instruction to create meaningful writing opportunities. The project's structure, combining summer training, monthly workshops, and ongoing peer learning

communities, provided what Fang (2022) identified as necessary for innovation: classroom autonomy and access to professional development activities. The balance of autonomy and collaboration within the project empowered teachers to innovate within their classrooms while fostering a cohesive, school-wide approach to professional growth in writing.

Project Description

The project included a three-day summer writing training for K-3 teachers and monthly focus meetings with professional learning communities (PLCs) and vertical teams from September through May. Teachers had opportunities to practice research-based instructional strategies, participate in vertical alignment activities, and collaborate to enhance writing instruction in Title 1 elementary schools.

The three-day Summer Launch Writing Training addressed the five key themes identified in the data analysis through a structured agenda and activities. Theme one, which highlighted teachers' challenges with students' lack of foundational writing skills, was addressed on Day 1 through activities such as the K-3 writing journey and vertical team writing development sessions. Theme two, focused on effective writing strategies, was addressed on Day 2 through activities on color-coded writing, modeling, scaffolding, establishing daily writing routines, and time management strategies. Day 3's genre-specific training also helped teachers develop grade-level opinion and informational writing experiences. Theme five, which emphasizes the need for effective professional development, was addressed through the project's overall structure, prioritizing hands-on practice, peer collaboration, and practical classroom application.

Resources Needed and Existing Supports

The Summer Launch Writing Training required both physical and technological resources. Staying informed about current educational trends enables teachers to create effective learning environments that meet diverse learner needs (Thokozane, 2024). The venue should accommodate K-3 teachers with space for whole-group presentations and breakout areas for grade-level and vertical team collaborations. It should have projectors or smartboards for training presentations and a reliable internet connection.

Existing supports included district-issued Chromebooks and the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) curriculum materials for all grade levels, which were central to the activities, specifically for vertical alignment of the instructional writing materials. The district's writing platform, *Writable*, was used for third-grade activities. Teachers needed writing materials for the color-writing implementation activities, including notebooks, chart paper, markers, and color-coding supplies. The district's Google Classroom platform served as the digital hub for the k-3 Teachers Writing Resource toolkit. According to Suarez and McGrath (2022), effective continuous professional development (CPD) ensures that teachers have the tools to address challenges and opportunities to reflect, grow, and refine their professional identities. The district's infrastructure and instructional resources were key components to ensure practical professional development sessions that positively impact how teachers implement and refine writing skills.

Documentation materials included the pre-assessment Google forms, evaluation surveys, grade-specific lesson plan templates, and writing progression charts. Access to

the local district's Georgia Milestones Assessment data was needed for discussions and planning during the vertical alignment activities. Human resources included professional development facilitators with expertise in writing instruction, teacher coaches for the differentiation stations, and administrative support to coordinate the monthly follow-up PLC meetings from September through May. Thokozane (2024) emphasized that coaching provides a personalized approach to professional growth. Using appropriate materials and effective coaching highlighted the importance of tailoring instructional support to fit teachers' specific needs to ensure growth and improve teaching.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Teacher attendance and engagement may be limited during summer break. Participation involves engaging individually or collectively in a process aimed at empowerment (Veltmeyer & Bowles, 2022). However, teachers may have conflicting schedules, summer commitments, or reluctance to participate in professional development during vacation, thus reducing participation. Solutions include giving advance notice of training dates, offering stipends, and designing interactive classroom-focused sessions instead of lectures. Space and logistics presented another potential challenge. The training required rooms for whole group presentations and breakout spaces for grade-level and vertical team activities, such as color writing implementation and differentiation stations. Ensuring adequate space for professional development activities required careful planning of room arrangements and schedules.

Time management during the sessions may be challenging due to a packed schedule with multiple daily activities and transitions. For example, Day One included

collaborative activities like the K-3 Writing Journey Map and Vertical Team Writing Development that require in-depth discussion. Given the limited time available for professional learning, it is essential to maximize these opportunities by designing experiences tailored to meet the specific needs of the teachers involved (Reichel, 2023). Solutions included using timer displays and building buffer time between activities, which may ensure that all content is covered effectively.

Project Timeline and Implementation

The project included a three-day Summer Launch Writing training for k-3 teachers, followed by monthly focus meetings with professional learning communities (PLCs) and vertical teams from September through May. The three-day training offered 6.5 hours of professional learning daily (totaling 1,170 minutes). Teachers practice research-based instructional strategies, engage in vertical alignment, and collaborate to improve writing instruction in Title 1 elementary schools. A detailed professional development timeline (Tables 2, 3, and 4) ensured opportunities for collaborative engagement with writing content, skills practice, and planning within grade levels and across vertical teams.

Table 4

Day One: K-3 Writing Professional Development

Basic Themes	Schedule
Day One Theme: June Foundations of Vertically Aligned Writing Instruction	8:00-8:30 AM: Welcome and Overview 8:00-9:30 AM: Introduction & Community Building Introduction to PLC framework - Team building activities - Pre-assessment of vertical alignment understanding 9:30-9:45 Break 9:45-11:00 AM: Writing Development K-3 Presentation: Developmental stages in writing - Local data analysis -Building Strong Writers PLC Activity - Discussion of research findings - Identification of critical transition points 11:00-12:00 PM K-3 Writing Journey Map - Grade-level teams: Essential skills identification - Vertical team activity: Progression mapping - Gap analysis discussion - Documentation of grade-level expectations 12:00-1:00 PM Lunch 1:00-2:30 PM: Vertical Team Writing Development Activity - Grade-specific skill progression work * K: Letter formation and spacing * 1st: Sentence formation * 2nd: Paragraph formation * 3rd: Multi-paragraph structure - Cross-grade sharing and discussion - Creation of vertical progression charts 2:30-2:45 PM Break 2:45-4:00 PM Instructional Alignment - Development of common writing vocabulary - Cross-grade coordination planning - Resource alignment discussion - Creation of grade-specific benchmarks

Day One: K-3 Writing Professional Development

Day One Introduction and Community Building (8:00 am-9:30 am)

The professional development facilitators introduce k-3 teachers to the professional learning communities framework (PLCs), facilitate the "Six-Word Story Share" team-building activity, and include a Google form pre-assessment on writing vertical alignment. Professional learning communities (PLCs) emphasize collaborative learning over isolated teaching, engaging educators in collective inquiry and action research to achieve better student results (DuFour & DuFour, 2021). According to DuFour and DuFour's research, schools implementing PLC report significant gains in student achievement, with some showing up to 30% gains in proficiency increases across subjects. The "Six-Word Story Share" activity prompts teachers to reflect on instructional challenges, fostering collaboration and professional growth (DuFour & DuFour, 2021). Teachers assess their understanding of vertical alignment, which connects skills and concepts systematically across grade levels to support students' learning (Bouffard, 2023). Bouffard highlighted the importance of linking current grade-level content with foundational skills from earlier grades to address student challenges. The pre-assessment identified gaps and informed the targeted PD, ensuring adequate support for writing development transitions.

Day One: Writing Development k-3 (9:45 am – 11:00 am)

Writing must be taught, nurtured, and practiced, progressing from basic to advanced skills (Rollins Center for Language & Literacy, 2024). K-3 teachers review the elements of students' emergent, developmental, and foundational writing stages. Kabel

et al. (2021) emphasized that the early years are pivotal for developing children's emergent writing skills. Thus, k-3 teachers must intentionally develop appropriate writing instruction early to establish a strong foundation for future academic success.

The "Building Strong Writers" k-3 professional learning activity addressed a critical need identified through data analysis where 70% of third-grade teachers reported that students struggle with foundational writing skills. The collaborative session groups k-3 teachers into mixed break-out teams to map writing skills progression, identify gaps, and share effective strategies across grade levels. The activity bridged gaps between early writing instruction and third-grade expectations, promoting vertical alignment and knowledge sharing. Teachers collaborate to create a more cohesive writing curriculum, ensuring systematic instruction and practical strategies for improving student outcomes.

Day One: K-3 Writing Journey Map (11:00 am-12:00 pm)

Through collaborative analysis of Georgia Standards of Excellence progression maps (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.), k-1 and 2-3 teacher teams create visual representations of writing skills development. Kindergarten and first-grade teachers focus on illustrating progression from early drawing and dictations to structured narrative writing, while second and third-grade teachers map the transition from writing simple sentences to multi-paragraph essays. Writing is a complex, progressive process requiring skills in oral language, visual-motor integration, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print conventions, and executive functioning (Pinto & Incognito, 2022). Using color-coding mapping, teachers identify critical transition points and gaps, particularly those revealed in the data analysis on foundational skill development.

Likewise, the vertical team activity addressed the challenges of second and third-grade students progressing from narrative to opinion and informational writing. Teachers establish clear pathways for students to progress from basic writing skills to more complex genres by collaboratively analyzing standards, pinpointing gaps, and designing structured support strategies. Tortorelli et al. (2022) asserted that "because teachers focus on standards for their students' age group, it is essential for the standards to be arranged in a sequence that helps students build the skills needed for current and future performance. The activity promoted cohesive and consistent writing instruction, helping to strengthen foundational skills while fostering smoother transitions across elementary grade levels.

Day One: Vertical Team Writing Development (1:00 pm-2:00 pm)

The k-3 vertical writing progression activity used Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's (2024) curriculum to align foundational skills from kindergarten letter formation to third-grade essay writing. Ryan et al. (2023) emphasized that teachers directly impact students writing outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted professional learning beyond general pedagogical knowledge (Gore et al., 2021) to improve student writing performance. K-3 vertical teacher teams rotate through stations, including a formation station to develop lessons using the HMH curriculum, an assessment station to analyze students' work and identify gaps between grades, and a support station to plan scaffolding strategies, interventions, and enrichment activities.

Day One: Instructional Alignment (2:45 pm-4:00 pm)

During this activity, teachers focus on creating cohesive writing instruction across grade levels by collaboratively developing a standard writing vocabulary list, ensuring consistent academic writing terminology is used from kindergarten through third grade. Teachers use the Georgia state standards of excellence (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.) to identify specific terms for language and writing processes that will be used consistently across all grade levels.

Additionally, teachers work in vertical teams to coordinate writing instruction plans using district pacing guides and curriculum maps. The session concludes with grade-level teams creating specific writing benchmarks that align with the common vocabulary and vertical-grade progression plans. The benchmarks include concrete examples of student writing at different proficiency levels, creating a clear progression of writing development from kindergarten through third grade. Teachers plan strategic resource sharing across grade levels to support consistent writing instruction.

Table 5

Day Two: K-3 Writing Professional Development

Basic Themes	Schedule
Day 2 Theme: July Effective Writing Strategies and Skill Progression	8:00-8:30 AM: Overview and Review of Day One 8:30-10:00 AM: Color Writing Introduction - Technique overview and demonstration - Grade-level adaptations presentation - Whole-brain teaching connection - Initial practice activities 10:00-10:15 AM: Break 10:15-12:00 PM: Vertical Color Writing Implementation - Grade-specific practice: * K: Basic color cues * 1st: Expanded coding * 2nd: Paragraph coding * 3rd: Multi-paragraph system - Cross-grade sharing - Implementation planning 12:00-1:00 PM: Lunch 1:00-2:30 PM: Modeling and Scaffolding - The Gradual Release Framework - "Writer's In Motion" Grade-specific modeling examples - PLC modeling lesson development - Vertical scaffolding planning 2:30-2:45 PM: Break 2:45-4:00 PM: Daily Writing Routines - Time management strategies - Writing notebook implementation (Quick Writes) - Graphic organizer progression - Differentiation planning

Day Two: K-3 Writing Professional Development

Day Two: Color Writing Introduction (8:30 am – 10:00 am)

Young children engage in writing through various methods, skill levels, and modalities (Quinn et al., 2024). Effective strategies for teaching foundational writing skills in primary grades use interactive, multimodal approaches to enhance learning: color writing, a multi-sensory, whole-brain teaching technique, transitions from oral to written expression. Aulina et al. (2024) identified whole-brain teaching as improving focus, quick thinking, and task execution. In color writing, students verbalize sentences and paragraphs before writing, activating kinesthetic, visual, and auditory brain areas. Subsequently, activating multiple brain regions improves understanding and retention of writing skills and organization.

The process begins with younger students responding orally to prompts using sign language gestures to promote critical thinking and correct grammar (Biffle, 2021). Biffle stated that increased time spent on oral writing makes physical writing more manageable for children. Encouraging children to express ideas verbally before writing offers educators insight into children's thinking and understanding of writing's purposes (Bingham et al., 2023). The color writing facilitator presents the progression of the whole brain teaching color writing, beginning with oral writing techniques, and then introduces different topic sentence and paragraph complexity levels. Bingham contended that teachers help scaffold writing concepts by separating the writing tasks into smaller, more manageable parts for the child, thus reducing part of the cognitive or physical load. The presentation concludes by demonstrating the scaffolding of paragraph progressions

into color-coded essay structures. This professional development session highlighted the techniques for grades k-3 and gave strategies for effective modeling and integration. Teachers' feedback during the data analysis indicated that color writing significantly enhances students' writing skills.

Day Two: Vertical Color Writing Implementation (10:15 am – 12:00 pm)

Teachers practice grade-specific color writing techniques during this collaborative vertical alignment session, progressing from foundational skills to complex writing structures. Ahmed (2024) emphasized that whole-brain teaching positively impacts instruction by addressing diverse student needs and fostering active engagement, collaboration, and meaningful learning.

- Kindergarten teachers use basic color cues and language gestures, colored blocks, and picture cards to create single-whammy sentences with details.
- First-grade teachers apply simple color coding to build sentences, using colored strips to contrast basic sentences from detailed ones.
- Second-grade teachers focus on paragraph development, using colored codes to organize topic sentences, supporting details, and conclusions.
- Third-grade teachers work on multi-paragraph essays, using an expanded color system to develop main ideas, evidence, and transitions.

After grade-level practice, teachers engage in cross-grade discussions to review the progression of color writing from kindergarten to third grade, highlighting key transitions and potential challenges. Cohen-Vogel et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of specifying clear pathways between grade levels to reduce redundancies,

address gaps, and scaffold learning opportunities. The session concludes with collaborative planning, where vertical teams develop implementation timelines, create support materials, and establish common expectations for color writing across all grade levels.

Day Two: Modeling and Scaffolding (1:00 pm – 2:30 pm)

Modeling and scaffolding provide effective examples and hands-on support essential for effective writing instruction. Modeling and scaffolding align with the gradual release of responsibility framework, emphasizing intentionally shifting learning ownership to students over time (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Similarly, Jin and Kim (2021) noted that scaffolding should adapt to a learner's knowledge, cognitive ability, and task to foster metacognition, while Rodriquez et al. (2021) stated that modeling involves demonstrating correct writing skills, common mistakes, and using think aloud strategies to address errors, aiding in understanding and applying the writing process. In k-3 writing professional development, the gradual release of responsibility framework highlighted the importance of using modeling and scaffolding strategies to guide students toward independence, mastering writing skills, and metacognitive growth.

The Gradual Release Framework: "Writers in Motion Modeling Examples.

The "Writers in Motion" gradual release framework k-3 stations addressed key practices identified by third-grade teachers during the data analysis. With 60% of teachers emphasizing modeling and scaffolding in writing instruction, the station rotations provide a structured method to implement the strategies. Each activity highlighted the vertical alignment of writing skills, culminating in a third-grade focus on

essay elements and explicit modeling of informational and opinion writing. Rodriguez et al. (2021) noted that through observation, students focus cognitive resources on the model, which explains and demonstrates the writing process, thus initiating shared and independent performance.

The gradual release framework mirrors teachers' scaffolding approach with struggling writers, incorporating explicit instruction, collaborative practice, and guided support. Subsequently, Fisher and Frey (2021) explained that the shift from teacher responsibility and a parallel increase in student responsibility can occur gradually over the course of a lesson, day, week, month, or year. This hands-on professional development helps teachers apply modeling and scaffolding strategies that align with best practices in writing instruction.

Day Two: Daily Writing Routines (2:45 pm – 4:00 pm)

Teachers experience time constraints in writing instruction. Ryan et al. (2021) emphasized that writing requires high mental effort from children and takes time to develop. However, Bui and Hsieh (2024) argued that standardized testing and limited instructional time have negatively impacted writing. Six third-grade teachers, representing 60% of the participants in the study, reported inadequate time teaching writing to third-grade students. Similarly, Bhowmik and Kim (2023) reported that a lack of time was challenging. Participants noted that insufficient time limited the ability to provide feedback, work with individual students, complete teacher responsibilities, plan for, and include writing in the day's lesson. Professional development helps teachers develop skills. Owens (2024) stated that effective school reforms depend on changes in

practice facilitated by professional development to improve student outcomes. The ”Making Minutes Matter” activity helps teachers analyze how writing instruction is used during daily instruction. Grade-level teams use color-coding and grade-specific lesson plan templates to identify the current minutes of dedicated time to writing, possible writing integration opportunities, utilizing transitions, and instructional minutes lost. Teachers reflect and look for patterns that could be maximized for writing instruction.

Time Management Strategies. Quick write activities give students three to five minutes of focused practice on writing tasks. The writing bridges activity supports teachers in developing strategies to integrate writing into other subject areas, addressing concerns about balancing curriculum demands with limited instructional time. The mindful station refocuses students after lunch through creative writing tasks that help promote daily writing practice and build fluency, with the option to incorporate social-emotional learning into the writing tasks. Exit ticket writing offers students opportunities to reflect on their learning and express their thoughts in writing.

Writing Notebooks. Writing notebooks serve as essential organizational tools for quick writing activities and building a collection of student reflections. Kindergarten notebooks are designed to meet appropriate developmental needs and have space for drawing, while first and second-grade notebooks include structured writing prompts or sentence starters. Third-grade students may choose between traditional notebooks or the district’s digital platform, Writable. The systematic approach to organizing daily writing helps teachers maximize instructional writing time while documenting writing growth throughout the year.

Differentiation Planning. Differentiated instruction involves adapting the teaching-learning process to address students' diverse needs (Suwastini et al., 2021). Similarly, Eikeland and Ohna (2022) emphasized that differentiation acknowledges student diversity by considering the characteristics and needs of all learners. Day three concludes with teachers rotating through differentiation stations to address the concern from the data analysis that 70% of teachers experience difficulties with writing strategies caused by students' lack of foundational writing skills. K-3 teachers participate in three differentiation stations to brainstorm, practice, and reflect on various writing strategies to give students tiered writing support. A teacher coach at each station guides the stations. Green (2024) noted that literacy coaches enhance professional growth by collaborating with teachers in the classroom and utilizing the benefits of collaborative learning. Teacher coaches at each station provide hands-on, embedded guidance. Station One provides intensive writing support, helping teachers develop strategies to improve students' basic sentence structure. Station Two focuses on writing activities that expand and enhance sentence construction. Station Three addressed data analysis findings, emphasizing the balance of test preparation and authentic writing experiences. Teachers reflect on activities that promote student choice in writing through tools such as choice boards and self-assessed writing rubrics.

Table 6

Day Three: K-3 Writing Professional Development

Basic Theme	Schedule
Day 3 Theme: August	8:00-8:30 AM: Overview & Review Day 8:30-10:00 AM: Opinion Writing Progression - Grade-level progression overview - Vertical team activity: Opinion writing - Development of grade-specific strategies - Cross-grade toolkit creation 10:00-10:15 AM Break 10:15-12:00 PM: Informational Writing Progression - Grade-level progression overview - Vertical team activity: Informational texts - Research skills development - Cross-grade planning 12:00-1:00 PM: Lunch 1:00-2:30 PM: Assessment Design - Grade-specific assessment tools - Rubric development - Progress monitoring systems - Georgia Milestones alignment 2:30-2:45 Break 2:45-3:45 M Implementation Planning - Year-long implementation Pacing Schedule - Grade-level action plans - Vertical team coordination - Resource organization 3:45-4:00 PM: Closure and Next Steps 3:45 - 4:00 PM: Closure and Next Steps - Review of three-day learning - Preview of ongoing support - Exit tickets and feedback - Distribution of follow-up materials

Day Three: K-3 Writing Professional Development

Day Three: Opinion Writing Progression (8:30 am – 10:00 am)

The data analysis showed teacher concerns about inconsistencies in writing curriculum goals across the local school district, schools, and grade levels. Systemic change involves transforming the school system, districts, and schools.- to align all students and staff with shared educational goals (Babajide & Smith, 2022). Babajide and Smith emphasized that teachers are key to driving systemic change. In writing instruction, systemic change means aligning teaching approaches at all levels with common writing goals, with teachers having a key role in implementing these changes effectively in classrooms.

Opinion Writing Vertical Team Activity. Day three begins with a 90-minute professional development activity focused on opinion writing progression that addresses third-grade writing proficiency challenges. During the past seven years, the Georgia Milestones Assessment third-grade writing scores for the opinion and informational writing portions have not improved from the previous years in the local school district. (Georgia Milestones Assessment System, n.d.). Additionally, the data analysis revealed that 70% of teachers struggle with students' lack of foundational writing skills, making this vertical team activity beneficial. The activity addresses concerns about inconsistent writing curriculum goals within the local school system. The "Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to-Grade-Growth" activity established a systematic approach where K-3 teachers collaboratively create great-level appropriate opinion writing graphic organizers aligned with common core state writing standards rubrics. Graphic organizers

are an effective strategy for teaching writing, as studies show that visual aids improve students' writing skills (Lambe et al., 2023). Likewise, including the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) curriculum planning ensured consistency in instructional writing approaches among K-3 grade levels.

The "Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to-Grade-Growth" created a fluid, comprehensive approach for teachers to build shared understanding, create common resources, and establish a clear progression of opinion writing expectations across grade levels. An opinion essay is a type of writing in which the author presents and supports opinions logically, using relevant information from reliable sources (Squire & Clark, 2020). Lambe et al. (2023) emphasized that improving students' essay writing skills requires using appropriate learning strategies or tools. The cross-grade writing resources toolkit addressed the finding that 60% of teachers need effective professional development in writing instruction. The "Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to-Grade-Growth" and the digital resource hub allow teachers to find hands-on, implementable professional development resources to help improve writing instruction across grade levels, thus improving students' writing proficiency.

Day Three: Informational Writing Progression (10:15 am – 12:00 pm)

Local third-grade students are not meeting the minimum proficiency in opinion and informational writing as determined by annually mandated criterion-referenced assessments (Georgia Milestones System, n.d.). Recent Georgia Milestones Assessment Spring 2024 extended test scores showed that out of 1,429 third-graders in local Title 1 elementary schools, only 214, or 14.98%, met proficiency in extended writing on the

Georgia Milestones Assessment. The remaining 85.02% failed to meet minimum proficiency in opinion and informational writing, highlighting a significant problem with writing skills among the majority of local third-grade students.

Erbasan and Dedeoglu (2023) argued that each writing genre- narrative, creative, informative, and persuasive has unique characteristics and requires specific techniques, with informative being the most neglected. Similarly, Herbet et al. (2021) asserted that expository writing is particularly challenging for elementary students due to limited background knowledge and unfamiliar text structures. The data reveals a critical issue in writing skills among local third-grade students, particularly in opinion and informational writing, with only 14.98% achieving proficiency. The findings align with research emphasizing the neglect of informative writing and the need for targeted teaching of informational writing.

Informational Writing Vertical Team Activity. The 105-minute professional development session, "Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to-Grade-Growth," focused on informational writing progression and addressed challenges local teachers face due to students' lack of foundational writing skills and inconsistent curriculum implementation across grade levels. K-3 teachers create informational graphic organizers aligned with the HMH curriculum to meet the identified need for systematic writing instruction across kindergarten through third grade. Babajide and Smith (2022) contended that systemic change in writing instruction means changing methods at all levels to meet shared goals. Badajide and Smith emphasized that listening to teachers' ideas and experiences is key to making systemic changes that work in the classroom.

The professional development session, “Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to-Grade-Growth,” addressed the data analysis findings that teachers experienced sharp shifts in writing skills expectations across grade levels. By working in vertical teams, K-3 teachers can help bridge the documented writing gaps between grade levels. The professional development activity created a systematic approach to improving informational writing instruction by focusing on creating vertically aligned tools and strategies. This helps build the foundational skills students need to achieve writing proficiency, particularly in third grade, where state assessments reveal significant challenges in writing performance.

Day Three: Assessment Design (1:00 pm – 2:30 pm)

Writing Pre-Assessments. The assessment design professional development session focused on creating cohesive, spiraling assessments across grades k-3. Pan and Sana (2021) noted that practice assessments are among the most effective pedagogical techniques to enhance learning. Grade-level teams develop pre-assessments aligned with students’ developmental levels. The pre-assessments integrate with the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) curriculum and each module’s final writing performance task. Pre-testing, or errorful generation, involves taking practice tests before new content is learned (Pan & Sana, 2021). Kindergarten writing pre-assessment may use basic sentence frames, with simple drawing and labeling tasks, while first-grade teachers design multiple sentence frames. Second-grade focus on paragraph frames with topic sentences and supporting details, and third-grade teachers develop multi-paragraph outlines with

introductions, transition words, text evidence, and conclusions for more complex writing tasks.

Writing-Post-Assessments. Likewise, teachers create writing post-assessments that demonstrate skill progression and align with the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) end-of-module writing performance task expectations. Aligning post-assessments with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is crucial, especially with the Georgia Milestones Assessment in third grade. Tortorelli et al. (2022) argued that comprehensive teaching strategies should align with learning standards to support students' writing. Similarly, Benko et al. (2020) noted that the CCSS enables instruction across various writing genres, including informational, argumentative, and narrative. Post-assessments should assess students' ability to apply structure, content, and conventions according to the CCSS.

Post-assessments mirror the rigorous writing requirements of the CCSS and are designed to gradually increase in complexity across grade levels, building toward the expectations of state testing. During data analysis, third-grade teachers highlighted the challenge of preparing students for extended essay writing on the Georiga Milestones. Thus, post-testing or retrieval practice can improve the transfer of learning (Pan & Sana, 2021). In the professional development session, third-grade teachers design post-assessments using the HMH writing performance tasks, which integrate with the district-purchased digital writing platform *Writable*. The platform mirrors the Georgia Milestones writing task by offering a digital format with pair passages, text-dependent questions, and writing prompts that require evidence from both passages during essay writing.

Day Three: Implementation Planning (2:45 pm – 3:45 pm)

In the professional development session, teachers use the local school district's year-long pacing schedule to integrate the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) writing activities, addressing gaps in a systematic approach to writing instruction revealed by data analysis. The data showed inconsistency in writing curriculum across grade levels. Monthly professional learning communities (PLCs) provide dedicated time for grade-level teams to plan writing activities, directly addressing the finding that 60% of teachers need practical experience with professional development in writing instruction. Mariana-Petroze (2023) noted that teachers meet with grade-level partners during sessions to examine student data from common formative assessments and plan instruction to meet student needs. In contrast, Paltiel (2024) explained that PLCs differ from traditional teacher professional development, which often relies on outside expertise. PLCs provide a more data-driven, context-specific approach to writing instruction than traditional professional development, which may lack focused writing support.

K-3 vertical teams will meet regularly throughout the year to help bridge the gaps between grade levels and support the development of foundational writing skills, which 70% of teachers identified as a significant challenge. Vertical PLCs span grade levels, enabling school-wide conversations to align content and identify gaps in instructional sequence (Mariani-Petroze, 2023). Vertical PLCs help create a unified approach to writing instruction across grade levels. The K-3 Teachers Google Classroom Writing Resource Toolkit provides shared resources and consistent instructional approaches. The

common digital platform ensures that all teachers access the same resources and maintain consistency in writing instruction across grades.

Day Three: Closure and Next Steps (3:45 pm – 4:00 pm)

The professional development session concludes with teachers reviewing the key components of the three-day learning experience. A schedule for proposed monthly PLC team meetings and vertical team collaborations will be shared with participants. Teachers complete an evaluation survey on how the professional development will help them improve writing instruction regarding foundational skill development, curriculum consistency, and writing assessment preparation. Didem and Necdet (2023) highlighted that self-assessment is recommended in teacher training because it engages students, motivates participation, and promotes more focused and effective learning. Similarly, Warsi and Khursid (2022) noted that self-assessment can be combined with other methods, such as the teacher portfolio, classroom observation, and peer observation. The evaluation allows teachers to provide specific feedback on each aspect of the training, addressing the finding that 60% of teachers need more effective professional development experiences in writing instruction. The feedback will guide future sessions and ensure ongoing support aligns with teachers' expressed needs for practical writing strategies.

Key Stakeholders Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers in grades k-3, instructional coaches, and the researcher had specific roles and responsibilities during the professional development on writing instruction to support successful implementation. Dinil and Thoifah (2022) argued that positive

interactions are fostered when educators and stakeholders share ideas and suggestions to improve education. Similarly, Dewi et al. (2022) explained that stakeholders can be impacted by or can influence public policy. Based on the research findings from Title 1 third-grade teachers' experiences with writing instruction, the three key groups collaborated to improve writing instruction by identifying gaps while creating a systemic support system. The following sections detail the specific duties and expectations for each group of participants.

K-3 Teacher Roles & Responsibilities

Teacher participants are expected to actively participate in grade-level and vertical team activities and discussions, establish grade-specific writing and language benchmarks, develop implementation plans, and attend monthly follow-up support sessions during the school year. Mastery learning happens when teachers engage in professional learning, apply the strategies, and see measurable improvement in student outcomes (Guskey, 2022). Subsequently, teachers are encouraged to apply instructional writing strategies, including the *Writer's In Motion* modeling and scaffolding activities, color writing techniques, and time management strategies to ensure daily writing practice. Still, teacher autonomy is essential to professional growth (Green, 2024), indicating that independence in decision-making plays a crucial role in teachers' professional development. Participants will reflect on progress and challenges throughout the process.

Instructional Coaches' Roles & Responsibilities

Instructional coaches support teachers throughout the professional development sessions. Edwards and Steed (2021) emphasized that peer coaching encourages self-reflection and reduces the isolation often felt when teaching in early childhood. Coaches are responsible for modeling writing strategies, providing classroom support, conducting follow-up observations, offering feedback, facilitating grade-level meetings, and bridging communication between administration and teachers. Additionally, coaches assist with implementation challenges and collect data on the effectiveness of the session's writing strategies. Kho and Ismail (2024) highlighted the importance of building rapport and coaching collaboratively without hierarchy. Instructional coaching promotes a collaborative and supportive professional development environment that helps teachers to implement effective writing strategies and improve student outcomes.

Researcher's Role & Responsibilities

The researcher is responsible for ensuring that the professional development aligned with the identified needs revealed during the data analysis. Acting as a learner and collaborator (Hagues, 2021), the researcher supported teachers in reflecting on their practices (Yang et al., 2021). Key tasks included presenting research findings that inform the training, connecting teachers' experiences with writing strategies to proposed solutions, collecting follow-up data to assess the impact, and adjusting the professional development plan based on participant feedback. Action research involves a cycle of questing, data collection, reflection, and implementation (Nolan & Paatsch,2024). The researcher collaborated with teachers and instructional coaches to maintain consistent

implementation and document how the professional development addressed the gaps identified in the study.

Project Evaluation Plan

K-3 teachers participate in evaluation processes as part of the professional development implementation project. During the three-day training, teachers complete daily reflection forms (Appendix A) to evaluate the writing strategies' effectiveness and identify areas requiring clarification. Self-direction is a key part of adult learning, involving goal setting and the evaluation of progress (Hedeliza et al., 2022). The post-training survey (Appendix A) allows k-3 teachers to evaluate their understanding of key writing strategies, assess the practicality of implementation plans, and identify the needed support to guide future professional development.

The k-3 writing professional development will be evaluated quarterly to monitor teacher implementation and student progress. Multiple assessment approaches (goal-based, outcomes-based, summative, and formative) provide comprehensive program feedback. Action, collaboration, and reflection are essential in designing high-quality professional development programs (Hedeliza et al., 2022). Teachers focus on foundational writing skills, daily routines, color writing, and time management in the first quarter. Teachers reflect on strategy improvements during the second quarter and integrate writing into other subjects. In the third quarter, teachers assess how they prepare students for the Georgia Milestones Assessment while incorporating advanced writing strategies. During the fourth quarter, teachers evaluate overall program success by analyzing student writing growth and planning for next year. Hedeliza et al. emphasized

the importance of allowing time for reflection, input, collaboration, and continuous assessment to make necessary practice adjustments. Thus, quarterly evaluations provide a structured approach to monitor progress, support instructional improvements, and guide future planning.

The overall evaluation goal of the k-3 writing professional development project was to evaluate writing strategy implementation and the impact on student achievement. The project used various assessments, including outcomes-based, summative, and formative, to measure teachers' growth in understanding and applying effective strategies for teaching writing in kindergarten through third grade. Daily reflections during the three-day training and using quarterly evaluations supported ongoing improvement in measuring change in instructional practices. Mohammad and Xodabande (2024) noted that reflective practice is a key element of teacher education and professional development. The evaluation methods provided ongoing feedback and improvement of teaching methods while promoting professional growth through reflective practice.

Project Implications

Local Impact

The k-3 writing professional development project has the potential for social impact on the local district's educational practices and student outcomes. Kayyali (2022) stated that positive social change happens when there is an open space for dialogue, debate, diverse perspectives, idea-sharing, and collaborative problem-solving. Similarly, Roslan et al. (2022) suggested that social awareness encourages individuals to recognize community problems and develop creative solutions. Addressing foundational writing

skill gaps reported by 70% of teachers as a significant challenge, the project can help create equitable learning opportunities for students in Title 1 schools. The focus on vertical alignment and consistent writing instruction across grade levels addressed systematic issues revealed during the study, such as inconsistent writing curriculums and sudden increases in expectations between grades. Effective time management strategies and authentic writing activities could address concerns 60% of teachers reported about limited instructional time and low student engagement. The session's focus on building teacher collaboration and ongoing support addresses the need for more effective professional development, which 60% of teachers identified as lacking. These improvements in writing instruction could lead to better student performance on the Georgia Milestones Assessment and help close the achievement gap in writing proficiency between students at Title 1 and Non-Title 1 schools.

Broader Educational Impact

The professional development project addressing k-3 writing instruction has the potential for broader application because the challenges identified in the research, such as inadequate writing time, foundational skill gaps, more consistent writing instruction, and the need for vertical alignment, are common across U.S. schools. With up to 75% of students lacking basic writing skills (National Assessment of Educational Progress for Writing, 2021), writing proficiency remains a local and national issue, emphasizing the widespread need for targeted instructional improvements.

The project's focus on systematic writing instruction and vertical alignment addressed common concerns in elementary education. The emphasis on collaborative

learning and ongoing support reflected best professional development practices recognized nationwide. Puranik and Koutsoftas (2024) emphasized the importance of writing as a skill with developmental, cognitive, linguistic, academic, and social implications for elementary students. Puranik and Koutsoftas highlighted the need for early, focused writing instruction to support students' development and academic achievement. The writing strategies and experiences introduced through the professional development project could support teachers facing similar writing instruction challenges, regardless of state curriculum standards or assessment systems.

Conclusion

Section three outlined a professional development project to improve k-3 writing instruction, bridge foundational skill gaps, and improve student performance on the Georgia Milestones Assessment. The three-day intensive training, supported by monthly follow-up sessions, provided targeted, collaborative instruction across grade levels. The detailed implementation timeline spanned an academic year, starting with summer training and continuing with monthly grade-level meetings and vertical team sessions. Evaluation methods included feedback through post-training surveys and long-term measures such as student writing samples, teacher implementation data, and assessment scores. This systematic approach to improving writing instruction supported the local Title 1 schools and offered a potential model for addressing similar writing instruction challenges in other districts. Section four will outline the project's strengths and limitations, propose alternative approaches, reflect on the work's importance, and suggest future research directions.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The research, findings, and development of this k-3 writing professional development project showed that teachers need ongoing, systematic support for effective writing instruction. Babajide and Smith (2022) emphasized that teachers are not just participants but key catalysts of the transformation process, highlighting a crucial role in driving systemic change. The project offered vertical classroom writing strategies that span across grade levels in response to teachers' challenges with foundational skills, instructional gaps, and time management. While the professional development is spread over three full summer days, monthly follow-up sessions and quarterly vertical team meetings provide continuous support for consistent writing improvement. According to Dyosini (2024), ongoing professional development equips teachers with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to meet the changing demands of education. Color writing strategies, time management techniques, and authentic writing experiences are components of the project that meet teachers' needs while maintaining rigorous standards. The project offered a possible way to improve writing instruction and create collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs) that support ongoing instructional development.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

Based on the needs identified in the research, the professional development project addressed the specific needs of 60% of teachers who experienced challenges teaching writing strategies and 70% who faced difficulties with foundational skills. The

three-day writing training program, supported by monthly PLCs and quarterly vertical team meetings, reflected research showing that ongoing professional development is more effective than isolated training (Harris et al., 2022). Similarly, Meyer et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of collaboration in transforming school culture and teaching practices. These approaches strengthened the project and ensured teachers continued to receive help to support writing instruction and foundational skills. Similarly, the activities progressed from foundational writing to more complex writing tasks, including specific grade-level strategies and assessments, without neglecting the need for authentic writing experiences in the context of test preparation.

Project Limitations

The professional development project required teachers to ensure that the strategies implemented were consistent across grade levels to prevent gaps in writing instruction that inconsistent practices might cause. Ryan et al. (2023) noted that practice-based professional development needs significant time for teachers to apply new strategies effectively. Therefore, combining multiple new strategies at once, along with regular instruction, could be overwhelming. Since the project was focused on grade-specific writing strategies, it may require greater concentration on differentiation strategies for diverse learners or exceptional students. Grahan et al. (2023) stated that improving writing outcomes for students with learning disabilities requires educators to be well-prepared, confident in teaching writing, and believe students can develop strong writing skills. Additionally, holding full-day sessions during the summer may limit participation. Likewise, arranging grade-level and vertical team meetings might face

challenges. These limitations and emphasis on teacher preparation, consistency, and differentiation should be addressed to ensure the project effectively improves writing instruction and supports all learners.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

A digital learning platform focusing on helping teachers teach writing skills is an alternative to traditional professional development methods for writing instruction. Shvardak et al. (2024) explained that the rapid development of digital technologies is transforming all aspects of life, especially in the professional training of primary school teachers. Online learning is a comprehensive experience for teachers with digital resources and virtual coaching to support self-paced learning modules. Digitization of education refers to using digital tools to create, process, exchange, and transfer information in the educational process (Shaxnoza, 2022). Strategies for writing, classroom implementation, virtual practice, and assessments are engaged by teachers at their own pace. Additional support is provided through virtual coaching, including one-on-one meetings, video classroom observations, feedback on recorded lessons, and virtual office hours. A comprehensive digital library of the platform has various writing resources, such as lesson plans, printable materials, and recorded model lessons. Through online professional learning communities, including Zoom meetings and discussion boards, teachers share strategies, successes, and challenges. Digital technology supports innovative teaching methods and collaboration (Qureshi et al., 2021) and enhances new approaches to learning and teaching. Thus, integrating digital technologies into

professional development programs can enhance teachers' ability to adapt to evolving educational needs and improve instructional practices.

Advantages of a digital learning platform for writing instruction include the ability to complete learning modules at one's own pace, immediate availability of resources, and low delivery cost. Shvardak et al. (2024) agreed that digital technologies in education include instant access to information and training in essential skills in working with information sources. However, potential challenges to consider are ensuring technology access and reliability, maintaining engagement in a virtual format, ensuring implementation fidelity, and building community virtually. Additionally, Moraes et al. (2023) noted that easy access to vast amounts of information can lead to overload, particularly when students struggle to process and analyze large data flows. The challenge is also relevant in online professional development for teachers, where many digital resources may overwhelm educators if the resources are not selected carefully to support practical learning and skill application.

Alternative Problem-Solutions Approaches

An alternative issue is the lack of time for writing instruction. Even with effective strategies and professional development, writing proficiency is unlikely to improve without daily dedicated instruction. Ryan et al. (2021) emphasized that writing requires significant mental effort from children and takes time to develop. Similarly, Graham (2022) supported this, noting that children's writing skills improve through regular practice. Still, Ray et al. (2023) found that while the complexity of writing demands consistent instruction and practice, only 20 to 25 minutes per day are allocated to writing

in elementary classrooms. This indicates a systemic scheduling issue that prevents adequate writing time. A potential solution is to redesign master schedules to include protected writing blocks and to embed writing instruction into content areas. In Title 1 schools, the local district should implement dedicated skills block time for teaching, remediation, and writing practice.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Pursuing doctoral studies and having a full-time teaching position presents scholarship opportunities for meaningful qualitative research. Ralston and Waggoner (2024) stated that EdD practitioner-scholars enhance their ability to use data, conduct research, and address the community's needs. Similarly, Morales-Contreras et al. (2024) described practitioner-scholars as professionals who study real-world problems in real-world contexts and are intellectually curious individuals dedicated to generating, expanding, and transferring rigorous knowledge. Serving as a teacher and researcher has provided unique insights into addressing the critical challenge of writing proficiency, where 86% of local third-grade students are not meeting minimum standards in opinion and informational writing on the Georgia Milestones Assessment.

The daily realities of teaching writing informed the research into teachers' experiences with instructional writing strategies and creating a professional development project that prescribed solutions. Wilson and Anagnostopoulos (2021) stated that qualitative research explores social phenomena by understanding people's perspectives in specific settings. Ravitch and Carl (2021) added that it captures the complexity of human social nature through interviews, conversations, and recordings, offering authentic

insights and unique findings rather than generalized observations. Through the qualitative research process, a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences through systematic analysis of interview data was explored using systematic coding approaches, and gaps in writing instruction support were identified. Converting qualitative data into a practical professional development project in conjunction with existing research on effective professional learning was important. Teaching while researching and studying instructional practices improved my ability to design effective professional development to address local problems and improve students' writing proficiency.

Project Development and Evaluation

Developing a professional development project based on qualitative research revealed the need to align teachers' needs with practical solutions. After analyzing interview data from ten third-grade teachers, there were clear patterns regarding challenges in writing instruction in terms of foundational skills, time management, and vertical alignment. The findings informed the project's design of creating a three-day comprehensive training that monthly PLCs and quarterly vertical team meetings would support. Viviv Krabonja et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of professional learning communities (PLCs) in promoting continuous, reflective, and collaborative professional development for educators. Evaluating the research findings helped me translate concerns into practical professional development components.

The project was designed for multiple stakeholders while being practical to implement. Monteiro et al. (2021) argued that focusing on assessment is important for developing teaching and learning processes. Thus, it was important to have clear

evaluation procedures to track progress and grade-specific strategy adaptations. Collaboration, distributing resources, using professional learning communities, and coaching support to create ongoing improvements in writing instruction practices were key components of the project. Also important was translating research into practical professional development for effective writing instruction and the flexibility to adapt the program based on teacher feedback and student outcomes.

Leadership and Change

Through this research and professional development project, I developed key leadership skills. Richardson et al. (2021) emphasized that effective leaders have vision, authenticity, and a commitment to learning; they trust teachers, embrace new approaches, communicate change, prioritize equity, and challenge norms. Applying the knowledge I have acquired through learning about qualitative research to help guide the development of a project, including conducting and analyzing interviews, highlighted the need to meet teachers' needs while ensuring that writing instruction is grounded in clear goals. My experiences illustrate how intentional leadership and research-based methods can lead to positive change and improve writing instruction in the local school district.

The project strengthened my skills in building professional learning communities (PLCs) in conjunction with new writing strategies for the local school district. Mintrop et al. (2022) emphasized that deeper learning is challenging but can be effectively supported through collaborative teamwork. Facilitating monthly grade-level and vertical team sessions helped me to understand the importance of supporting the diverse needs of each teacher while maintaining high expectations for writing instruction. Moreover, I

developed my ability to listen to teachers' instructional needs and empower them by providing opportunities to share expertise and take ownership of writing instruction improvements. Ytterstad and Olaisen (2023) stated that transformational leadership inspires task improvement, innovation, shared vision, trust, and collaboration. The leadership skills I have gained will continue to be helpful in future efforts to support teacher growth and student achievement.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

This research has helped in understanding the challenges and opportunities of elementary writing instruction within Title 1 schools. The district data revealed that from 2018 to 2024, less than 15% of third-grade students reached proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment's writing portions, indicating a systemic writing challenge in Title 1 schools. The study was in response to a critical gap in educational practice between required writing standards and classroom implementation. Lewis (2024) explained that while the Common Core State Standards hold teachers accountable for students' writing performance, they fail to provide educators with specific instructional strategies. Lewis emphasized the need to research effective instructional practices and scaffolds aligned with writing-genre expectations. This study explored this disconnect by examining teachers' direct experience and challenges with writing strategies for students in hopes of identifying potential solutions.

The study provided key information on improving writing instruction in elementary schools. Vertical alignment and spiraling of writing instruction from kindergarten through third grade were essential for the systematic progression of writing

skills, with each grade level to build upon previously learned skills. Tortorelli et al. (2022) argued that different views on early writing development across preschool and early elementary settings can create confusion about writing processes, age-appropriate skills, and effective learning experiences. Tortorelli emphasized the importance of developmentally sequenced standards to help teachers link precursor and future skills to current performance expectations within their students' age band. Therefore, there is a need for cohesive, developmentally aligned writing instruction to bridge gaps and support continuous writing growth throughout the elementary grades.

There is a need to balance standardized testing requirements and authentic writing experiences that genuinely engage students in the writing process. Ryan et al. (2023) found that current assessment practices restrict students' opportunities to produce writing for purposes beyond system evaluation. Gardner and Kuzick (2022) supported these findings, adding that teachers must implement meaningful and authentic writing experiences to counter these limitations. Also crucial is teacher professional development to implement successful writing strategies and fill the gap in fundamental skills. Owens (2024) argued that school reforms depend on changes in practice, with professional development as a key step for improving student outcomes. Similarly, Viviv Krabonja et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of lifelong learning, alongside quality university education, to equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

This research is important because it highlights the challenges in teaching writing and offers ways to improve it through systematic changes. The research showed the need for improved writing instruction alignment across grade levels to help students build

writing skills year by year. It also stressed that focusing too much on standardized testing preparation limits students' opportunities to practice meaningful and engaged writing. Finally, teachers need more support and professional development to use effective strategies in the classroom. Improving writing instruction across grade levels requires teamwork and ongoing support for teachers so that all students can succeed.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Teachers and administrators in Title 1 schools should concentrate on creating a vertically aligned writing curriculum from kindergarten through third grade that systematically builds foundational writing skills. This approach is supported by findings that 70% of teachers found it challenging to practice advanced writing strategies due to students' lack of basic skills. Moreover, schools in the local district need dedicated writing blocks in daily schedules. Ray et al. (2023) argued that most teachers dedicate insufficient time to writing despite its complexity, requiring extensive and sustained instruction and practice. Juuti et al. (2021) recommended that ongoing professional development should foster collaboration among teachers, learners, and researchers to create professional development opportunities. Systematic writing instruction, dedicated writing time, and ongoing professional development are all necessary to help teachers with practical strategies to warrant consistent, high-quality writing instruction across grades.

Future Research

Future research could build on this study to extend understanding of writing instruction and student achievement. A valuable direction would involve exploring

writing instruction and teachers' experiences in fourth and fifth grades when students are expected to write even more complex, analytical pieces. Widiastuti et al. (2024) emphasized that writing is the most complex skill, requiring the ability to organize thoughts and ideas in a coherent manner that readers understand. Wargadinata et al. (2021) noted that mastering writing is more challenging than other language skills, like listening, speaking, and reading. Investigating upper elementary grades could show how foundational skill gaps identified in third grade affect later performance and support vertical planning across all elementary grades. Therefore, gaps in skills should be addressed early on to support writing development throughout all grade levels.

The above analysis also revealed that future studies could identify which writing strategies are most efficient for Title 1 students by comparing various teaching methods. For instance, researchers might look at the impact of a dedicated writing block on writing performance and on the implementation of color writing on writing performance. Studies might also examine how different standardized test preparation approaches and authentic writing activities influence student interest and Georgia Milestones achievement in all elementary grades. Fellowes (2021) emphasized that giving students an authentic audience and purpose is an effective teaching strategy. Chen et al. (2022) agreed and found that poor writing performance and low motivation to write come from a lack of authentic writing experiences. Thus, future research could create a springboard for investigating specific strategies and interventions that may improve writing achievement across all grade levels.

Conclusion

In elementary Title 1 schools, there is a disconnect where third-grade students are expected to write in a deeper, sophisticated manner, and classroom support is lacking. For instance, over seven years, only 15% of students achieved proficiency on the Georgia Milestones Assessment, which points to a more significant issue beyond classroom challenges. The study revealed a complex network of issues, including significant challenges with foundational skills, insufficient time spent on writing instruction, and a critical need for practical professional development.

The study exposed a gap between the complex writing requirements of the Common Core State Standards and the difficulties of teaching them to students. The findings showed the need to rethink writing instruction in Title 1 schools by developing a cohesive skills progression from kindergarten through third grade and enhancing teacher preparation. As writing becomes more essential for academic and career achievement, this research provided a framework for reducing achievement gaps and enabling all students to develop the writing skills they need to succeed.

This research revealed that the persistent gap in writing achievement does not end with writing performance; instead, it indicates persistent gaps in the opportunity to learn. When 85% of students have difficulty meeting basic writing proficiency, early educational gaps limit future possibilities. Changing writing instruction in Title 1 schools means systemic change in how we prepare and support teachers and students. Writing proficiency is not just a skill to be taught; it is a fundamental right that should precede academic and professional success.

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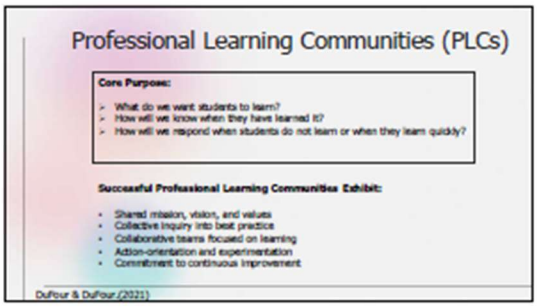
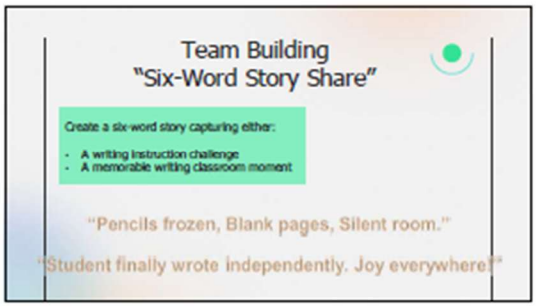
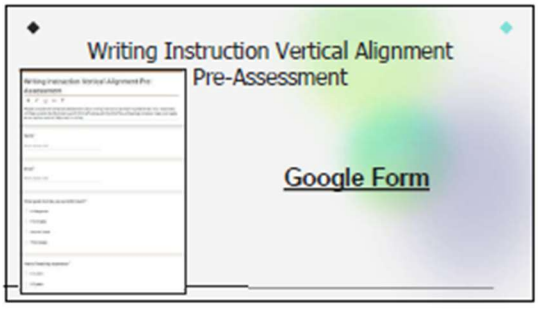
Appendix A: The Project

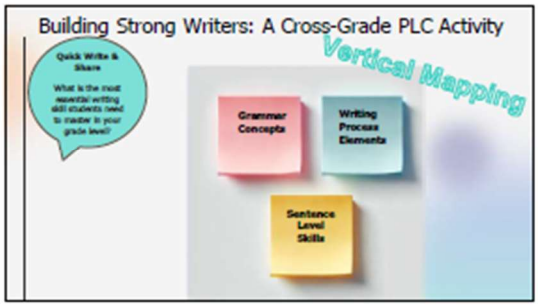




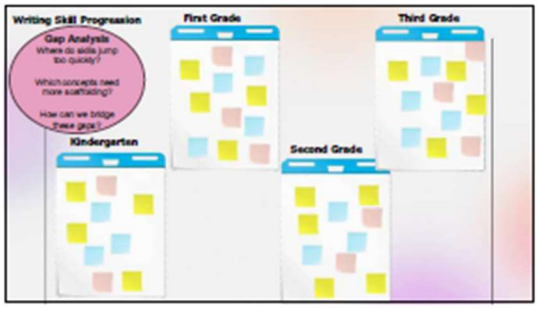


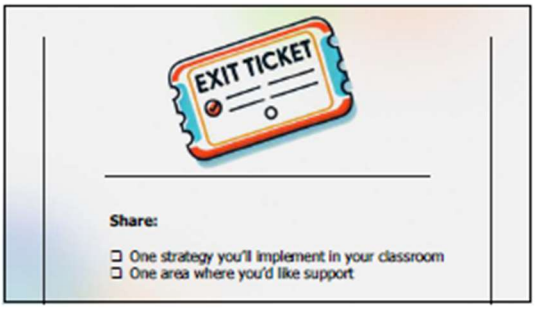

Developmental Stages in Writing
K-1st
Foundational writing

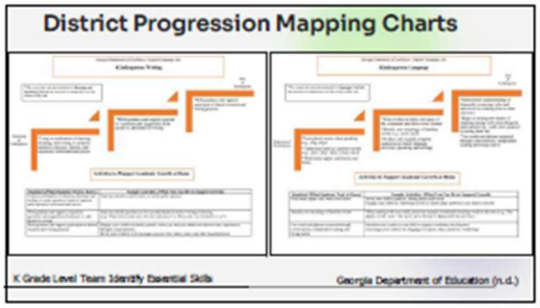

Developmental Stages in Writing
2nd-3rd
Fluency writing

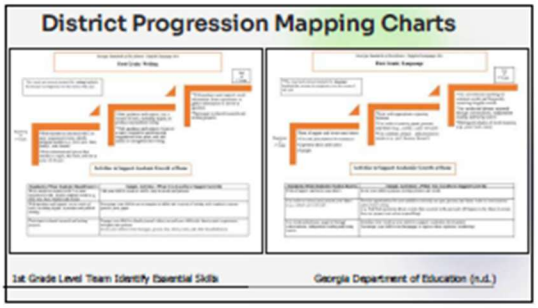

Building Strong Writers: A Cross-Grade PLC Activity
Quick Write & Share
Vertical Mapping
Grammar Concepts
Writing Process Elements
Sentence Level Skills

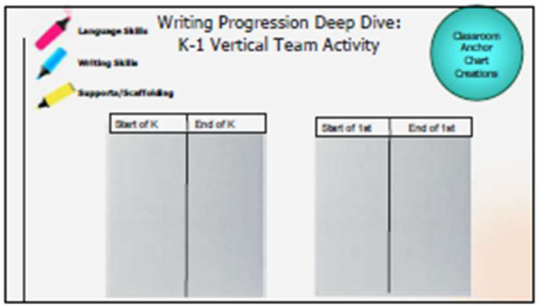

Local Data Analysis

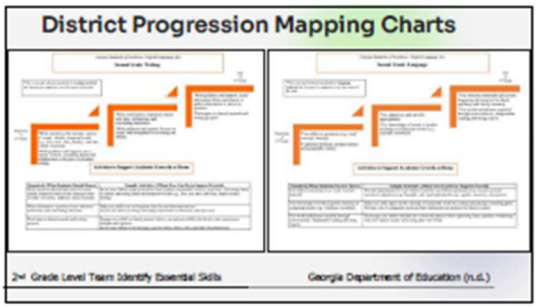

Writing Skill Progression
Gap Analysis
First Grade
Third Grade
Kindergarten
Second Grade

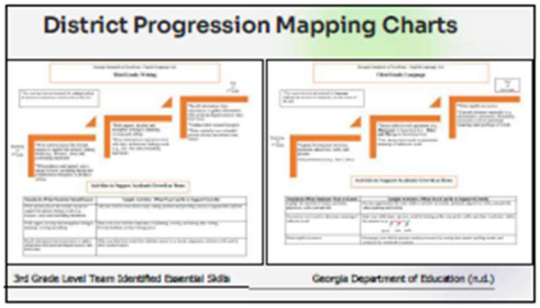

EXIT TICKET
Share:
One strategy you'll implement in your classroom
One area where you'd like support

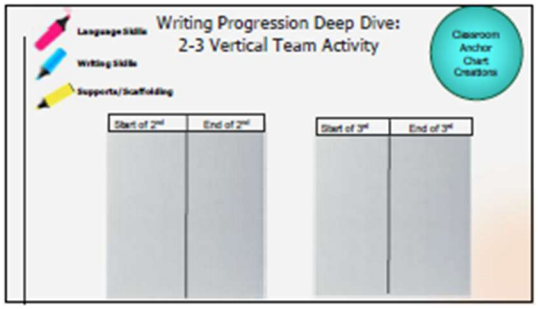

District Progression Mapping Charts
K Grade Level Team Identify Essential Skills
Georgia Department of Education (n.d.)

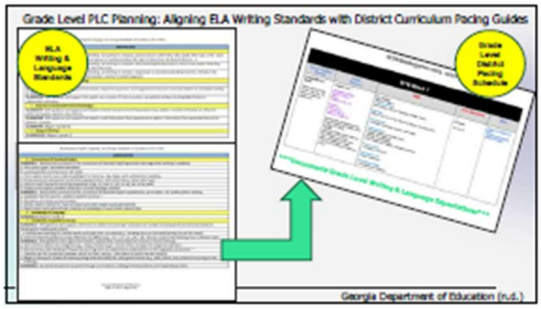

District Progression Mapping Charts
1st Grade Level Team Identify Essential Skills
Georgia Department of Education (n.d.)


Language Skills
Writing Skills
Supports/Scaffolding
Writing Progression Deep Dive:
K-1 Vertical Team Activity
Classroom Anchor Chart Creations
Start of K
End of K
Start of 1st
End of 1st

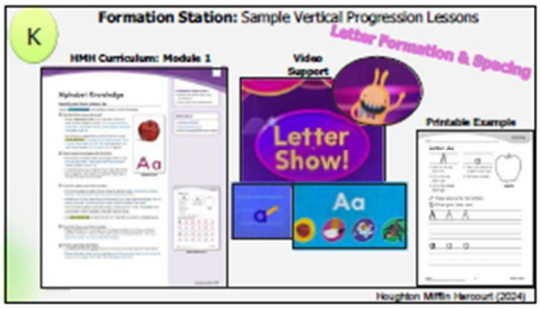

District Progression Mapping Charts
2nd Grade Level Team Identify Essential Skills
Georgia Department of Education (n.d.)

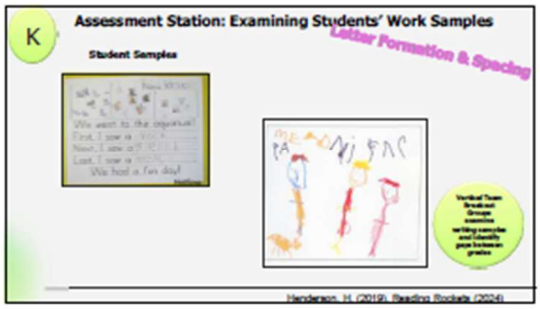

District Progression Mapping Charts
3rd Grade Level Team Identified Essential Skills
Georgia Department of Education (n.d.)

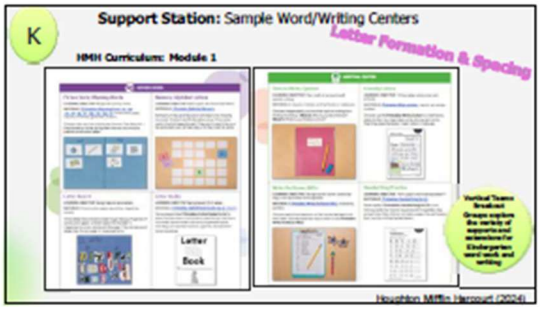

Language Skills
Writing Skills
Supports/Scaffolding
Writing Progression Deep Dive:
2-3 Vertical Team Activity
Classroom Anchor Chart Creations
Start of 2nd
End of 2nd
Start of 3rd
End of 3rd

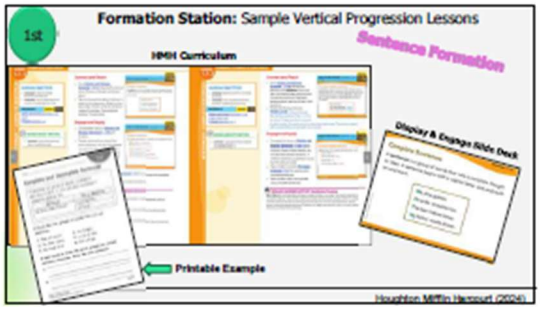

Grade Level PLC Planning: Aligning ELA Writing Standards with District Curriculum Pacing Guides
ELA Writing & Language Standards
District Level Pacing Schedule
Georgia Department of Education (n.d.)

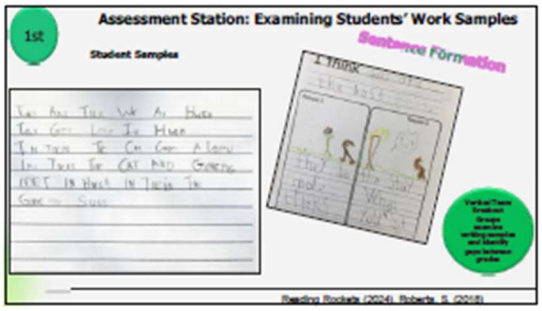

Vertical Teams
Writing Development
Using the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Curriculum

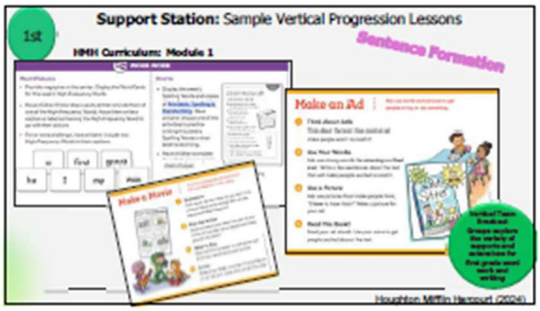

K
Formation Station: Sample Vertical Progression Lessons
Letter Formation & Spacing
HMH Curriculum: Module 1
Video Support
Letter Show!
Printable Example
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

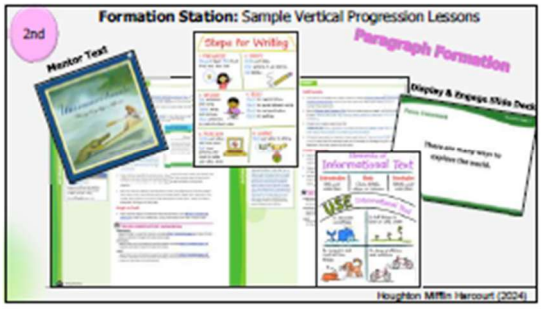

K
Assessment Station: Examining Students' Work Samples
Letter Formation & Spacing
Student Samples
Vertical Team Breakout Groups examine writing samples and identify gaps between grades
Henderson, H. (2019). Reading Rockets (2024)

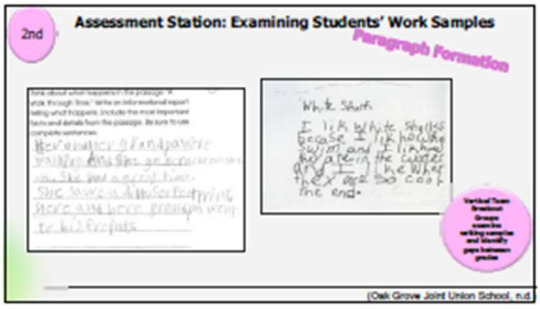

K
Support Station: Sample Word/Writing Centers
Letter Formation & Spacing
HMH Curriculum: Module 1
Letter Book
Vertical Teams Breakout Groups explore the variety of supports and extensions for Kindergarten word work and writing
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

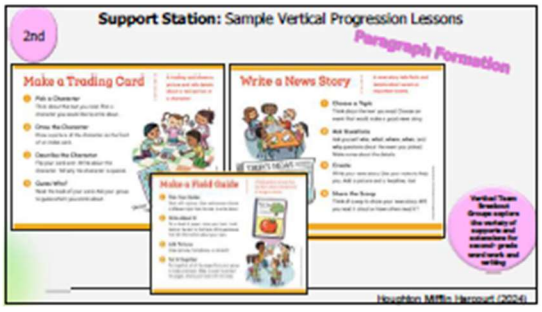

1st
Formation Station: Sample Vertical Progression Lessons
Sentence Formation
HMH Curriculum
Display & Engage Slide Deck
Printable Example
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

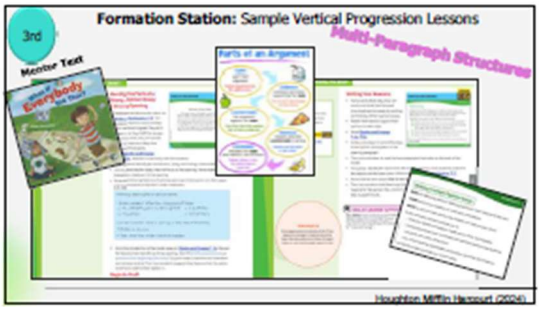

1st
Assessment Station: Examining Students' Work Samples
Student Samples
Sentence Formation
Reading Rockets (2024), Roberts, S. (2018)

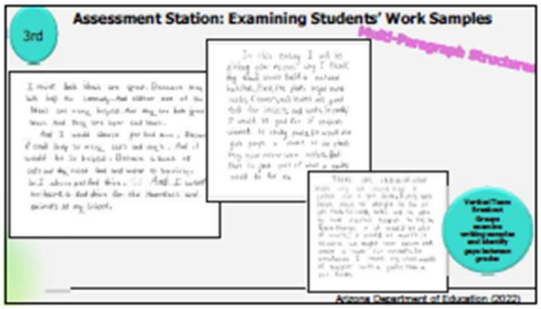

1st
Support Station: Sample Vertical Progression Lessons
HMH Curriculum: Module 1
Sentence Formation
Make an iMd
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

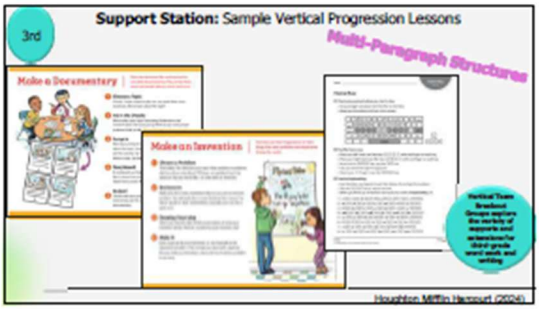

2nd
Formation Station: Sample Vertical Progression Lessons
Mentor Text
Steps for Writing
Paragraph Formation
Informational Text
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

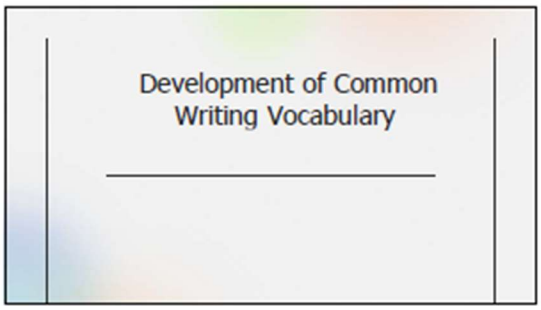

2nd
Assessment Station: Examining Students' Work Samples
Paragraph Formation
(Oak Grove Joint Union School, n.d

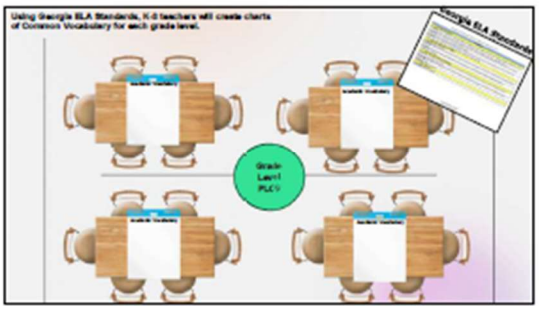

2nd
Support Station: Sample Vertical Progression Lessons
Paragraph Formation
Make a Trading Card
Write a News Story
Make a Field Guide
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

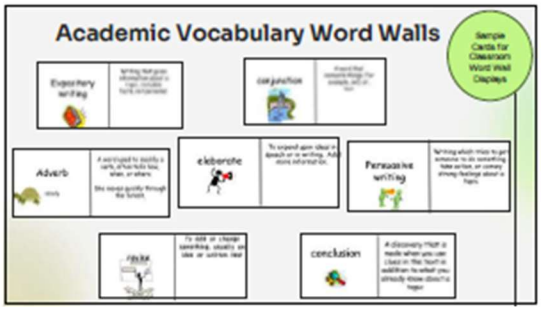

3rd
Formation Station: Sample Vertical Progression Lessons
Multi-Paragraph Structures
Mentor Text
Parts of an Argument
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

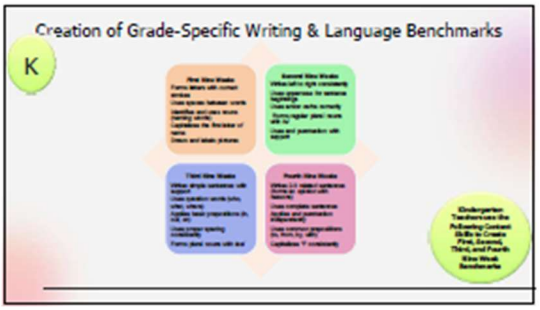

3rd
Assessment Station: Examining Students' Work Samples
Multi-Paragraph Structures
Arizona Department of Education (2022)

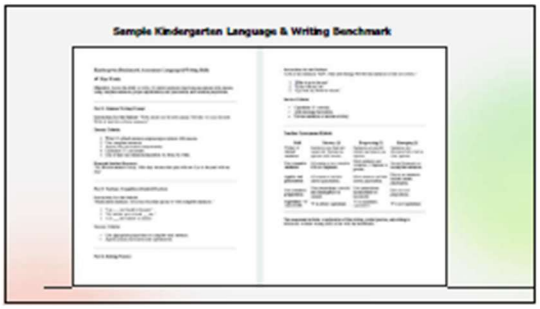

3rd
Support Station: Sample Vertical Progression Lessons
Multi-Paragraph Structures
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)


Development of Common Writing Vocabulary

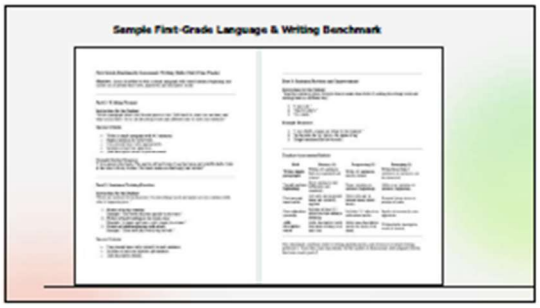

Grade Level PLCs


Academic Vocabulary Word Walls
Sample Cards for Classroom Word Wall Displays
Adverb
elaborate
Persuasive writing
conclusion

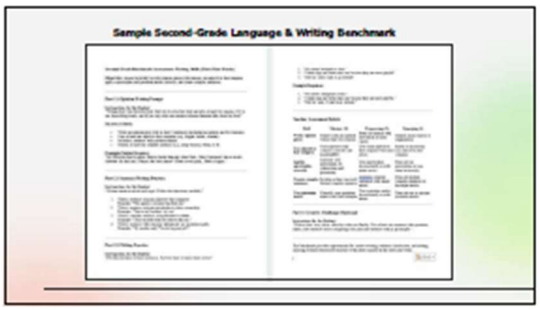

Creation of Grade-Specific Writing & Language Benchmarks
K


Sample Kindergarten Language & Writing Benchmark

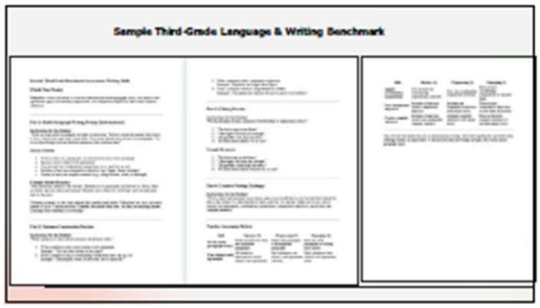

Creation of Grade-Specific Writing & Language Benchmarks
1st

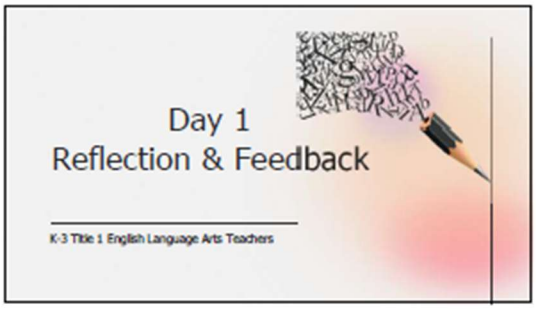

Sample First-Grade Language & Writing Benchmark


Creation of Grade-Specific Writing & Language Benchmarks
2nd

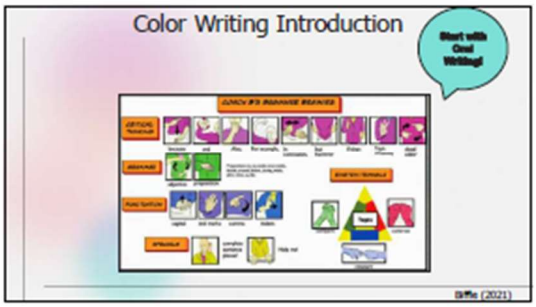

Sample Second-Grade Language & Writing Benchmark

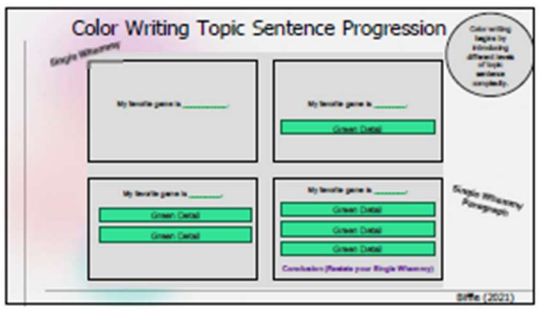

Creation of Grade-Specific Writing & Language Benchmarks
3rd

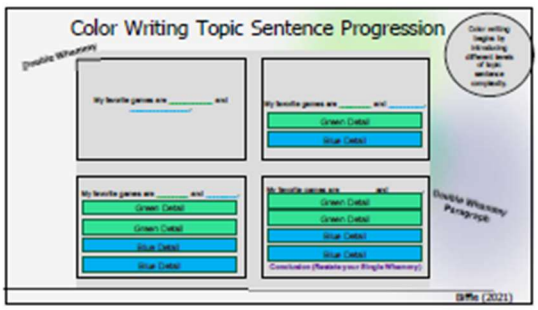

Sample Third-Grade Language & Writing Benchmark

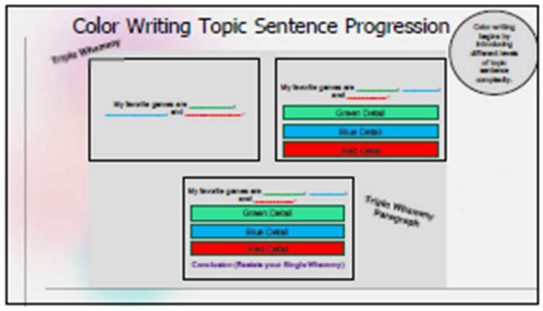

Day 1
Reflection & Feedback
K-3 Title 1 English Language Arts Teachers

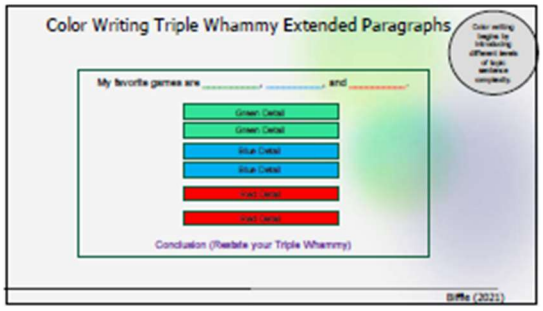

Day Two
July Training

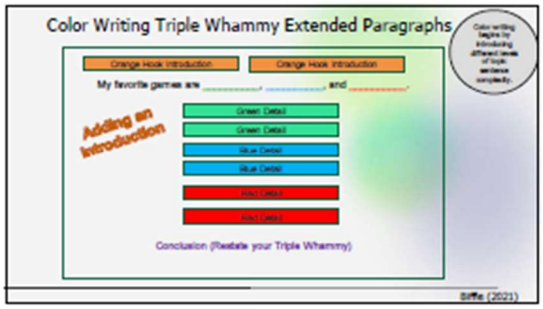

Color Writing Introduction
Start with Oral Writing!
Biffle (2021)

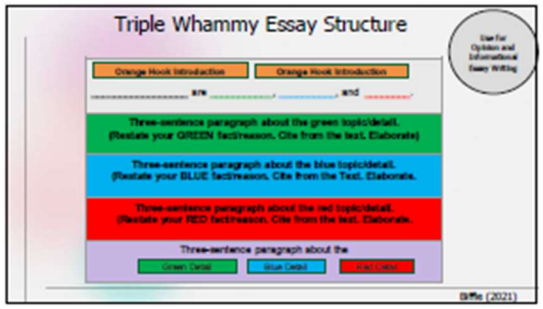

Color Writing Topic Sentence Progression
Single Whammy
Color writing begins by introducing different levels of topic sentence complexity.
My favorite game is _____.
Green Detail
Green Detail
My favorite game is _____.
Green Detail
Green Detail
My favorite game is _____.
Green Detail
Green Detail
Green Detail
Conclusion (Restate your Single Whammy)
Single Whammy Paragraph
Biffle (2021)

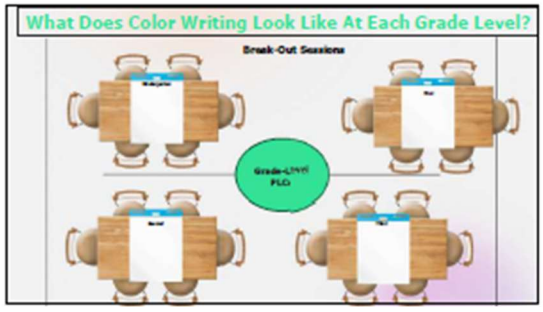

Color Writing Topic Sentence Progression
Double Whammy
Color writing begins by introducing different levels of topic sentence complexity.
My favorite games are _____ and _____.
Green Detail
Blue Detail
Green Detail
Green Detail
Blue Detail
Blue Detail
Green Detail
Green Detail
Blue Detail
Blue Detail
Conclusion (Restate your Single Whammy)
Double Whammy Paragraph
Biffle (2021)

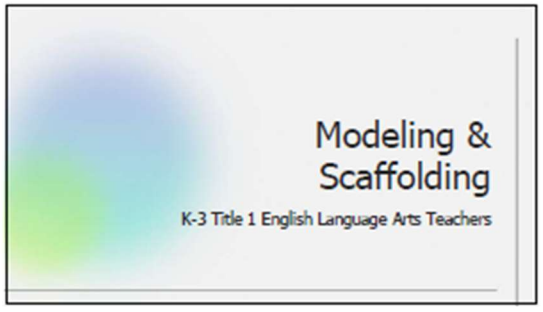

Color Writing Topic Sentence Progression
Triple Whammy
Triple Whammy Paragraph

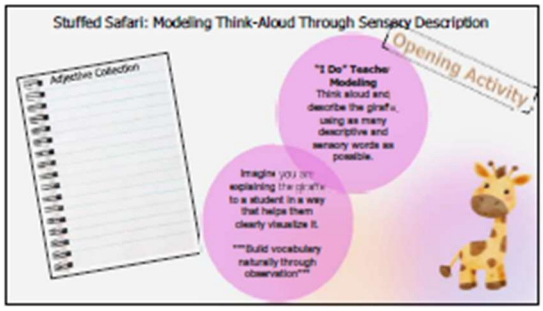

Color Writing Triple Whammy Extended Paragraphs
Conclusion (Restate your Triple Whammy)
Biffle (2021)

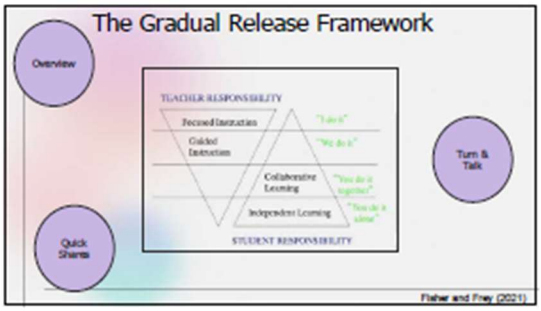

Color Writing Triple Whammy Extended Paragraphs
Orange Hook Introduction
Orange Hook Introduction
Adding an Introduction
Conclusion (Restate your Triple Whammy)
Biffle (2021)

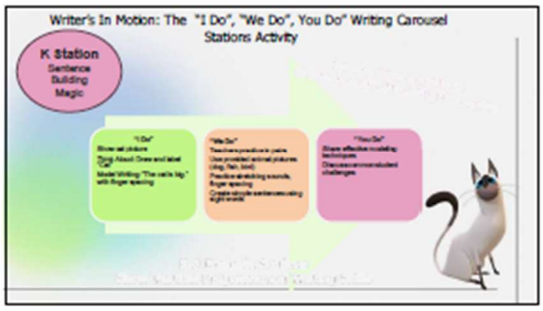

Triple Whammy Essay Structure
Orange Hook Introduction
Orange Hook Introduction
Three-sentence paragraph about the green topic/detail.
(Restate your GREEN fact/reason. Cite from the text. Elaborate)
Three-sentence paragraph about the blue topic/detail.
(Restate your BLUE fact/reason. Cite from the Text. Elaborate.
Three-sentence paragraph about the red topic/detail.
(Restate your RED fact/reason. Cite from the text. Elaborate.
Three-sentence paragraph about the
Biffle (2021)

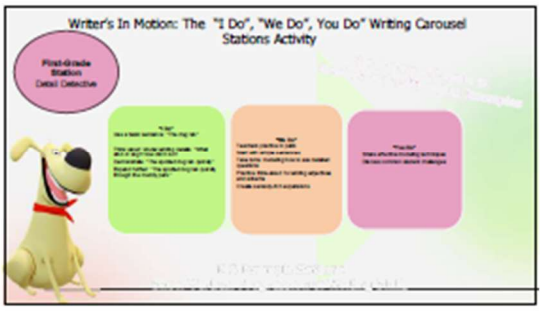

What Does Color Writing Look Like At Each Grade Level?
Break-Out Sessions
Grade-Level PLC


Modeling & Scaffolding
K-3 Title 1 English Language Arts Teachers


Stuffed Safari: Modeling Think-Aloud Through Sensory Description
Opening Activity
Adjective Collection
"I Do" Teacher Modeling
Think aloud and describe the giraffe, using as many descriptive and sensory words as possible.
Imagine you are explaining the giraffe to a student in a way that helps them clearly visualize it.
Build vocabulary naturally through observation

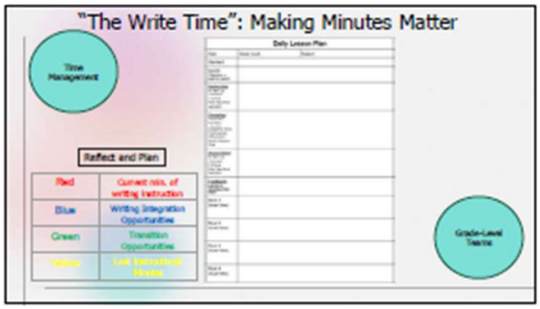

The Gradual Release Framework
Overview
TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY
Focused Instruction
"I do it"
Guided Instruction
"We do it"
Collaborative Learning
"You do it together"
Independent Learning
"You do it alone"
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY
Turn & Talk
Quick Shares
Fisher and Frey (2021)

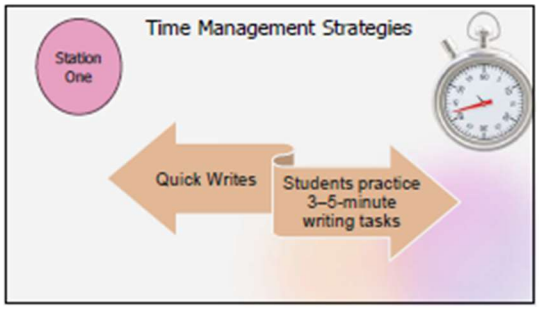

Writer's In Motion: The "I Do", "We Do", You Do" Writing Carousel Stations Activity
K Station
Sentence Building Magic
"I Do"
"We Do"
"You Do"


Writer's In Motion: The "I Do", "We Do", You Do" Writing Carousel Stations Activity
First-Grade Station
Detail Detective

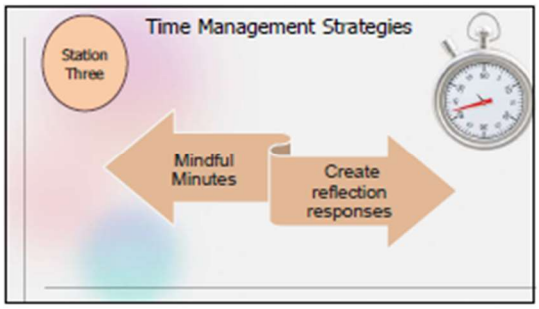

Writer's In Motion: The "I Do", "We Do", You Do" Writing Carousel Stations Activity
Second-Grade Station
Paragraph Puzzlers

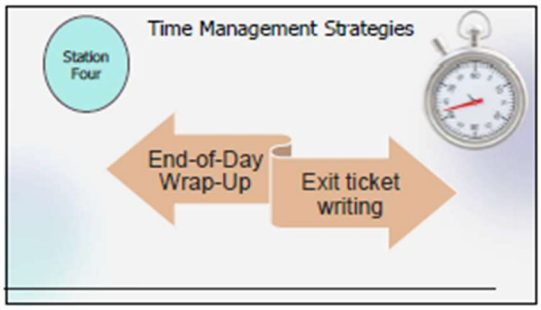

Writer's In Motion: The "I Do", "We Do", You Do" Writing Carousel Stations Activity
Third-Grade Station
Essay Elements

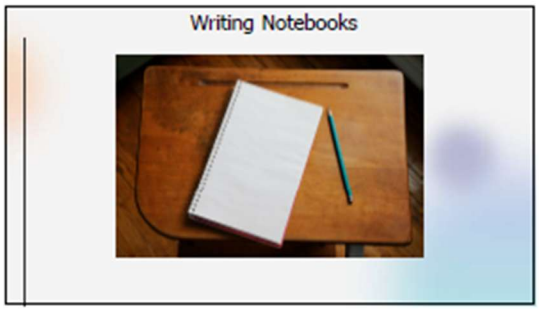

"The Write Time": Making Minutes Matter
Time Management
Reflect and Plan
Red
Current mix of writing instruction
Blue
Writing Integration Opportunities
Green
Transition Opportunities
Grade-Level Teams

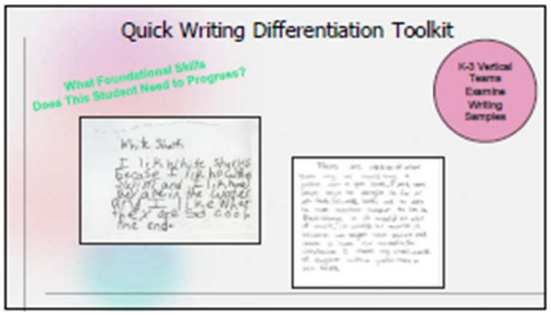

Time Management Strategies
Station One
Quick Writes
Students practice 3–5-minute writing tasks

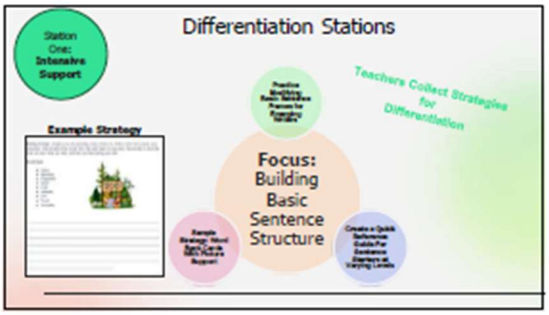

Time Management Strategies
Station Two
Writing Bridges
Create cross-curricular writing opportunities

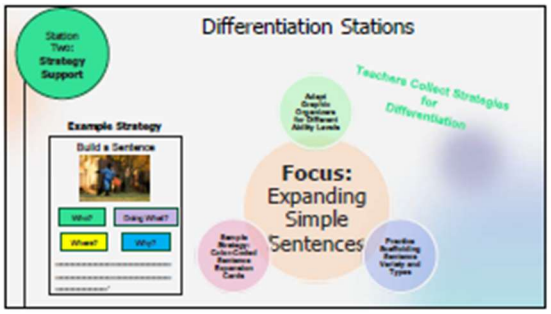

Time Management Strategies
Station Three
Mindful Minutes
Create reflection responses

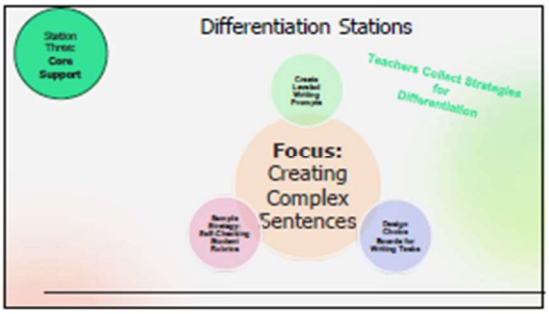

Time Management Strategies
Station Four
End-of-Day Wrap-Up
Exit ticket writing


Writing Notebooks

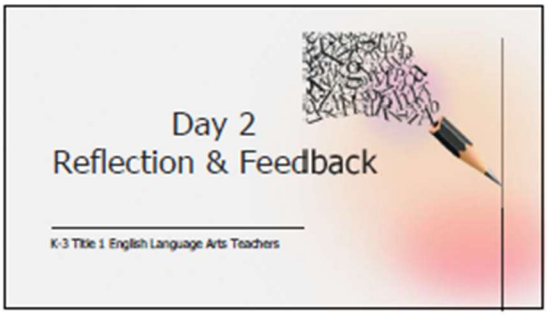

Quick Writing Differentiation Toolkit
What Foundational Skills Does This Student Need to Progress?
K-3 Vertical Teams Examine Writing Samples


Station One: Intensive Support
Differentiation Stations
Teachers Collect Strategies for Differentiation
Example Strategy
Focus: Building Basic Sentence Structure

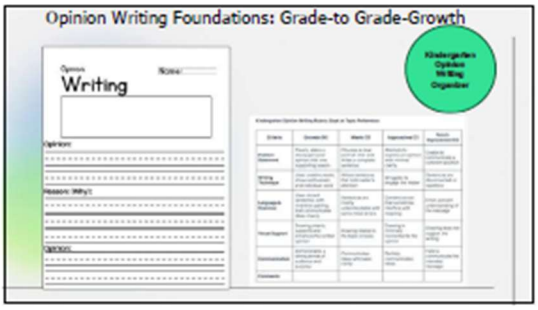

Station Two: Strategy Support
Differentiation Stations
Teachers Collect Strategies for Differentiation
Example Strategy
Build a Sentence
Who?
Doing What?
Where?
Why?
Focus: Expanding Simple Sentences

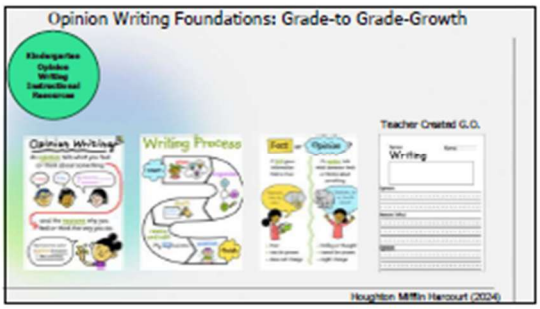

Station Three: Core Support
Differentiation Stations
Teachers Collect Strategies for Differentiation
Focus: Creating Complex Sentences

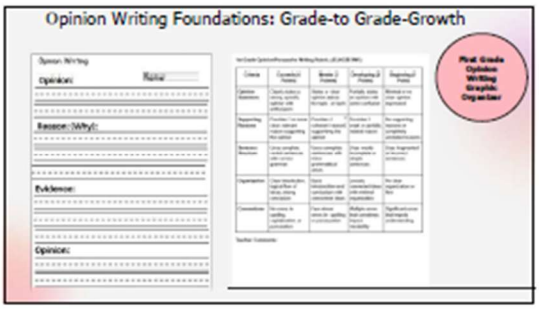

Station Three: Core Support
Example Strategy


Day 2
Reflection & Feedback
K-3 Title 1 English Language Arts Teachers

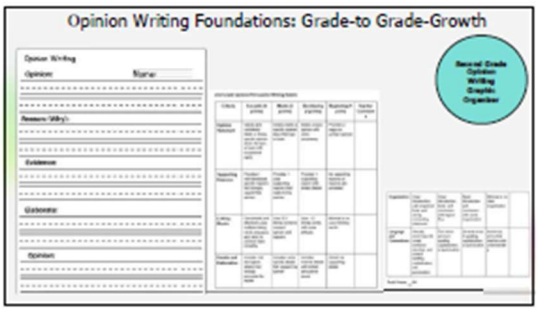

Day Three
August Training

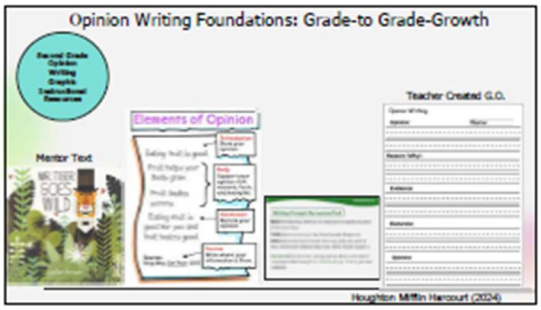

Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Writing
Kindergarten Opinion Writing Organizer

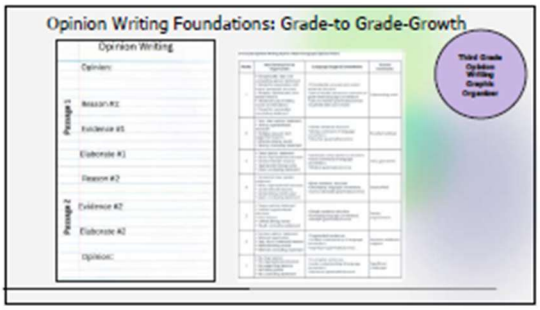

Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Kindergarten Opinion Writing Instructional Resources
Opinion Writing
Writing Process
Teacher Created G.O.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)


Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
First Grade Opinion Writing Graphic Organizer
Opinion:
Reason/Why?:
Evidence:
Opinion:


Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
First Grade Opinion Writing Instructional Resources
Mentor Text
BIG BAD BUBBLE
Elements of Opinion
Teacher Created G.O.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)


Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Second Grade Opinion Writing Graphic Organizer
Opinion:
Reason/Why?:
Evidence:
Outcome:
Opinion:

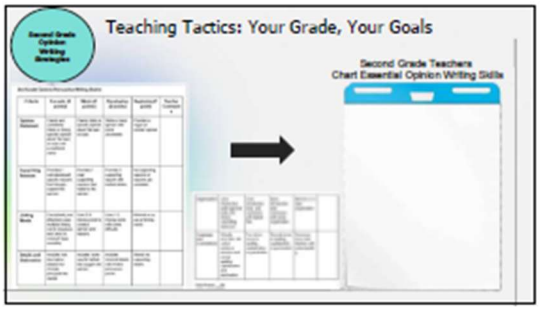

Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Second Grade Opinion Writing Graphic Instructional Resources
Mentor Text
Elements of Opinion
Teacher Created G.O.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)


Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Opinion Writing
Third Grade Opinion Writing Graphic Organizer

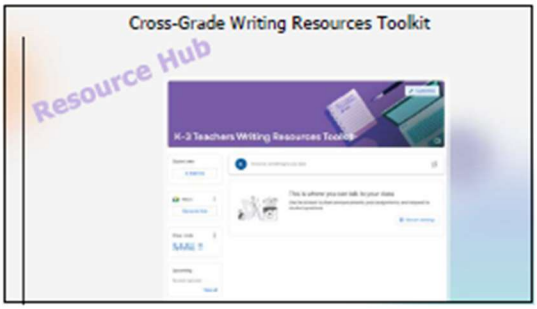

Opinion Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Third-grade Opinion Writing Instructional Resources
Mentor Text
Parts of an Argument
Teacher Created G.O.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

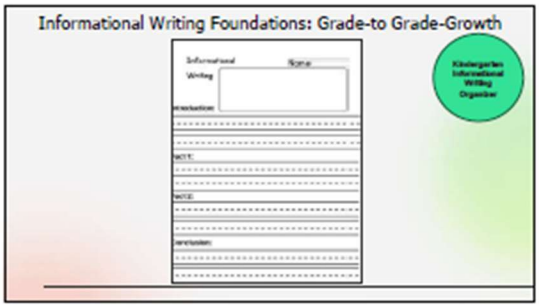

Kindergarten Opinion Writing Strategies
Teaching Tactics: Your Grade, Your Goals
K Teachers
Chart Essential Opinion Writing Skills

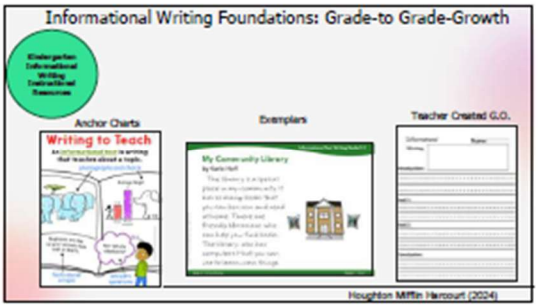

First Grade Opinion Writing Strategies
Teaching Tactics: Your Grade, Your Goals
First Grade Teachers
Chart Essential Opinion Writing Skills

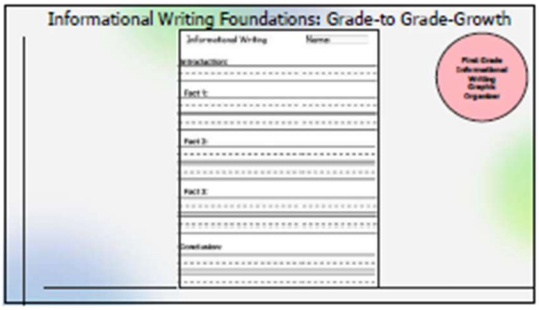

Second Grade Opinion Writing Strategies
Teaching Tactics: Your Grade, Your Goals
Second Grade Teachers
Chart Essential Opinion Writing Skills

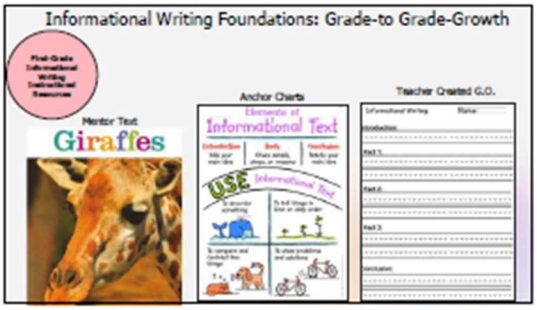

Teaching Tactics: Your Grade, Your Goals
Third-Grade Teachers
Chart Essential Opinion Writing Skills


Cross-Grade Writing Resources Toolkit
Resource Hub

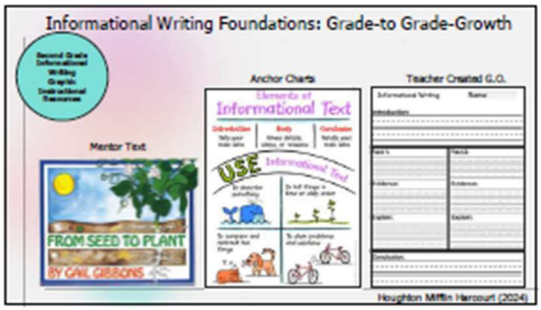

Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth

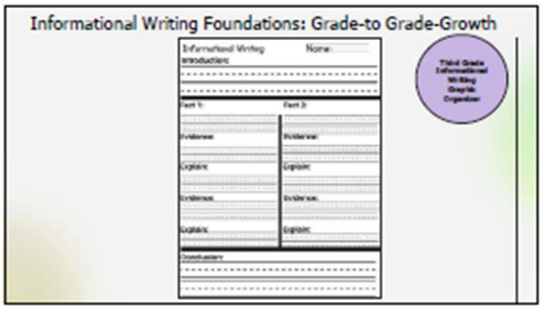

Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Anchor Charts
Writing to Teach
Exemplars
Teacher Created G.O.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)

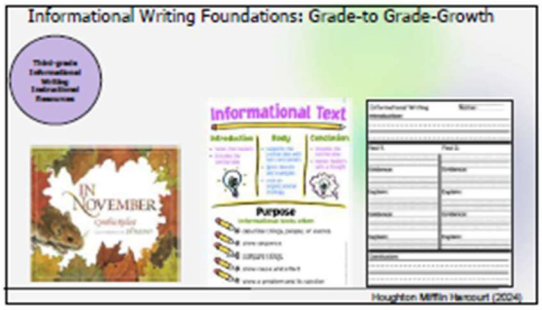

Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth

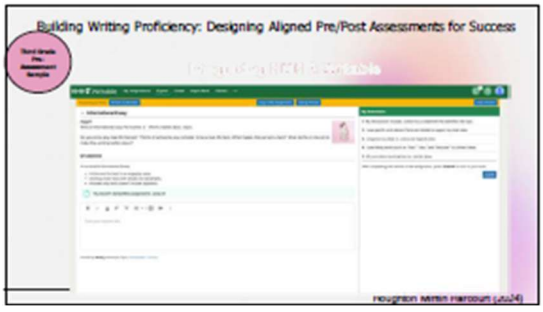

Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Mentor Text
Giraffes
Anchor Charts
Elements of
Informational Text
Teacher Created G.O.


Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth


Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Anchor Charts
Teacher Created G.O.
Mentor Text
FROM SEED TO PLANT
BY GAIL GIBBONS
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)


Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth

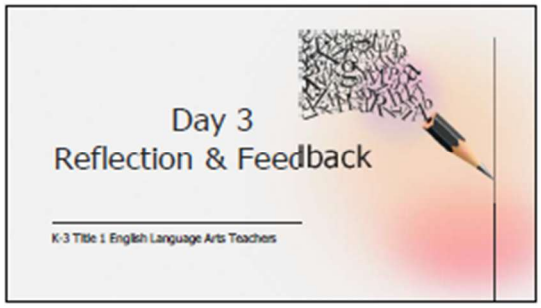

Informational Writing Foundations: Grade-to Grade-Growth
Informational Text
IN NOVEMBER
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)


Building Writing Proficiency: Designing Aligned Pre/Post Assessments for Success


Building Writing Proficiency: Designing Aligned Pre/Post Assessments for Success
THIS IS YOUR LIFE CYCLE
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2024)


Implementation Planning


Schedule of Monthly PLCs and Vertical Team Meetings
September Focus:
Foundational/Writing Skills
October Focus:
Writing Process Development
November Focus:
Writing Fluency & Expression
December Focus:
Writing Organization & Structure
January Focus:
Opinion Writing
February Focus:
Informational Writing
March Focus:
Content Area Writing
April Focus:
Text Dense Writing
May Focus:
Writing Celebration & Reflection


Day 3
Reflection & Feedback
K-3 Title 1 English Language Arts Teachers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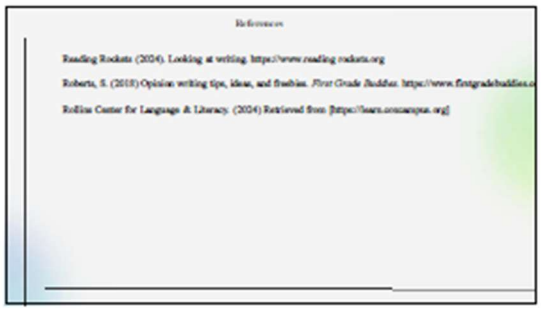
Oak Grove Joint Union School District. (n.d.) 2nd grade writing samples. https://www.ojusd.org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Appendix A: Daily Reflection Form – Writing Strategies PD

Date: _____ Grade Level: _____

Today's Key Takeaways

1. The most important thing I learned today was:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. One strategy I will implement immediately:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Implementation Planning

3. Rate your confidence in implementing today's strategies (circle one):
1 (Not Confident) → 2 → 3 → 4 (Very Confident)

4. I need the following support to implement successfully:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Questions and Clarifications

5. Something I'm still wondering about:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. I would like more information about:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Session Feedback

8. Today's most effective activity:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. One thing that could be improved:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Additional Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
__

Please submit this form before leaving today's session. Your feedback helps us adjust the next training to meet your needs.

K-3 Writing Strategies Professional Development

Post-Training Evaluation Survey

Part 1: Overall Program Evaluation

Please rate the following on a scale of 1-4

(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree)

1. The professional development objectives were clearly communicated.
2. The content was relevant to my teaching needs.
3. The training provided practical strategies I can implement in my classroom.
4. I understand how to implement color writing strategies at my grade level.
5. I learned effective time management techniques for writing instruction.
6. The vertical alignment activities helped me understand writing progression across grades.
7. I feel prepared to implement new writing strategies in my classroom.
8. The materials provided will be helpful for implementation.
9. The presenters were knowledgeable and effective.
10. There was adequate time for practice and discussion.

Part 2: Strategy-Specific Feedback

Please provide brief responses to the following questions:

1. Which color writing strategies do you plan to implement first and why?_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What time management techniques will be most useful in your classroom?_____

_____
_____
_____

3. How will you incorporate mindful writing activities into your schedule?_____
_____
_____
_____

4. What support will you need to successfully implement these strategies?_____
_____
_____
_____

Part 3: Implementation Planning

Please outline your:

1. Top three implementation priorities:

- Priority 1:
- Priority 2:
- Priority 3:

2. Anticipated challenges:_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Resources needed:

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Timeline for implementation:_____
_____
_____
_____

Part 4: Professional Learning Needs

Please indicate areas where you would like additional support: (circle all that apply)

Color writing techniques

Time management strategies

Writing assessment methods

Student engagement strategies

Vertical alignment planning

Technology integration

Other (please specify):

Part 5: Open Response

1. What was the most valuable aspect of this professional development?

2. What could have been improved?

3. How can we best support your implementation efforts?

4. Additional comments or suggestions:

Follow-up Preferences

Please select your preferred methods for follow-up support (circle all that apply):

Grade-level team meetings

Individual coaching sessions

Virtual check-ins

Written feedback

Classroom observations

Demonstration lessons

Other (please specify):

Contact Information (Optional)

Name:

Grade Level:

School:

Email:

Preferred contact method:

Your feedback is valuable and will help us provide targeted support during implementation. Thank you for your participation!

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Date:

Location:

Time:

Interview Opening Script

Hi, my name is Kim Robertson, and I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to understand your experiences with using writing strategies in your classroom. My role as a researcher is to gather information that reflects your experiences and thoughts. Before we begin, I want to remind you that you can stop the interview anytime. Your confidentiality is important. Therefore, I won't record your name, school, or district. To ensure I accurately gather your thoughts, I'd like to record our conversation. May I have your permission to make an audio recording? Once the data analysis is complete, I'll provide you with a summary of the findings for your review. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1. How long have you been teaching Third-grade?
2. What is your educational background?
3. Tell me about your experiences teaching writing to third-graders in a Title 1 school.
    a. Can you tell me more about a specific experience that you have had and the outcome?

4. What writing strategies have you used in your classroom to teach third-graders essay writing? For example, what types of writing activities are 3rd graders expected to engage in?
    a. Can you elaborate more about that?
    b. What would scaffolding strategies for essay writing look like for third-graders?
5. What does a writing lesson look like in your classroom?
    a. Can you walk me through your thought process?
    b. What are your reasons for taking this approach?
6. What challenges, if any, have you encountered with teaching essay writing to third-graders?
    a. Can you tell me more about that situation?
    b. Why do you think that is?
7. What resources have you found to be the most helpful in teaching writing?
    a. Can you elaborate more about this?
8. Are there resources you've found to be less helpful?
    a. Why do you think this is so?
9. What do you feel are the essential strategies to help improve third-graders' essay writing skills?
    a. How do you plan to measure the success or effectiveness of these strategies?

10. Have you engaged in any PD specific to teaching writing? How often has it been made available? How often do you take advantage of writing instruction professional development opportunities?
    a. Why do you think that is?
11. What support or professional development do you feel teachers need to help them teach writing more effectively?
    a. Can you elaborate more about that?
12. What recommendations would you suggest to help improve teachers' instructional strategies to teach opinion and informational writing?
    a. What lessons have you learned from past experiences that inform your recommendations here?
    b. What do you think might happen if writing instruction were done differently?
13. Is there anything else you would like to share?
14. Do you have any questions for me?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time. I'll email you a copy of our conversation transcript within the next week for your review. If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with me using the information provided.

Appendix C: First Cycle Open Coding

Codes	Quotes or Excerpts	Participants
-Lack of foundational grammar Skills	"I have to always go back and reteach the basics of what is a noun? What's a adjective, adverb, and then how do we put that into a sentence because I find that in third-grade students have not truly grasped that and haven't been able to use it and apply it in their writing."	T1
-Basic sentence construction	"Well, the instructional strategies, they have to be able to form a complete sentence, with a complete thought, then we can build on that."	T3
-Building from simple to complex	"Because if you can't write a sentence, how are you going to write an essay? If you can't write a sentence, how are you going to write a paragraph?"	T8
	"a big challenge is that structure has not been taught. The structure is not as rigorous or as explicit in k-2, and it's all a huge shock to them."	T5
-Writing sentence structure challenges	"Students are struggling with sentence structure and things like that, and then you're jumping into third-grade, and you go from some little components to	T6

	full information and opinion essays."	
-Skills gaps/Earlier grades	"Year-to-year variations that have led to inconsistencies in student preparedness."	T10
-Color writing technique	"Color writing, it's at our school, but also, a friend of mine and myself trained five other schools in color writing. We are really hoping that a lot of kids are going to benefit from it."	T4
-Visual Organization tools - Daily Writing	"I think providing them with simple graphic organizers that they can understand, and then also, I feel like they have to write every single day."	T7
-Modeling strategies -scaffolding -Structured approaches	"I do a lot of modeling." Sometimes I even pull small groups to scaffold and give a really detailed, guided writing lesson session to those who, especially my lower kids who don't exactly know how to write sentences and things of that nature."	T8
	" [Color writing]…a total game changer."	T7
	I've never had as many students at the end of third-grade be able to write a five-paragraph essay. It's huge."	T5

-Lack of transfer to written text	"We spent a lot of time verbally writing before putting pen to paper, but we didn't see that transfer once they started writing."	T9
-Time constraints	"I felt it was very dry and, I guess, very formulated."	T5
	"Time is a huge obstacle, of course."	
-Skill jump from second to third-grade	"I do feel like here, we're going from them writing little stories in second grade… and struggling with sentence structure to full opinion and informational essays in third-grade."	T6
	"I think because of testing it becomes so dry and boring and kids hate it."	T9
-Writing Curriculum	"Okay, if you ask a school as a whole, the number one challenge would be the idea of a set writing curriculum."	T1
	"First of all, we need to come up with an overall curriculum as a county."	T3
	Yes, I know we have it in our scope and sequence, but you have teachers who do not know how to teach writing. So we've got to find something that works."	
	"I actually took a highlighter, and I highlighted the second-	T5

-Vertically alignment of writing skills between grade levels	grade writing standards and what was expected of them. And then I went to our standards and highlighted our writing standards, and I can tell you there was a whole lot more highlighted on our third-grade standards than second-grade standards."	
	"I feel like there should be one thing in place that everybody is held accountable for doing. I think things should be scaffolded from kindergarten to fifth grade, beginning in kindergarten with the ideas and just moving from there."	T8
-Unfairness of standardized testing	"I think it's very unfair. Like I said before, you've got kids coming from different backgrounds. You know, we have to differentiate our classrooms all the time. But, yeah, we make these babies take the same test and expect the same thing."	T3
	"I personally do not feel like third-graders should have to type an extended essay response for the GMAS. I do not feel like that is age-appropriate for them."	T7
	"The rigor went through the roof, and it was only	

-Age appropriateness of standardized assessments	three weeks before testing. So personally, I felt like we waited too long to do that, and it was very hard."	T5
	"Once we got to that test prep, it was just way harder than anything they had ever done."	T9
	"I just feel like we have so much on our plate that we have to do in the ELA section that we are not doing anything well. It's just a splatter of information, and we hope that the kids, you know, get enough practice, and they get it."	T3
Unrealistic time expectations	"There was one program that specified that we were supposed to have 60 minutes for writing, and that was never going to happen, and to do this program with fidelity."	T1
-Developmentally inappropriate rigor	"It's a lot at one time and for teachers and students." I mean, I don't know why Georgia feels like it has to all be thrown at them in third-grade."	T6
Student Engagement Real-Word Experiences	"We go, and we write about, either outside or inside, what you notice, what you wonder, what do you want to know?"	T2

	"Virtual opportunities are huge and give them experiences if they can't have them firsthand. Hands-on and then the virtual are definitely tools for writing that I've used a lot."	T6
	"We can write about things that we love."	T9
	"They love their notebook at the end of the year and enjoy taking it home."	T2
Practical Professional Development	"Having somebody come in the classroom and actually show how it can be done in the classroom."	T1
	"I think the most beneficial would be not just showing us the platform where to go and what to see, but actually showing us what it looks like through a unit or that type of thing."	
-Lacking professional development	"Well, I feel like professional development is definitely lacking."	T4
	"I think finding good strategies and having them do the strategy like a student really modeling it for them as the teacher and having them play the role of a student helps them."	T9

-Peer/teacher training	"A friend of mine and myself trained five other schools in color writing. We are really hoping that a lot of kids are going to benefit from it."	T4
	"I've heard certain schools have these teachers who are really good at writing. Finding those teachers whose students are consistently making the threes and fours on the Milestones Assessment, we need those teachers helping us."	T6
	"I'm a professional development junkie, and what I have found is that the teachers will not be a fan of it at first, but you get so much more when you make them do it."	T9
	"I think that I could be provided with more professional development with writing because even as weeks went on, I was reading more things or changing different strategies, just tweaking things within my classroom, just trying to learn as much as possible.	T10
Lack of proper training	"Well, I feel like the professional development is definitely lacking."	T7
	"Last year, we had Write Score, which I've heard	T7

	really good things about, but we didn't receive any training on it. So, I really did try to use it, but it was very overwhelming."	
	"We get these things, but we don't have the proper training." "So, we've got to find something that works."	T6
	"I did not find any of that really worked well personally. I do whole brain teaching, and I like the idea of it, but in combination with the writing we were doing, it didn't transfer to physical writing for the kids."	T9
Innovative writing tools	"Magic school AI has become a powerful tool and one of the things that the kids started to love, and I was honest with my administration, and they were all for it.	T6

Appendix D: Second Cycle Axial Coding

Themes	Categories	Codes
Teachers experience difficulties with writing strategies because of students' lack of foundational writing skills	Grammar Foundational Skill Challenges	- -Lack of foundational grammar
	Basic Sentence Construction Challenges	-Basic sentence construction
	Simple to Complex Writing	-Building from simple to complex
		-Writing structure challenges
	Vertical Skill Gaps	-Skills gaps/Earlier grades
Teachers experience effective writing strategies	Color Writing	-Color writing technique
	Structured Writing Strategies	-Visual organization tools -Modeling strategies -scaffolding -Structured approaches
	Importance of Daily Writing	Daily Writing
Teachers experience challenges teaching effective writing strategies	Inconsistency in Writing Strategies	-Lack of transfer to written text

	Time Constraints	-Time constraints
	Grade Level Skill Gaps	-Skill jump from second to third-grade
	Lack of Authentic Writing	-unmeaningful writing
	Curriculum Challenges	-Set writing curriculums -Fluid curriculum vertically -lack of knowledge in teaching writing
	Systemic Approaches to Writing	-Accountability in writing expectations
	Standardized Testing Unfairness	Unfairness of standardized testing -Age appropriateness of standardized assessments
	Test-Driven Student Disengagement	-Lack of differentiation -Same test/Same expectations
	Developmentally Inappropriate Rigor	-high rigor -students unprepared -inconsistent pacing of instruction
	Real-World Experiences	-Real-world experiences -Student engagement
Teachers' experiences with authentic writing and student engagement		

	Authentic Writing	-Making connections -Authentic experiences
	Student Engagement	-Increasing writing motivation -Student-centered -Relevant engagement
	Practical Application of Strategies	-Practical application of writing strategies
Teachers need effective experiences with professional development in writing strategies	Lack of Effective Training	-Lacking professional development
	Peer Learning	-Modeling of writing strategies -Taking the role of a student
	Consistent Practices	-Peer/teacher training -Professional development junkie -Make them do it
	Innovative Writing Tools	-Consistent writing practices -Finding -Innovative writing tools