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A Survey of Fifth Grade Writing Teachers on Their Instructional Writing Practices

Susan Margaret Muehl Egloff
Walden University

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Susan Egloff

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2013

Abstract

A Survey of Fifth Grade Writing Teachers on Their Instructional Writing Practices

by

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MA, University of Northern Iowa, 2005

BA, University of Northern Iowa, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Administrative Leadership for Teaching and Learning

Walden University

April 2013

Abstract

Writing is an essential skill that students need in order to become successful in school and beyond. Within a school district in the southwestern United States, student writing scores were not at proficient levels, and students were not prepared for graduation or employment. The purpose of this quasi-experimental research study was to compare the distribution of student writing achievement scores for 5th grade teachers who used 7 or more of the 11 components of effective writing instruction outlined by Graham and Perin to those teachers who implemented 6 or fewer of these components. In this study, a survey was given to 35 teachers from the lowest and highest performing schools in each performance zone or geographic cluster of schools across the school district, to discover how many of the components from Graham and Perin's model were used. The results of this project study were insignificant and indicated that the number and frequency of strategies were not related to student proficiency as measured by the state's writing proficiency exam. Results from this study will be shared with district leaders in a white paper report. The report includes recommendations to create a district-based writing framework with research-based instructional strategies. Although the results from this study were insignificant, the results have added to the body of knowledge in writing instruction. The white paper report can be used as a foundation for teachers, principals, and curriculum developers to improve writing instruction and achievement in this and other school districts.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my husband, Matthew J. Egloff, for his love, encouragement, faith, and support through my doctoral journey.

I would also like to dedicate this doctoral study to my mom, Patricia C. Muehl, and to my dad, Philip H. Muehl. My parents started my educational journey several years ago and inspired me to reach my highest aspiration. We did it! LYLY always.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Writing instruction is an area that needs more attention across the nation, specifically in the elementary grades. Writing is not an optional skill for students; it is essential (Kiuahara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2008), although student writing scores increased by 3% from the 2002 assessment to the 2007 assessment, student performance did not reach or exceed proficiency levels (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008). Writing has become a national concern, due to students' lack of proficiency on state writing assessments (Tunks, 2010). Unfortunately, with the implementation of the provisions of the No Child Left Behind legislation, writing instruction has been neglected as teachers have sought to meet other curricular demands set forth by the federal government (Baker, Chard, Ketterlin-Geller, Apiehatabutra, & Doabler, 2009; Kiuahara et al., 2009; McCarthy, 2008). In order for students to become more proficient in writing, researchers suggest increasing instructional time, improving instructional methods, enhancing teacher training, and incorporating technology into writing instruction (Cutler & Graham, 2008; McCarthy, 2008). In this quasi-experimental research study, I analyzed the writing instructional practices of fifth grade teachers to determine whether schools that used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction had higher student achievement than schools that used six or fewer of these 11 components.

I will outline the problem in the area of writing in more detail, provide a rationale for the study, include definitions used in the study, specify the significance of the problem, state the research question, and address current research in a detailed literature review in the next section.

Local Problem

Clark County School District (CCSD), a school district in southern Nevada, has been experiencing low student achievement in the area of writing. The results of the 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam indicated that more than half of the fifth graders (53.5%) in the CCSD were not proficient in writing (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). The percentage of CCSD's fifth graders who performed at proficiency level or higher was 46.5%, which was below the state target of 63.8% (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). The *proficient* level on the 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam encompassed the *meets standard* and *exceeds standard* categories based on the state assessment writing rubric (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). The 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam had a rubric with a total of 20 points. The Nevada Department of Education (2011) identified *meets standard* as a score between 12 and 15.5 and *exceeds standard* as a score between 16 and 20 (see Appendices G and H for rubrics and cut scores). The writing exam was scored by two evaluators, with each evaluator giving a score according to the adopted and approved rubric (Nevada Department of Education, 2011).

The CCSD's Curriculum and Professional Development (CPD) Division has provided state standards, district standards, and benchmarks for teachers. However, the school district has not specified a writing framework that would give teachers a step-by-step guide to teach specific writing skills and strategies. Teachers need research-based instructional strategies, effective components of writing instruction, and a guide to use as a solid structure for teaching writing (Graham & Perin, 2007; Pressley, Mohan, Fingeret, Feffitt, & Bogaert, 2007). Teachers have used writing instructional strategies from their college preparatory years, from professional development trainings, from personal research, and from colleagues (CCSD, Curriculum and Professional Development Division, 2011). The lack of a research-based instructional framework for teachers to implement has caused ambiguous and inconsistent writing instruction across the school district. Little research has been done in the school district to examine teacher preparation in conjunction with strategies used to teach writing and time spent on writing instruction. This district has a history of rapidly increasing student enrollment that may have contributed to a lack of instructional focus in the area of writing.

The CCSD is spread out over 7,910 square miles and includes 357 schools in a large metropolitan area as well as outlying communities and rural areas (CCSD, 2011). The student registration rate has been rapidly increasing over the past 10 years, reaching an enrollment of 308,447 for the 2011-2012 school year (CCSD, 2011). The school district has a diverse population of students, with the largest being Hispanic (43.4%), followed by Caucasian (30.2%), Black (12.0%), Asian (6.6%), multiracial (5.8%), Native

Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (1.5%), and Native American (0.5%; CCSD, 2011). In addition, this school district experienced a high transiency rate of 32.5% (Nevada Department of Education, 2011).

With the large influx of transient and diverse students over the past 10 years, the CCSD has faced several challenges. Not only has the school district needed to focus on the infrastructure of new schools, the building of new classrooms, and the hiring of several thousand educators to accommodate the influx of students, the school district has also had to focus on building a solid curriculum foundation (Quality Leadership Resources, 2011). However, the primary focus for the last 10 years has been building classrooms and hiring teachers (Takahaski & Berns, 2011). With increased accountability from No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the school district was forced to shift the focus from construction to student achievement. The new superintendent, Dwight Jones, commented on the school district's growth in a newspaper article, saying that the school district

“got so focused on taking care of growth, the school district lost focus of the real mission. The mission was building schools, staffing schools and opening schools. The mission was not focused on what is actually happening in the schools.”

(Takahaski & Berns, 2011, p. 1)

With a diverse population of students and varied experience levels among teachers, educators needed to equalize instruction across the geographically large and transient district. The solution this district sought was the adoption of a district-wide reading and mathematics curriculum, but the school district did not adopt a district-wide

writing program. This lack of attention to a writing program triggered schools to examine instructional practices (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). Individual schools decided to purchase or create writing curricula to support the new teachers in the buildings and to provide consistent writing instruction across grades (CCSD, Curriculum and Professional Development Division, 2011). Although schools purchased or created writing programs, writing instruction became inconsistent across the school district, resulting in gaps in student learning. In order to provide consistent instruction and expectations across the school district, an examination of instructional practices needed to be conducted to compare how strategies were aligned to research-based instructional strategies.

The NCLB Act (2002) required that students be evaluated in reading and mathematics, but little attention was given to writing (Graham & Perin, 2007; McCarthey, 2008). One way to support the evaluation of writing at the school district level is to examine the components of effective writing instruction and determine how teachers teach writing. A model of the effective components of writing instruction from Graham and Perin (2007) was researched and became the foundation for this study. In this project study, I sought to determine (a) if current writing instruction aligned with Graham and Perin's 11 components of effective writing strategies and (b) the distribution of student proficiency scores between teachers who used seven or more of the strategies and teachers who used six or fewer of the writing strategies.

Rationale

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2011), writing is a crucial way for students to express thoughts, to learn, and to communicate (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008). Each year, schools are expected to make adequate yearly progress in the areas of English and mathematics, according to NCLB (2002). For Nevada, the assessed English category includes the subjects of reading and writing (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). While CCSD addressed these curricular areas, fewer than half of the fifth graders in the school district (46.5%) were proficient in writing in 2011 (Nevada Department of Education, 2011).

Many schools in the CCSD have addressed the low writing performance of students by implementing mock writing exams on a regular basis and holding grade-level meetings to discuss strategies to increase the effectiveness of writing instruction (CCSD, 2011). In this effort, faculties have collaborated in grade levels and departments to address writing instruction and student performance while measuring student progress in a formative way. However, teachers need more support to implement a comprehensive writing curriculum that includes a writing framework and expectations that are grounded in research (Coker & Lewis, 2008). As a specific district-wide writing program or curricula has not been formally adopted and several methods of writing instruction have been implemented, this project study was essential to discover whether instructional practices that align with Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of writing instruction resulted in improved scores.

Despite the importance of writing instruction, students are not able to meet the demands set forth by teachers, state assessments, and the workplace. Graham and Perin (2007) argued that students struggle with grammar and structure, voice development, paragraph organization, and developing ideas. Those are the four main areas in which students are evaluated on the 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam, and CCSD students are not able to meet proficiency levels. Many educators encourage students to express ideas and experiment with words by analyzing thoughts and developing a collection of writing skills beginning at an early age (Baker et al., 2009; D'On Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo, 2010). Baker et al. (2009) and Graham and Perin have suggested that writing is an outlet that gives students the opportunity to express ideas in sharing feelings and opinions, but many students struggle with developing ideas and organizing thoughts well enough to pass standardized exams and are not ready for college or beyond. While many educators know the importance of teaching writing, students are not developing the necessary writing skills to be successful (Salahu-Din et al., 2008).

Educators need more support to utilize several research-based writing strategies in order to meet the curricular needs set forth by the Nevada Department of Education and the needs of students. Currently, CCSD does not have an adopted writing program, nor does the CCSD know how the instructional strategies teachers use impact student achievement (CCSD, Curriculum and Professional Development Division, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to compare the distribution of student writing achievement scores for fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and

Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction to the distribution of student scores for teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components of effective writing instruction.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

Grammar instruction: The study of the parts of speech (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Highly qualified: Teachers who hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree, are licensed to teach in the State of Nevada, and have demonstrated competency in their teaching area (Nevada Department of Education, 2011).

Inquiry: Tasks or activities that engage students to increase content knowledge related to the writing topic (Coker & Lewis, 2008).

Peer assistance: A method for students to collaborate by sharing writing samples and ideas (Berry, 2006).

Prewriting: A stage that comes before composing as a process to gather thoughts or ideas, typically called *brainstorming* (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Process writing: A differentiated way to teach writing by having students write for a real audience (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Sentence combining: Specific instruction on how to combine simple sentences to make more complex sentences (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Setting product goals: A method to help students set short-term goals for writing assignments (Coker & Lewis, 2008).

Strategy instruction: Defined as methodically teaching strategies for planning, revising, or editing text (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Study of models: Exposure of students to examples of good writing (Gibson, 2007).

Summarization: Process of summarizing texts or readings (Reeves, 2002).

Writing: A system of symbols that correspond with sounds and then words of spoken language (Vygotsky, 1978). Writing can be further defined as a written form of communication that goes beyond handwriting, good spelling, and conventions (Cusumano, 2008). In this study, writing is a form of communication whereby students communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas on paper or through the use of a technology device.

Word processing: The act of using a computer or computer programs to compose writing (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Significance

NAEP reported that 67% of eighth graders and 76% of twelfth graders have performed at or below the basic level in writing (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008). Coupled with that fact, the National Commission on Writing (NCW, 2006) has reported that students do not possess the necessary writing skills for college or beyond. The NCW and several researchers have provided suggestions for improving writing instruction, such as increasing the time spent on how to teach writing, providing more comprehensive teacher training, and providing effective strategies for teaching writing (Atwell, Maxwell,

& Romero, 2008; Baker et al., 2009; Coker & Lewis, 2008; Cusumano, 2008; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Gibson, 2007; Graham & Perin, 2007; Lovell & Phillips, 2009; McCarthey, 2008; NCW, 2006; Warren, Dondlinger, & Barab, 2008). Baker et al. (2009), Lovell and Phillips (2009), and McCarthey (2008) suggested that writing instruction needs to improve in order to increase student achievement scores. The Graham and Perin (2007) model of effective writing instruction includes research-based instructional practices for teachers to implement immediately. By ascertaining whether the Graham and Perin model of writing instruction was effective, CCSD will be able to review the results of this study and examine the instructional practices of fifth grade teachers.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to compare the distribution of student writing proficiency scores for fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction to the distribution of student scores for teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components as measured by the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam. Seven of the 11 components were selected to focus on because the passing rate for the 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam was 12 out of 20 points, or 60% (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). Six of the 11 components represented 54.5% of the components, whereas seven out of the 11 represented 63.6%; therefore, seven was selected as being closer to 60%. It is important to note a change in how the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam was scored relative to previous exams. The Nevada Department of Education (2012) changed to a holistic rubric with proficient scores categorized as either

meets or *exceeds* (see Appendix I). The results and insights of this study have added to the body of knowledge in writing instruction and have provided research for district officials and curriculum leaders to refer to in discussing the implementation of a comprehensive writing framework to increase writing performance.

Guiding/Research Question

Writing instruction has been an area that needs more attention across the nation and in the CCSD because writing skills are not optional for students; these skills are essential. In order for students to become more proficient writers in the CCSD, a study needed to be conducted to determine if current writing instruction methods aligned with Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective instruction. The guiding research question for this study was the following:

1. Do students of teachers who implement seven or more of the 11 components from Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction model have a statistically higher distribution of student achievement scores in the *meets* and *exceeds* proficiency categories than those who implement six or fewer as measured by the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency exam?

In this quasi-experimental study, the following hypothesis was used to explore and understand the differences in student achievement scores:

H₀: There is no significant statistical difference in the distribution of scores for students taught by teachers who implemented seven or more of the 11 components from Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction model and the distribution of scores for

students taught by teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components from Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction model as measured by the Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam.

H₁: There is a statistically significant difference in the distribution of scores for students taught by teachers who implemented seven or more of the 11 components from Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction model and the distribution of scores for students taught by teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components from Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction model as measured by the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam.

The 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam was changed to an online administered assessment, and the scoring rubric was changed from an analytic rubric (see Appendix G) to a holistic rubric (see Appendix H). A proficient score on the 2012 exam was categorized as *meets* or *exceeds* standards. Students were considered to meet standards if the earned score was 3 points, and students were considered *exceed* standards if the earned score was 4 out of 4 points possible (Nevada Department of Education, 2012).

Review of the Literature

Several factors influence the reasons why students have difficulty in learning to write well. This literature review describes how writing has evolved, the impact of the standards-based movement on writing instruction, the impact technology has had on instruction, the importance of teacher training and professional development, and how

teacher perceptions relate to teaching writing. To locate scholarly journal articles, books, and quantitative research studies, a focused key word search was conducted using terms such as *effective components of writing instruction, instructional practices, writing strategies, writing process, teacher beliefs, professional development, and technology*. For literature published between 2007 and 2012, I used the following databases: Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Academic Search Premier, Education Research Complete, ProQuest, and SAGE. Over 175 research articles, web-sites, and books were reviewed in an effort to narrow the topic. The sources used in this study were selected because they were the most relevant to the topic of practices for writing instruction.

In a world of rapidly developing technology and global unification efforts, students must be prepared to enter the workforce with strong writing communication skills (American College Testing [ACT], 2011). The NCW reported that businesses required employees to “create clearly written documents, memoranda, technical reports, and electronic messages” (Kihara et al., 2009, p. 136). In order to help students become proficient in different writing modalities, which can range from text messaging to evaluative report writing, schools must review writing instructional practices to determine if students are prepared for graduation and beyond (Bernabei, Hover, & Candler, 2009; Coker & Lewis, 2008; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Dunn & Finley, 2010). Examining instructional practices is the foundation for this doctoral study.

Many universities require written essays to evaluate students' writing abilities for admission, and students who are considered to be poor writers might not be eligible to attend college (Graham & Perin, 2007). The value of writing instruction is not confined to the school setting because the need for writing skills persists when individuals enter the workforce (Baker et al., 2009; Coker & Lewis, 2008). Poor writing habits in the workforce can delay a promotion or advancement, and can affect hiring practices (Baker et al., 2009; Coker & Lewis, 2008). Weaker writers are at a disadvantage in school and in the professional working world (Coker & Lewis, 2008; Kiuahara et al., 2009). Students who do acquire the necessary writing skills and can apply these skills on a regular basis will be more employable in professional occupations (Rose, 2011). The NCW (2006, 2010) suggested that writing needs to be the central focus of the school reform agenda in order to prepare students for the 21st century. However, the NCW did not offer specific instructional strategies to teach writing because the commission focused on increasing writing time for students, providing professional development for teachers, and assessing student progress (Cutler & Graham, 2008; NCW, 2006, 2010).

The NCW (2006, 2010) recommended that schools investigate resources from the National Writing Project and the National Council of Teachers of English, two organizations that offer more instructional strategies. A few of those strategies are to model good writing; teach the process of drafting, composing, and editing written pieces; and encourage students to publish writing pieces. The aforementioned instructional strategies are embedded in Graham and Perin's (2007) research on writing, but Graham

and Perin offered more specific and targeted instructional strategies. As school districts consider how to increase writing achievement scores, the root causes of the problem, (i.e., student achievement not increasing) need to be explored (Preuss, 2003).

When looking at school reform, district officials need to diagnose issues and evaluate current instructional practices for school improvement (Protheroe, 2011). By conducting a needs assessment, the school district can discover the types of instructional strategies teachers used. The results may help officials discern why writing achievement scores are not at proficient levels. Schools “cannot fix something until the teachers know what is wrong” (Preuss, 2003, p. 13). Examining the basic causes of the problem, school leaders can select specific strategies to target rather than targeting symptoms (Preuss, 2003).

Hillocks (1986) examined writing instruction in depth over 20 years ago by conducting a meta-analysis of several research articles, journals, studies, and books focused on specific instructional strategies for teaching writing. His research findings indicated that although it is important to teach grammar in isolation and provide time for free writing, neither strategy had an impact on writing achievement. Hillocks also discovered that using models during instruction, teaching students how to combine sentences, and guiding students through the inquiry that had positive effects on writing achievement. Although Hillocks suggested that further research needed to be conducted on specific models of writing instruction, the research findings stated above prompted additional researchers to explore and suggest reasons for poor writing performance which

include, but are not limited to, a focus on standards versus quality instruction, lack of technology incorporated into writing instruction, poor teacher training on how to teach writing, teacher beliefs that impact writing instruction, not enough time spent on writing instruction, and a lack of knowledge of effective writing strategies or ineffective strategies taught in isolation (Atwell, Maxwell, & Romero, 2008; Baker et al., 2009; Coker & Lewis, 2008; Cusumano, 2008; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Gibson, 2007; Graham & Perin, 2007; Hillocks, 1986; Lovell & Phillips, 2009; McCarthey, 2008; NCW, 2010; Warren, Dondlinger, & Barab, 2008). Each of the researchers offered suggestions on how to increase writing achievement, including the following: increase time spent on writing, provide a balanced writing curriculum to include a variety of research-based instructional strategies, and provide teachers with more training on how to effectively teach writing (Coker & Lewis, 2008; Cusumano, 2008; Cutler & Graham, 2008; D'On Jones et al., 2010; Gibson, 2007; Graham & Perin, 2007; Watts, 2009).

Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of writing instruction have been selected as the theoretical foundation for this project study because of the extensive work in identifying effective strategies for teaching writing that has been performed since Hillocks's (1986) study. A second reason for selecting Graham and Perin's work as the theoretical foundation was that most research in this area has involved writing in elementary and secondary schools versus college. Graham and Perin also provided suggestions for scholar practitioners to enhance teaching methodologies, which directly affect student achievement in the classroom and leads to social change (Coker & Lewis,

2008). Hillocks tended to favor qualitative studies with an audience in the post secondary realm and focused on composition research, which is not directly tied to classroom teachers at the elementary level (Coker & Lewis, 2008).

Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a meta-analysis by reviewing and analyzing over 120 research documents related to writing instruction “to identify effective practices for teaching writing” (p. 446). The quantitative studies were narrowed down to instructional strategies for students in Grades 4 through 12, with a greater emphasis placed on Grades 4 through 6. Writing instruction was further broken down into categories based upon instructional approaches (Coker & Lewis, 2008). By conducting a meta-analysis, the researchers were able to systematically examine the impact (the effect size) of the interventions in the research studies. Graham and Perin then derived the effect size from each instructional approach in each quantitative study and averaged the results to get the effectiveness of each of the strategies over several studies. A detailed explanation of the effect size follows. “The authors used Cohen’s d as an effect size statistic, which is simply the difference between the post-test mean scores of the comparison and treatment groups divided by the pooled standard deviation of both groups” (Coker & Lewis, 2008, p. 237). The disadvantage to this type of meta-analysis was that many qualitative studies were not included because Graham and Perin sought to examine the relationship between specific writing strategies and measurable student outcomes (Coker & Lewis, 2008).

Through the meta-analysis research study, Graham and Perin (2007) were able to narrow the list of effective writing strategies to the following: strategy instruction, summarization, peer assistance, setting product goals, word processing, sentence combining, inquiry, prewriting activities, process writing approach, study of models, and grammar instruction (Bernabei et al., 2009; Coker & Lewis, 2008; Graham & Perin, 2007). Follow-up research and analysis at the elementary level were conducted by Coker and Lewis (2008), Kiuvara, Graham, and Hawken (2009), and Gilbert and Graham (2010) to survey teachers and evaluate the 11 components of effective writing defined by Graham and Perin's research.

Graham, Perin, Coker, and Lewis's definitions for each of the 11 components will be explored below.

- *Strategy instruction* has been defined as methodically teaching strategies for planning, revising, and editing text (Graham & Perin, 2007). Writing strategies can be related to brainstorming or to the broader topic of how to write in a certain genre such as essay writing or persuasive writing. Coker and Lewis (2008) described how specific strategy instruction is designed to help students become independent writers by giving students the strategies to be used during the different stages of the writing process.
- *Summarization* is the process of summarizing texts or readings (Graham & Perin, 2007). For students, writing a summary is a way to remember what was read and to build summary skills in other subject areas (Reeves, 2002).

- *Peer assistance* is a method for students to share writing samples and ideas (Graham & Perin, 2007). Berry (2006) also defined peer assistance as an effective way to teach writing, but called the process *peer conferencing*.
- *Setting product goals* is a method to help students set short-term goals for writing assignments (Graham & Perin, 2007).
- *Word processing* is the act of using a computer or computer programs to compose writing (Graham & Perin, 2007).
- *Sentence combining* involves specific instruction on how to combine simple sentences to make more complex sentences (Graham & Perin, 2007).
- *Inquiry or research* involves tasks or activities that engage students to increase content knowledge related to the writing topic (Graham & Perin, 2007). This process can involve comparing and contrasting a topic or collecting evidence to support the writing topic (Graham & Perin, 2007).
- *Prewriting*, the stage that comes before composing, is a process for gathering thoughts or ideas, typically called *brainstorming* (Graham & Perin, 2007).
- *Process writing* is a more complex approach, as this method involves differentiated methods of teaching writing such as having students write for a real audience; developing stages of the planning process with opportunities to review, translate, and revise; helping student develop a sense of personal ownership of and responsibility for writing projects; providing opportunities for peer collaboration in a safe and supportive environment; giving time for

self-reflection; giving specific and targeted feedback or assistance as needed; and giving time for other ways to differentiate instruction (Graham & Perin, 2007). Berry (2006) provided a simple version of the process approach with the components organizing, drafting, and reviewing, but a detailed description was warranted because there are several components within the planning, drafting, and revising stages.

- Through the *study of models*, students are exposed to examples of good writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). Gibson (2007) supported the use of modeling good writing to students of various ages, even preservice teachers.
- *Grammar instruction* involves the study of the parts of speech (Graham & Perin, 2007). Kiuahara, Graham, and Hawken (2009) and Graham and Perin (2007) suggested that grammar instruction is not a strong evidence-based practice for teaching writing because grammar produced a negative effect size in the meta-analysis; however, grammar instruction has been included as direct instruction model of teaching basic writing skills.

Berry (2006) specifically recommended that teachers guide students through the steps of the writing process, provide students time to practice writing skills, and interactively converse with students to help improve writing performance. Two of these three recommendations, writing process and practice time, were included in Graham and Perin's (2007) research and were part of their 11 components of writing instruction.

Greene (2011) discovered that students need experience in understanding literary devices

and an increase in personally engagement with the writing process to create well-developed writing assignments. In Greene's study, the findings indicated that students needed more opportunities for reflective writing in order for students to refine their work and increase their independent writing skills. Both Berry and Green discovered that although providing students with reflective time is a good strategy, reflection alone is not enough for a comprehensive writing curriculum; writing instruction needs to be multi-faceted and include several strategies.

Overview

Since the time of pictographs or hieroglyphics, the purpose of writing has remained the same: to express thoughts, feelings, experiences, and knowledge (Graham & Perin, 2007). Writers need to express personal thoughts or feelings, be able to organize ideas, and provide a mental picture through words that can take the reader to a different time or place (Coker & Lewis, 2008). The public education system was originally formed because people were "not born trained to defend freedom, equality, and self-government" and therefore, people needed a suitable education in order to make intelligent decisions (Educational Policies Commission, 1955, p. 5). Beginning with the Declaration of Independence, the federal government has borne a responsibility to provide a free and appropriate public education, which includes writing instruction. The most recent evidence of this responsibility comes from the accountability era and the NCLB Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002).

Standards-Based Movement

With the onset of NCLB, states, districts, and classroom teachers have implemented standardized instruction to meet the goals and demands set forth by the federal government (McCarthy, 2008). Unfortunately, the standards-based movement has led publishers and instructional leaders to standardize the curriculum and script instruction, which devalues teaching and devalues “opportunities to embed best writing practice in the classroom” (NCW, 2006, p. 13). The standards-based movement overlooks writing instruction because the standards are not measured under NCLB’s Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks even though “reading and writing skills play a significant role in the achievement scores obtained on standardized and nonstandardized tests” (Atwell, Maxwell & Romero, 2008, p. 2). Teachers face daily challenges to develop writing skills in young students in the era of high stakes testing and accountability because more focus has been spent on reading and mathematics versus writing (Hooper, Roberts, Nelson, Zeisel, & Fannin, 2010).

Even though school districts have been seeking ways to improve academic achievement, writing has often been pushed to the side or has been poorly taught. Teachers lack sufficient time to effectively teach writing and may neglect the subject altogether due to school interruptions or curricular demands (Fry & Griffin, 2010). Teachers are also forced to spend more time preparing students for tests versus creating authentic writing exercises (McCarthy, 2008).

Despite the weaknesses pointed out in the research, the standards-based movement has also had positive effects on classroom instruction. For example, schools have been more aware of what matters and there is a greater focus on how to help students become better prepared for graduation or postsecondary education (Quality Leadership Resources, 2011). New research, however, focused more on the negative and unwanted effects of a standards-based movement. Nippold and Ward-Lonergan (2010) suggested students have been expected to have more targeted skills and there has been a greater emphasis on accountability versus overall student development. A second negative effect of the standards-based movement has been students were expected to come together and have similar learning results; however, students have differing learning styles and developmental levels, which the standards-based movement does not address (Voltz, Sims, & Nelson, 2010). Teachers need to balance the standards-based movement with effective teaching practices in many subject areas, including writing (McCarthy, 2008). McCarthy went on to suggest writing curriculums need to expand in order to include more genres, writing forms, and technology.

Technology

If teachers change how they teach writing to become more meaningful for students, then writing has to move beyond a requirement and into an environment that promotes writing across the curriculum (NCW, 2006). In order for teachers to move writing beyond an obligation, writing needs to become a daily, personable, and meaningful activity that blends strategy, process, skill, genre, and technology for students

to improve (Cutler & Graham, 2008; McCarthey, 2008). Teachers are faced with new challenges to incorporate technology into classroom instruction and to improve the educational performance of students (Atwell et al., 2008). Educators must increase the expectations in the 21st century as students face more challenges than ever before. Students need to benefit from educational technology and instructional resources (Atwell et al., 2008).

Software programs have been available for educators to help scaffold writing instruction and to help support writing development (Lovell & Phillips, 2009). Computer software programs offer immersive learning environments to increase student motivation and to provide scaffold resources for teachers (Warren et al., 2008). These programs go beyond basic word processing or grammar instruction and use a constructivist, problem based approach to writing, which increases student writing development (Lacina, 2005; Warren et al., 2008). The software programs that allow teachers to focus only on grammar, word processing, concept mapping, or word analysis are non-instructional and should not be used to teach writing (Lacina, 2005; Lovell & Phillips, 2009). Many of these basic programs do not help teachers track student progress or provide constructive feedback, which limits the capacity and impact (Lovell & Phillips, 2009).

However, if programs are research-based, provide a way for teachers to track and monitor students, and give students specific feedback, then incorporating this type of technology into writing instruction would increase student motivation and time spent on writing (Lovell & Phillips, 2009; Warren et al., 2008). When implemented properly,

software programs can complement classroom instruction because students can work independently, receive immediate feedback, have time to practice skills, and “gain a sense of accomplishment” (Lovell & Phillips, 2009, p. 201). Teachers need to be flexible when working with technology because there could be obstacles in scheduling computer lab times, and technology issues related to equipment malfunction. Many times teachers see these obstacles as a minor nuisance, and part of the learning process (Andes & Claggett, 2011).

Regardless of the type of computer based programs teachers blend into writing instruction, a key factor in increasing writing performance is to “increase student time-on-task practicing writing” (Warren et al., 2008, p. 133). Students are able to become independent writers by practicing the process, skills, and strategies through collaboration with teachers and classmates (Read, 2010). Word processing is one of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as identified from Graham and Perin (2007) and many states are going to an online word processing platform for assessing students (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). As schools explore the integration of technology in writing instruction, district officials need to support teachers by providing on-site and hands-on practice for successful implementation (Andes & Claggett, 2011; Atwell et al., 2008).

Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2010) teacher education programs need to shift the focus from academic

preparation to clinical practice. Teacher preparation programs should be entwined with theoretical content and professional classes. NCATE went on to explain how this can be accomplished by having teacher education programs work closely with school districts to decrease the gap between what schools need and how teachers are prepared. The greatest impact on student achievement and student learning is an effective teacher in the classroom. Effective teachers are defined as being

“well versed in curricula, communities, knowledge of child growth and development, used assessments to monitor student progress and effectively engage students in learning. Teachers need collaboration, communication, and problem solving skills to keep pace with rapidly changing learning environments and new technologies.” (NCATE, 2010, p. 1)

Preservice teachers need a solid foundation on how to teach writing, which means college students need to become avid writers and to write more as part of their educational training (Reid, 2009). A preservice teacher’s written communication should be developed and at the top of the educational priorities according to Moskovitz (2011). Many times in teacher education programs, writing instruction is often combined with reading instruction with an emphasis on how to teach reading (Coker & Lewis, 2008; Watts, 2009). Writing instruction at the university level needs to have a targeted focus on how to write and how to teach writing. Preservice teachers who learn how to teach writing through various strategies, such as those suggested by Graham and Perin (2007), have more knowledge of effective writing practices to use in the classroom (Coker & Lewis,

2008). In addition, Moskovitz explained teacher education programs should provide more timely and specific feedback from an experienced professor that will help preservice teachers develop a better sense of writing skills.

Once preservice teachers graduate, acquire a job, and attain a classroom, then the prospective teachers will discover the need to have a deeper understanding of the many layers to teaching writing that will enhance students' knowledge (Gibson, 2007).

Teachers need to participate in effective professional development sessions in order to continue to develop personal writing styles. The professional development sessions need to enhance the instructional writing practices that will meet the differentiated needs of students as well as to motivate students to view writing as purposeful and meaningful (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Reid, 2009). As part of any writing session, participants need to write as part of the training, which is a central component of the National Writing Project (Watts, 2009). The National Writing Project focuses on helping dedicated teachers develop the discipline of teaching writing to become more confident in the learned and acquired skills. Teachers can then apply the learned knowledge at school to create an energizing classroom of student writers (Reid, 2009).

Effective teachers can address multiple aspects of teacher pedagogy and students' competence to help develop students' ideas, voice, organization, and conventions (Gibson, 2007). Students need a "creative, responsive, and knowledgeable teacher who is prepared to participate in extensive professional development over a number of years" to learn how to improve personal writing practices (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010, p. 373). Having

professional development sessions at the school site will help enhance teacher expertise and help create new ways to work with students. This type of format allows teachers to learn about and practice new strategies that have been researched to effectively teach writing, such as the 11 components of effective writing instruction from Graham and Perin (2007) (Coker & Lewis, 2008; Reid, 2009). Teachers are also able to develop “a strong sense of instructional efficacy” during training sessions to motivate and stimulate students (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010, p. 380). During these professional development sessions, teachers are able to perform a self-examination of perceptions and beliefs of writing instruction.

Teacher Perceptions and Beliefs

McGheen and Lew (2007) and Seban (2008) discovered that teacher perceptions and personal beliefs on how to teach writing can impact the way writing is taught. Teachers who do not enjoy writing will shy away from teaching writing because of apprehensive feelings (Thompson, 2011; Tunks, 2010). Fry and Griffin (2010) discovered teacher attitudes about writing and how educators personally write impacts how writing is taught in the classroom. Fry and Griffin revealed preservice teachers had two misconceptions to teach writing because of the belief that writing instruction was based on a personal preference and that teachers who were the best writers would also be the best writing instructors.

Although teacher attitudes and perceptions impact writing instruction, the greater impact on writing instruction is the ability to offer constructive and valuable feedback to

students and to teach several writing strategies (Fry & Griffin, 2010). Graham and Perin's (2007) theoretical model of effective writing instruction recommends a variety of strategies that have had a positive impact on student achievement. The impactful strategies range from directly teaching several writing strategies to examining models of good writing.

Implications

In this study, I examined if using seven or more of the 11 components of effective writing instruction had an impact on the distribution of student achievement scores of students compared to using six or fewer of the components. Seven was selected as the number of components to focus on because the passing rate for the 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam is 12 out of 20 points, or 60% (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). Six of the 11 components represented 54.5% of the components, whereas seven out of 11 represented 63.6%; therefore, seven was selected as being closer to 60%. If the Graham and Perin (2007) model of writing instruction is effective, then the CCSD can develop a plan. One possibility could be to create a writing framework to include research-based instructional strategies, assessment expectations, and provide district-wide training that will lead to increased writing skills and improved writing performance.

Summary

In summary, NAEP reported that writing scores increased slightly from 2004 to 2007 in Grades 8 and 12, but many students leave high school without the necessary writing skills needed in order to be successful in college and in the working world (Cutler

& Graham, 2008; Salahu-Din et al., 2008). D'On Jones et al. (2010) conducted a study to examine the state of writing instruction in a primary classroom and how instruction with interactive writing versus a workshop model produced better results. The researchers, D'On Jones et al. (2010) concluded both models of instruction were equally effective and suggested writing instruction should be flexible and teachers need to use a range of instructional methods. An additional study conducted by Geisler, Hessler, Gardner, and Lovelace (2009) analyzed two writing interventions with a focus on counting the number of total words and the number of different words written. These researchers discovered students responded differently to the interventions and recommend teachers should differentiate instruction by using different instructional strategies. Baker et al. (2009) examined experimental, quasi-experimental, and single-subject studies that evaluated instructional interventions in writing. The results from the study suggested a comprehensive approach to teach writing with clear procedures and steps to follow would significantly improve student writing and student achievement. Students need to receive a comprehensive education to include a foundation in writing to be successful in life.

Students who do not learn to write effectively at a young age are at a disadvantage as the skill set diminishes and students are not able to adequately perform at required levels. The purpose of this study was to compare the distribution of student writing achievement scores for fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction to the distribution of student scores for teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components of

effective writing instruction. Until there is current data on how teachers consistently teach writing in the classroom, then developing high quality trainings, and a comprehensive writing curriculum will remain a challenge (Coker & Lewis, 2008).

In the next section, I provided information on the quasi-experimental research methodology used to examine writing instructional practices of fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction and teachers who used six or fewer of the 11 components of effective writing instruction to compare the distribution of student scores between the two groups.

Section 2: The Methodology

The purpose of this quasi-experimental research study was to discover if the distribution of writing achievement scores for the students of fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction was statistically different from the distribution of student scores for teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components as measured from the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam. Seven was selected as the number of components to focus on because the passing rate for the 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam is 12 out of 20 points, or 60% (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). Six of the 11 components represented 54.5%, and seven represented 63.6%; therefore, seven was selected as being closer to 60%.

This chapter contains a description of the quantitative methods and procedures I used to collect and analyze data for this study. A rationale for the quasi-experimental research approach will be discussed, in addition to sampling methods used to gather data. The data collected consisted of student achievement scores from the fifth grade 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam and responses from a survey of fifth grade teachers' writing instructional practices. Next, I analyzed data results to identify instructional strategies that aligned with Graham and Perin's (2007) theoretical model of writing instruction, to investigate teacher preparation to teach writing, and to examine the amount of time spent on writing in the classroom. I will share the data analysis and results from

this study with district leaders as a foundation for improving writing instruction across the school district in order to improve student performance.

Quantitative Research Measures and Procedures

A quasi-experimental approach was appropriate for this project study because the participant groups already existed, and were purposefully selected. Creswell (2012) suggested using a quasi-experimental approach when assignment of groups is not random “because the experimenter cannot artificially create groups for the experiment” (p. 309). I used the purposeful sampling technique to intentionally select school sites and individual teachers to understand how writing was taught (Creswell, 2008). To be eligible to participate in this study, a participant must have been a special education teacher or a general education teacher teaching writing in fifth grade in the highest performing school or in the lowest performing school in each of the 14 performance zones. Twenty-eight schools were included in the sample. For this study, fifth grade teachers from the lowest and the highest performing school in each performance zone or geographic cluster of schools, were given a survey to discover how many of the components from Graham and Perin’s (2007) model of effective writing instruction were used. Next, two groups were formed: (a) schools that used seven or more of the 11 effective components of writing instruction and (b) schools that used six or fewer of the 11 components.

I used two forms of data collection for this project study. The first form of data collection was a survey to gather information about the 11 components of writing instruction. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) suggested selecting this type of data

collection over other research approaches because a survey is useful to gather information from a large group of people. In addition, Creswell (2009) suggested a survey approach to research provides a “numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 12). Three characteristics of survey research were included in this study: (a) utilizing a preestablished survey instrument, (b) summarizing responses quantitatively, and (c) selecting a sample from a larger population so the findings could be generalized to the larger population (Lodico et al., 2010). For these reasons, I deployed a survey to analyze methods of writing instruction related to Graham and Perin’s (2007) theoretical model.

I followed the descriptive survey methodology consisting of a preestablished survey to collect data. A preestablished survey is a type of a measuring tool that has already been developed by researchers (Lodico et al., 2010). A preestablished survey entitled “Writing Practices of Teachers Grades 4 to 6” was located, and the author, Graham (2010), gave permission for the survey to be used in this study. The preestablished survey was used in a prior research study conducted by Gilbert and Graham (2010) to assess how teachers teach writing, specific questions related to each of the 11 components of writing instruction, time spent on teaching writing, and if teachers felt prepared to teach writing. In this project study, I adapted and used many of the questions from the preestablished survey, specifically the questions focused on the 11 components of writing instruction. A survey approach was desired for this study due to the population size and the large geographic area. Following Institutional Review Board

(IRB number 02-29-12-0157530) approval, a cover letter was provided to district officials to gain permission to administer the survey. Once district permission was obtained, each building principal selected to be in the study was given the cover letter, consent form, and a school district site acknowledgement letter to sign and return to the school district's research department before teachers were contacted. Once all permissions were granted, a cover letter including the consent form and an electronic one-shot survey was sent to each selected school via the school principal, who then sent the survey to a fifth grade teacher. I could not send the survey directly to the participants due to confidentiality issues. However, one question on the survey did ask for the school's location code to link the student proficiency data with the survey responses. Survey data were collected through an online survey web-site and were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The second form of data collection was a performance measure to gather student achievement results from the fifth grade 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam administered in early February 2012 (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). The Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam was modified for the 2012 administration. Student writing was assessed differently by using a holistic rubric scored by two evaluators (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). A proficient score on the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam was categorized as *meets* or *exceeds* standards. Students were considered to *meet* standards if they earned a score of 3 points, and students were considered to *exceeds* standards if they earned a score of 4 out of 4 points (see Appendix

I). A performance measure was appropriate for this study because the measure examined the writing proficiency of each student (Creswell, 2008). Data were obtained from the school district's Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division [AARSI], which had given preapproval and granted full access once IRB approval was granted. School-level writing achievement results were also available by visiting the Nevada Department of Education's website.

Setting and Sample

This project study was conducted in a large district in southern Nevada. The CCSD is the fifth largest district in the country (Proximity, 2011). It has over 17,000 licensed personnel, approximately 16,300 of whom are considered highly qualified (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). The focus of this study was comparing the distribution of student writing achievement scores for fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction to the distribution of student scores for teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components of effective writing instruction. Therefore, the population for this study was fifth grade teachers, and a sampling came from the highest performing school and the lowest performing school in each of the district's performance zones or geographic clusters of schools. The intent of this selection strategy was to capture the potential variation in instruction across the school district.

Using the purposeful sampling technique allowed me to intentionally select school sites and individual teachers in the effort to understand how writing was taught

(Creswell, 2008). To be eligible to participate in this study, an individual must have been either a special education teacher or a general education teacher teaching writing in fifth grade in the highest performing school or in the lowest performing school in one of the 14 performance zones. Twenty-eight schools were included in the sample, and 25 school principals gave permission for the study to be conducted. The survey was administered to fifth grade teachers in 23 of the 25 participating schools, so there were 23 schools included in the study. Teachers at two of the schools did not complete the survey within the timeframe to participate. Data for all of the fifth grade students in all of the participating schools were used in this study, representing approximately 2,000 students.

Instrumentation and Materials

The *one-shot survey* was online and was self-administered to the selected fifth grade teachers in the CCSD. Lodico et al. (2010) defined a *one-shot survey* as a survey that is mailed to selected participants to collect perceptions related to an issue at one point in time. Creswell (2008) supported the use of a *one-shot survey*, or a cross-sectional survey, when the goal is to gather data that can be generalized from a sample to a population.

The survey obtained for this project study had been used in a national study conducted by Gilbert and Graham (2010). The two researchers surveyed a small portion of intermediate-grade writing teachers about their general background, preparation to teach writing, time spent on writing, and classroom instructional practices. Creswell (2008) suggested that a preestablished instrument should be recent (i.e., used within the

last 5 years), cited by other authors, and reviewed or published. The selected survey was created, field tested, peer reviewed, published, used within the last 5 years, and cited by other authors (Gilbert & Graham, 2010). For this project study, only the first two out of the five sections of the survey were used because the last three portions of the survey were not directly linked to this study. The authors of the survey had given permission for the survey to be modified. The first section asked teachers about demographic information, educational level, years of teaching experience, and time spent on instruction. These questions were in either fill-in-the-blank or check-box format, depending on the item (e.g., gender, ethnicity, level of education, etc. were check-box questions). The second section of the survey contained 19 questions concerning how often the teachers used the indicated writing practices, including the 11 components. Fourteen of the 19 items in the second portion were answered using an 8-point Likert-type scale with response options of *never*, *several times a year*, *monthly*, *several times a month*, *weekly*, *several times a week*, *daily*, and *several times a day* (Gilbert & Graham, 2010). Values of the items ranged from 0 (*never*) to 8 (*several times a day*). Possible responses to the remaining five questions ranged from *never* (score of 0) to *always* (score of 7), with an option in the middle of *half the time* (score of 3.5) and were focused on how often students collaborated and how often students used word processing (Gilbert & Graham, 2010). Responses from the survey were tied to fifth grade student achievement scores through a question on the survey that asked for the school name or location code. I managed confidentiality of the participants throughout the study through a coding process

of assigning the school location code to each school name. Collected data were housed on a secure computer and was available upon request from the researcher.

Student proficiency results were obtained for each of the schools participating in the study from the AARSI Division in the CCSD. Student identifier information was stripped from the data and consolidated to be reported as a school. Creswell (2008) suggested that scores from an instrument need to be stable and consistent for reliability purposes, that scores need to make sense, and that scores should be meaningful for validity purposes. The Nevada Department of Education conducted validity and reliability measures for the writing proficiency exam by having more than one person score the writing test of each student and by comparing the scores to ensure that results were stable and the final scores made sense. Student data were reported by grade level, by school, and were connected to each participating school through the school location code on the survey.

Data Analysis

The purpose of collecting data were to answer the following research question: Do students of teachers who implement seven or more of the 11 components of Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction model have a statistically higher distribution of student achievement scores in the *meets* and *exceeds* categories than those who implement six or fewer as measured by the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency exam? Data were automatically collected from an online, self-administered, survey warehouse, and student achievement scores were obtained from the AARSI Division. Administering a

paper-and-pencil survey through the postal service would have resulted in unnecessary cost, given that a survey could be administered online through the school district email service. An online survey was convenient for the researcher and the participants, with data being available immediately (Creswell, 2008). Survey responses were analyzed to create two groups. Group (A) was composed of teachers who used seven or more of the 11 components, and Group (B) was composed of teachers who used six or fewer of the 11 components. Survey items that yielded a response of monthly or more often (e.g. monthly, several times a month, weekly, several times a week, daily, or several times a day) and questions with a frequency response of 4 or higher out of 7 relating to the 11 components of effective writing instruction (Questions: 16-26 and 30) were analyzed to categorize teachers into Group (A) who used seven or more of the 11 components. Survey response items yielding a response of never or several times a year, and for questions with a frequency response of three or less were analyzed to categorize teachers into Group (B) who used six or fewer of the 11 components.

This section contains the statistical analysis from the survey “Writing Practices of Fifth Grade Teachers” and student achievement scores. Creswell (2008) defined six steps researchers should follow in analyzing data. First, the researcher needs to report the number of members who did and did not complete the survey in a table. Second, the researcher should discuss how response bias could impact the study by examining the effect of the nonresponses. Third, the researcher needs to provide a descriptive analysis of dependent and independent variables to address the range of scores, mean, and

standard deviations. Fourth, the researcher needs to identify the statistical procedure if the proposal contains an instrument with scales. Fifth, the researcher needs to identify the statistical computer program and the statistics used to test the research questions or hypotheses. Finally, the researcher needs “to present the results in tables or figures and interpret the results from the statistical test” (p. 152). These steps have been followed and are detailed in this section.

Schools were purposefully selected to participate in this study through application of the following criteria: A school needed to be either the highest or the lowest performing school in each of the performance zones. Twenty-eight schools were invited to participate in the study, and 23 schools completed the survey. The response rate was 82.1% (Table 1). Of the schools that did not participate, one school principal did not want the school included in this study because the school had several other studies taking place. Two schools did not give permission within the established time frame, and two schools gave permission, but the participants did not complete the survey. The five schools that did not participate were all from different performance zones. Three of the five schools had high student achievement, and two of the schools had lower student achievement rates. Due to a cross-representation of schools across the school district, selection bias was not a threat.

Table 1

Survey Response Rate

# Invited	# Participated	% Participated
28	23	82.14%

Of the 23 schools that did participate in the study, 35 responses were collected from the “Writing Practices of Fifth Grade Teachers Survey” survey. I did not anticipate multiple responses from one school because an assumption was made that the school principal would send the survey link to the grade level chair. This assumption was violated because multiple teachers from the same school participated in the survey. Criteria to participate in the study were applied and four of the 35 responses were removed. One response was removed because I tested the function of the survey to make sure the survey link deployed correctly. Two responses were removed because participants did not respond to the first question, which was agreeing to participate in the research study. A fourth response was removed because the participant did not teach writing. I examined the remaining 31 responses for the 23 schools and found there were four schools that had two teacher responses and two schools that had three teacher responses. The survey did not ask for participant name or position due to confidentiality and I could not tell which response was from the fifth grade chairperson. For this study, I averaged the responses in order to determine one value for each school for the questions relating to the 11 components of effective instruction. Creswell (2008) suggested it is okay to sum the response scores because an individual response may not accurately reflect the participant’s score. I added the summed scores to compute an overall score for each of the questions and then divided by the number of individual responses to provide a single score for the school for each variable (Creswell, 2008).

Once survey responses were removed that did not meet the study's criteria and multiple responses from six schools were averaged, then I analyzed the data by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to provide frequencies and conduct a chi-square statistical test. Descriptive analysis information of the 31 teacher participants and 23 schools that participated in this study is presented in Tables 2 and 3. The majority of the respondents were Caucasian females with an education level beyond a master's degree. The range of experience in teaching ranged from 3 years to 28 years and the average was 11 years. When asked if participants felt adequately or extensively trained to teach writing in college, only 45% were prepared to teach writing. When asked if participants received training on the job, 84% responded with adequate or extensive training. Eighty-one percent of the participants responded as having received adequate or extensive training on their own.

Next, participants were asked if they used a commercial writing program, and 74% responded yes and 26% responded no. The types of commercial programs varied with the most common programs being "Write from the Beginning" ($n = 11$), "Lucy Calkins" ($n = 5$), and "Trophies" ($n = 6$). Thirteen participants indicated having used parts from several different writing programs. Findings from the survey indicated teachers in the CCSD use several different writing programs, combinations of programs, or no programs at all.

Table 2

Teacher Descriptions

Variable	Frequency	%		
Gender:				
Female	25	80.7		
Male	5	16.1		
No Response	1	3.2		
Ethnicity:				
Asian	1	3.2		
Black	2	6.5		
Hispanic	1	3.2		
Pacific Islander	1	3.2		
White	26	83.9		
Education Level:				
Bachelor's	3	9.7		
Bachelor's Plus	5	16.1		
Master's	9	29.0		
Master's Plus	14	45.2		
Preparation to Teach				
Writing:	None (%)	Minimal (%)	Adequate (%)	Extensive (%)
Prep in college	6.5	48.4	38.6	6.5
Prep after college	3.2	12.9	61.3	22.6
Prep on own	3.2	16.1	61.3	19.4

Table 3

How Frequently Fifth Grade Teachers Used Instructional Strategies

Strategy	Several Times a Year	Monthly	Several Times a Month	Weekly	Several Times a Week	Daily	Several Times a Day
Strategies for planning ($n = 31$)	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	30.4%	26.1%	26.1%	4.3%
Strategies for revising ($n = 31$)	0%	4.3%	13%	30.4%	17.4%	30%.4	4.3%
Teach how to summarize ($n = 31$)	0%	0%	26.1%	43.5%	8.7%	21.7%	0%
Establish goals ($n = 31$)	0%	0%	0%	17.4%	21.7%	26.1%	34.8%
Students collaborate ($n = 31$)	4.3%	0%	8.7%	21.7%	39.1%	21.7%	4.3%
Word processing ($n = 31$)	4.3%	21.7%	13%	13%	30.4%	13%	4.3%
Prewriting ($n = 31$)	0%	0%	0%	13%	8.7%	30.4%	47.8%
Process approach ($n = 31$)	0%	0%	0%	13%	8.7%	47.8%	30.4%
Sentence combining ($n = 31$)	4.3%	13%	30.4%	26.1%	13%	13%	0%
Inquiry or research activities ($n = 31$)	43.5%	34.8%	8.7%	4.3%	8.7%	0%	0%
Model ($n = 31$)	4.3%	21.7%	43.5%	13%	4.3%	13%	0%
Grammar ($n = 31$)	0%	0%	13%	21.7%	39.1%	21.7%	4.3%

Next, survey responses (Questions: 16-26 and 30) were analyzed separately because the questions directly correlated with the 11 components of effective writing instruction presented in Table 3. Each column represents the timeframe the strategies were taught (e.g. strategies for planning was most frequently used on a weekly basis). Following the item analysis, I used the SPSS program to sort survey responses by the school's location code. Responses (Questions: 16-18, 24-25, and 30) were converted from words to the identified Likert-scale (e.g. never = 0, several times a year = 1, etc.). Schools that responded as having used seven or more of the 11 components on a monthly or more frequent basis (Questions: 16-18, 24-26, and 30) and with a score of 4 or higher (Questions: 19-23) were labeled as Group (A). All of the 23 schools were categorized into Group (A), which meant all of the schools in the survey responded as having used seven or more of the 11 components on a monthly or more frequently basis.

An alternative analysis was sought because all 23 schools fell into Group (A) and there were no groups to compare the distribution of student scores. I decided to apply new criteria to include survey responses of weekly or more frequently and with a score of 4 or higher (Questions: 16-26, and 30). The alternative analysis was more consistent because all questions were scored with a frequency of 4 or higher. Results of the alternative analysis indicated there were 17 schools in Group (A) as having used seven or more of the 11 components of effective writing instruction on a weekly or more frequent basis and with a score of 4 or higher. Six schools were categorized into Group (B) as

having used 6 or fewer of the 11 components on a several times a month or less frequently and a score of 3 or less (see Table 4).

Table 4

Summary of Groups

School Location Code	High or Low in Performance Zone 2011	# of Graham & Perin (2007) Strategies Used	Group	Proficiency 2012
215	Low	11	A	25%
230	High	9	A	76%
236	Low	8	A	35%
238	High	10	A	80%
239	Low	10	A	25%
253	Low	9	A	31%
254	Low	7	A	30%
271	Low	9	A	23%
304	High	7	A	48%
330	High	9	A	65%
358	Low	9	A	33%
362	Low	6	B	35%
379	High	9	A	71%
384	Low	5	B	25%
403	Low	8	A	29%
410	Low	5	B	26%
412	High	6	B	57%
443	High	10	A	54%
484	High	9	A	37%
512	High	5	B	48%
526	High	7	A	27%
916	High	5	B	39%
924	Low	8	A	22%

The chi-square statistical test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis to compare if there was a significant difference in the distribution of scores for students

taught by teachers who implemented seven or more of the 11 components from Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction, Group (A), and the distribution of scores for students taught by teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components from Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction, Group (B), as measured by the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam. I analyzed the frequencies from the student achievement categorical data from the alternative analysis (Creswell, 2008; Green & Salkind, 2011; Hinkle, Wiersman & Jurs, 2003; Lodico et al., 2010).

Based on Table 5, schools in Group (A) had a distribution of scores with 666 students scoring in the *meets* category and 157 students scoring in the *exceeds* category. Schools in Group (A) had a proficiency rate of 44% on the writing exam. Schools in Group (B) had a distribution of scores with 140 students scoring in the *meets* category and 25 students scoring in the *exceeds* category. Schools in Group (B) had a proficiency rate of 40.7% on the writing exam. The results of the chi-square test indicated there was no statistical difference in the distribution of rubric scores based on the use of the Graham and Perin (2007) model, $\chi^2(2, N = 2278) = 3.05, p = .384$, and the distribution of scores were similar to each other. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 5

Chi-Square Cross Tabulation

		Writing Achievement Level				Total
		1	2	3	4	
GROUP	Count	217	832	666	157	1872
	Expected	221.9	838.2	662.3	149.6	1872.0
	A Count					
	% within GROUP	11.6%	44.4%	35.6%	8.4%	100.0%
	Count	53	188	140	25	406
	Expected	48.1	181.8	143.7	32.4	406.0
	B Count					
	% within GROUP	13.1%	46.3%	34.5%	6.2%	100.0%
	Count	270	1020	806	182	2278
	Expected	270.0	1020.0	806.0	182.0	2278.0
Total	Count					
	% within GROUP	11.9%	44.8%	35.4%	8.0%	100.0%

Outcomes

The purpose of this study was to discover if the distribution of student writing achievement scores for fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction were statistically different than the distribution of student scores for teachers who implemented 6 or fewer of the 11 components of effective writing instruction. Results from data analysis indicated there was no statistical difference in student proficiency scores at schools that used 7 or more of the components and schools that used 6 or fewer of the components.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

I made three assumptions for this project study. The first assumption was participants would respond openly and honestly to an online survey because responses were voluntary and participant identity was confidential. The second assumption was the teachers surveyed were currently employed, were teaching writing in fifth grade, were the grade level chair, and were under contract with the CCSD. The third assumption was that all fifth grade teachers in one school building were using the same instructional methods for teaching writing, and only one teacher response would be needed from each participating school.

I made three limitations for this study. The first limitation was not every instructional strategy was evaluated because the possible list of strategies would be exhaustive and impossible to conduct as a small number of teachers would be willing to participate. A second limitation was not every grade level was considered, so this study will not be generalized to the primary grades, middle school, or high school. However, this study could be generalized to other fifth grades across the district and the state as the CCSD accounts for more than 85% of the student population in the state (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). A third limitation was the format for administering the test was new this year. For the first time, fifth grade students composed and finalized the writing assessment on a computer versus a paper and pencil as was done in previous years. This method of writing assessment administration was pilot-tested the previous school year and was successful. Students in this district have been exposed to online

testing formats before, but the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam was the first time students composed online.

The scope of this study analyzed how writing was taught in the highest performing school and the lowest performing school in each of the 14 performance zones. This study is limited to the CCSD in southern Nevada and to teachers contracted to teach fifth grade. In this research study, I assessed how teachers teach writing and if incorporating seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of writing instruction resulted in higher distribution of student scores, by using the "Writing Practices of Fifth Grade Teachers" survey and student achievement results from the 2012 fifth grade Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam.

Protection of Participants

I considered three ethical responsibilities for this research study. First, I purposefully selected participants that were contractually employed by the CCSD and informed consent was obtained from each participant. The informed consent contained a detailed description of the study, a description of any potential or possible risks of participating in the study, and explained how the study was voluntary. The consent letter also contained a confidentiality statement (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Lodico et al., 2010). Second, participants were emailed a cover letter outlining the purpose of the research study, procedures to complete the survey, risks and benefits of participating in the survey, ensuring of confidentiality, uses for the information, and contact information.

This method was used to protect participants from harm. Third, confidentiality was ensured through an online survey and every consent form was kept in a secure location.

Poor writing performance by students in the CCSD has received attention, but an in-depth analysis of instructional writing practices was needed to determine how instructional practices should be streamlined across the school district to raise student performance. Through this quasi-experimental research study, I determined that writing achievement scores for fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction had no statistical difference than the student scores for teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as measured from the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam. The next two sections will address project design, implications for social change, suggestions for future research, and my reflections of the project study.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction, Description, Goals, and Rationale

In this section, a description of the project, a white paper, will be provided along with goals, a rationale, and a vision for implementation.

Through the literature review and data analysis in this research study, the project was a white paper (Appendix A). The white paper report was given to the director of the instruction unit and to the writing coordinator in the CPD Division in the CCSD. The white paper includes an introduction to the problem, a summary of the study, research results, recommendations for the school district to address, and references.

The goal of the white paper was to communicate the doctoral study and results with the curriculum leaders in the CCSD. This quasi-experimental research study and the white paper report focused on the problem of poor writing achievement of students and examined instructional practices of teachers who teach writing in fifth grade.

A white paper report is an effective way of providing information to a group of people to recommend certain solutions to an identified problem (Purdue, 2012). A white paper was chosen for this project because the report addressed the problem of low writing achievement scores in the school district by providing data analysis on writing instruction. The report provides information on the local problem, study results of comparing instructional practices with student achievement across schools in the diversified district, and suggests recommendations for the school district to consider implementing. The recommendations in the white paper report include creating a district-

wide writing framework with expectations for allotted time, training on research-based strategies, providing teachers with ongoing professional development, and monitoring progress through a formative evaluation.

Review of the Literature

Based on the data analysis in this research study, the number and frequency of writing instructional strategies from Graham and Perin's (2007) model of 11 components of writing instruction were not related to student achievement. Survey results further revealed that teachers did not receive adequate training to teach writing while in college, but teachers did have ongoing professional development after college either through work or through self-study. Another result of this research study was discovering how many different writing programs teachers used. Out of the 23 schools that participated in this study, 17 schools used 14 different writing programs. The use of several writing programs indicated that writing instruction across the school district was inconsistent. There was a lack of structure and expectations for teaching writing, which is why teachers used combinations of programs to teach writing.

A writing framework is used to focus on the process of writing versus the product of writing; otherwise, teachers and schools will not know how to get to the product (Bernabei et al., 2009). Teachers need to know and understand a district-wide framework for teaching writing, including how to teach and assess writing (Nauman, Stirling, & Borthwick, 2011). Results from this study indicate that teachers need a common framework with district expectations to address how to use research-based instructional

strategies, how to assess student writing with a common rubric, and how to continuously improve instruction through ongoing professional development.

The National Writing Project (2012), along with the National Commission on Writing (NCW, 2006, 2010), supported the implementation of a unified framework in order to give students opportunities to write throughout the day and to increase their achievement. The NCW (2006) suggested that a writing panel needs to be at the center of writing reform and must be composed of teachers, curriculum leaders, and department heads in order to create a solid framework for the implementation of high-quality professional development. This project, a white paper report, contains the recommendation that a writing framework be developed to establish district-wide expectations that include allotted time for teaching writing, research-based instructional strategies, creation of common assessments with a common rubric, and ongoing professional development.

In order to be labeled as an effective writing practice, an identified strategy must have been studied and examined for its impact on achievement through several research studies (Graham, 2008). Graham further suggested, “writing practices are likely to be even more effective if they are embedded within a framework of what we know about how youngsters move from initial acclimation (i.e., novice writer) to competence (i.e., skilled writer)” (p. 4). The Curriculum and Professional Development (CPD) Division does provide a continuum for teaching writing, called “The K-12 Writing Continuum.” The continuum addresses how a student moves from “Emerging” writer to “Independent”

writer, with a brief description of the steps in between (Figure 1). CCSD also provides teachers with a chart to help them allocate time during the week to specific subjects, but writing is not specified within it (Figure 2). The two items listed above are resources for teachers, but the survey results showed that teachers need more consistency and a structure to teach writing effectively.

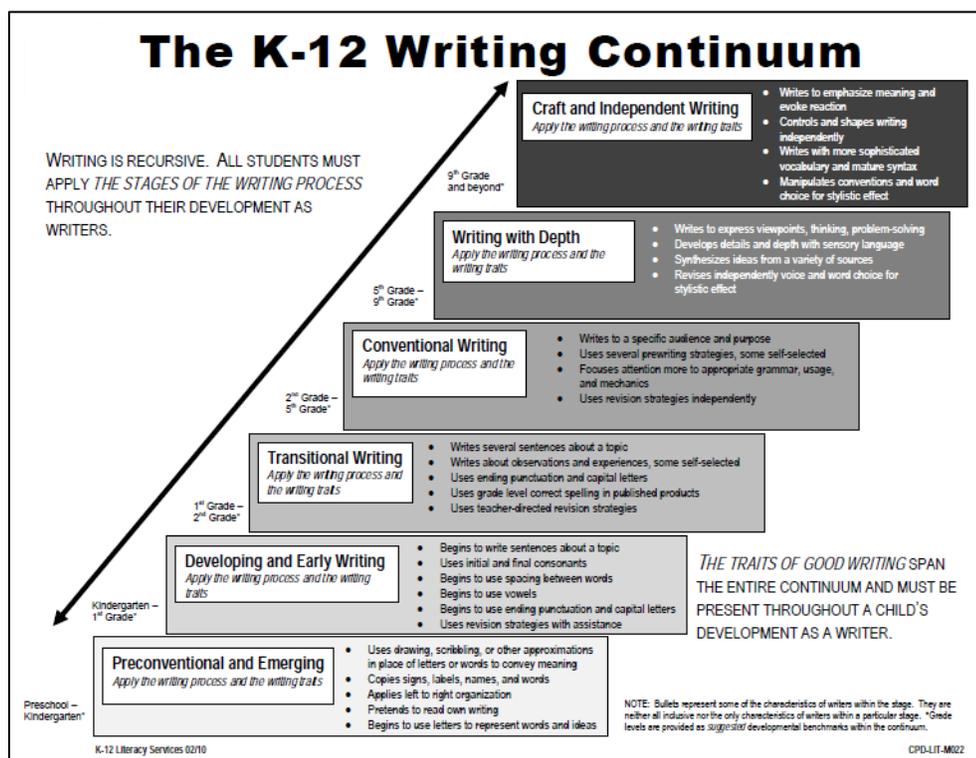


Figure 1. Writing continuum document from the CPD Division web-site of the CCSD.

**Allocation of Academic Time for Grades K-5
Clark County School District**

HALF-DAY KINDERGARTEN			FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN			GRADES 1,2,3,4,5,(6)		
Daily Allocations:			Daily Allocations:			Daily Allocations:		
Student Day	150 minutes		Student Day	371 minutes		Student Day	371 minutes	
Breaks, Passing	10 minutes		Lunch	30 minutes		Lunch	30 minutes	
Available Academic Time	140 minutes		Breaks, Passing	31 minutes		Breaks, Passing	25 minutes	
Weekly Academic Time: 700 minutes			Weekly Academic Time: 1,550 minutes			Weekly Academic Time: 1,580 minutes		
Academic Area	Minutes		Academic Area	Minutes		Academic Area	Minutes	
	Daily	Weekly		Daily	Weekly		Daily	Weekly
	Minimum			Minimum			Minimum	
Core Academics			Core Academics			Core Academics		
Reading/Language Arts	80	400	Reading	120	600	Reading	110	550
			Language Arts	40	200	Language Arts	48	240
Mathematics	36	180	Mathematics	70	350	Mathematics	70	350
	Recommended			Recommended			Recommended	
Integrated Academics			Integrated Academics			Integrated Academics		
Science/Health		35	Science/Health		75	Science/Health		110
Social Studies		35	Social Studies		75	Social Studies		80
	Required			Required			Required	
Specialist Period(s)		50	Specialist Period(s)		250	Specialist Period(s)		250

3/11/2004, Rev. 8/11/2005

CCSD-CPDD

Figure 2. Allocation of academic time for Grades K-5 from the CPD Division web-site of the CCSD.

Teachers need to provide students with structured activities and strategies that are motivating, that are relevant, and that allow students to connect with an audience through writing assignments (Gabor, 2009). Chapman (2006) supported the notion of motivating students through appropriate and challenging writing tasks. Teachers should be able to motivate students and allow them to explore multiple strategies in writing to help them develop skills that can be applied across content areas (Chapman, 2006; McCarthy, 2008). Smith (2008) suggested that teachers need to develop “competent writers whose processes are grounded in knowledge transformation and not simply proficient at knowledge telling” (p. 25). Teachers in the CCSD have been able to use strategies, but

results from this study indicate that efforts have been inconsistent across the school district. Survey results revealed that 8 out of 31 teachers did not use a writing program and that of the 24 teachers who did use a writing program, 13 indicated that they used parts from several different writing programs. A total of 14 different writing programs were identified in the survey. Although the results from the hypothesis were inclusive, teachers used several different strategies and programs; this, had caused inconsistent writing instruction across the school district. The next portion of this literature review will examine the 14 identified writing programs in alphabetical order (see Table 6 for a summary).

Being a Writer

Being a Writer is a research-based writing program written and created at the Developmental Studies Center in California (DSC, 2012). This program is designed to enable K-6 students to build the skills and creativity they need to write. *Being a Writer* also supports the development of social and ethical values in students (DSC, 2012). Much of the program uses trade books to immerse students in various genres of writing, provide models of good writing, and reinforce the skills and strategies taught in the lessons. The DSC (2012) made correlations to the Common Core State Standards in June 2011 to help teachers make the transition from state standards to the Common Core State Standards. This writing program is comprehensive, addresses all 11 components of effective instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007), and is outlined on the company's website.

Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test

This is a book resource with a CD-ROM for teachers to use. *Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test* contains several classroom strategies to help students succeed on a state writing assessment (Kiestler, 2006). Teachers can use the book to reproduce activities and strategies to help students build writing skills that will increase the passing rate on state assessments (Kiestler, 2006). The resource addresses six of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007): strategies for planning and revising, summarizing, prewriting, sentence combining, models, and grammar (Kiestler, 2006).

Easy Grammar

Through the research conducted in this study, two references to easy grammar surfaced. The first reference was a book entitled *Easy Grammar Plus*, which includes information on grammar concepts such as capitalization, sentence types, phrases, clauses, and punctuation (Phillips, 1995). The second reference was a website called *easygrammar.com*. This website is designed to help teachers teach, learn, and remember how to use grammar through a series of books and online support (Easy Grammar Systems, 2011). Both of these resources only address one of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007), which is grammar.

Lucy Calkins

Lucy Calkins is a professor, researcher, and author who founded the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and wrote several books to help teachers teach

writing (Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, 2010). Teachers in CCSD use the book series *Units of Study* by Lucy Calkins. Calkins's book series and professional development sessions help teachers use the writer's workshop model and six research principles. The principles are as follows: Teachers should (a) teach the traits of writing, (b) use the writing process, (c) provide direct instruction, (d) provide students more time to write, (e) give support to struggling writers and English language learners, and (f) combine writing and reading (Firsthand, 2008). The *Units of Study* program addresses eight of the 11 components of effective writing instruction defined by Graham and Perin (2007): strategies for planning and revising, summarizing, collaboration, prewriting, process approach, sentence combining, using models, and grammar instruction (Firsthand, 2008).

Science Research Associates

One teacher identified Science Research Associates (SRA) as the writing program used for writing instruction. SRA was not defined in the survey responses and could refer to a few different programs. One possibility was *SRA Decoding Strategies*, which is a reading series to help students who have difficulties in decoding words (Engelmann, et al., 1999). A second possibility is a book titled *SRA Essentials for Writing* produced by the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company (McGraw-Hill Education, 2012). This program, designed for middle school and high school students, is focused on test-taking skills, grammar and language use, and helping students set goals to improve specific aspects of writing (McGraw-Hill Education, 2012). As SRA was not defined in the survey,

assumptions or speculations concerning which program the teacher in the study meant to refer to could not be made. Therefore, an alignment analysis is not provided with the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007).

Step Up to Writing

Step Up to Writing is a research-based program with strategies and activities for teachers to teach writing (Cambium Learning Group, 2012). The writing program focuses on building common language and assessments across grade levels with strategies and practices that are grounded in research and focused on the genres of writing (Cambium Learning Group, 2012). Research supporting this program indicates nine out of the 11 components of effective writing instruction defined by Graham and Perin (2007). The nine components identified are strategies for planning and revising, summarizing, collaboration, prewriting, process approach, sentence combining, inquiry, models, and grammar (Sopris West, 2007).

Teaching the Qualities of Writing

One teacher identified the book *Teaching the Qualities of Writing* as a resource for teaching writing. The book focuses on developing writing ideas, writing voice, and strategies to teach students how to develop writing skills (Portalupi & Fletcher, 2010). The book contains 13 lessons and 11 video clips based on four principles: ideas, design, language, and presentation (Portalupi & Fletcher, 2010). The lessons are designed to be taught over a 6-week cycle (Portalupi & Fletcher, 2010; Seitz, 2006). This resource aligns with six of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and

Perin (2007): establishing goals, collaboration, word processing, process approach, sentence combining, and grammar instruction (Portalupi & Fletcher, 2010).

Thinking Maps

Thinking Maps is a visual program that helps students to organize thought processes through eight graphic organizational tools (Thinking Maps, 2012). This program is designed to be implemented with another writing program because it focuses primarily on brainstorming and gives structure to help students develop critical thinking skills (Thinking Maps, 2012). *Thinking Maps* is a graphic tool that helps provide students with different structures when going through the writing process, but the program teaches students how to use the tools and not how to become better writer (Smith, 2003). Only one specific connection can be made between *Thinking Maps* and Graham and Perin's (2007) model of effective components of writing instruction, which is prewriting (Thinking Maps, 2012).

Trophies

The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt publishing company produces a reading series called *Trophies* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011). The CCSD has officially adopted *Trophies* as one of the approved reading programs for teachers to use (CCSD, 2011b). The reading program encompasses reading, writing, and grammar. The writing portion of *Trophies* includes writing prompts embedded in the genres of writing (e.g. narrative, expository, etc.) to be used when teaching the reading series. *Trophies* includes 4 of the

11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007): collaboration, prewriting, sentence combining, and grammar (Bowling, 2011).

Words Their Way

Words Their Way is an instructional approach that helps students study words, study phonics, and study spelling (Dearnley, Freeman, Gulick, & Neri, 2002; Pearson Education, 2009). The focus of this program is to teach students how to study words, separate letters, separate syllables, identify patterns, and identify meanings (Pearson Education, 2009). Unfortunately, no research was found to determine how this program is used for writing instruction, therefore, an alignment was not made with Graham and Perin's (2007) model of 11 components of effective writing instruction.

Write From the Beginning

The program *Write From the Beginning* is a writing program created from Thinking Maps Incorporated (2012). This program is designed to be either a core program or a supplemental program and is aligned to the traits of effective writing (Thinking Maps, 2012). The program establishes a focus for teachers across a school to differentiate instruction (Thinking Maps, 2012). *Write From the Beginning* provides teachers with support to teach the different genres of writing (e.g., narrative, expository, descriptive, etc.), but research regarding specific teaching strategies was narrow and limited. Further research into this writing program and its effectiveness is needed to measure the impact the program has on student achievement. According to Wriggle (2011) and Thinking Maps, Inc. (2012), only one component aligns with Graham and

Perin's (2007) model of effective components of writing instruction, which is to have students establish goals in writing.

Writing A-Z

Writing A-Z is an online web-site for anyone who teaches writing or wants to improve writing skills. There are core lessons for teachers to download that include the writing process and genres of writing in correlation with the four developmental levels of students in different stages of the writing process (Klein, 2010). *Writing A-Z* bases most of its research from Graham and Perin's (2007) research and incorporates all 11 components of effective writing instruction (Klein, 2010; Writing A-Z, 2012).

Writing Academy

The Writing Academy is an in-house training academy the CCSD CPD Division provides for teachers who wish to voluntarily extend knowledge in writing. Teachers sign up for the multi-week academy through an internal system called Pathlore (CCSD, 2011b). The focus of the training is on standards and strategies for increasing the rigor of writing instruction (CCSD, 2011b). Detailed information on which types of strategies that could align with the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007) was not available. Researching the components and effectiveness of the writing academy could be an area for future research.

Zaner-Bloser

Zaner-Bloser produces handwriting programs along with reading, vocabulary, spelling, and writing programs for teachers. A main writing program by Zaner-Bloser is

called *Strategies for Writing* (Zaner-Bloser, 2008; 2013). *Strategies for Writing* was first published in 2008. The program focuses on six traits of writing, having students and teachers use a rubric for self-assessment, a rubric for instruction, includes test practice, and grammar practice (Crawford, 2003). Overall, this program addresses seven of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007): strategies for planning and revising, establishing goals, collaboration, prewriting, process approach, models, and grammar (Crawford, 2003; Zaner-Bloser, 2008; 2013).

Table 6

Summary of Writing Programs Aligned to Graham and Perin's (2007) Model of Components of Effective Writing Instruction

Program Number in parentheses indicated how many components were addressed	Strategies for Planning & Revising	Summarize	Establish Goals	Collaboration	Word Processing	Prewriting	Process Approach	Sentence Combining	Inquiry or Research	Models	Grammar
Being a Writer (<i>n</i> = 11)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Blowing Away State Writing Assessments (<i>n</i> = 6)	X	X				X		X		X	X
Easy Grammar (<i>n</i> = 1)											X
Lucy Calkins (<i>n</i> = 8)	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X
SRA (<i>n</i> = NA)											
Step up to Writing (<i>n</i> = 9)	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Teaching the Qualities of Writing (<i>n</i> = 6)			X	X	X		X	X			X
Thinking Maps (<i>n</i> = 1)						X					
Trophies (<i>n</i> = 4)				X		X				X	X
Words Their Way (<i>n</i> = 0)											
Write from the Beginning (<i>n</i> = 1)			X								
Writing A-Z (<i>n</i> = 11)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Writing Academy (<i>n</i> = NA)											
Zaner-Bloser (<i>n</i> = 7)	X		X	X		X	X			X	X

Teachers in the CCSD have been using several different writing strategies and programs to teach writing. The results from my doctoral study indicated there were inconsistent writing practices and implementation of instructional programs. The inconsistent writing instruction across the school district indicates there is a lack of structure and expectations for teaching writing. By providing a unified structure and framework for teaching writing, teachers across the school district will be able to consistently teach writing, to communicate with other teachers, and to positively impact student achievement.

Project Description

Creating, writing, and delivering a white paper report was the implementation of my project. The writing coordinator and the director of the instruction unit will receive my final report and recommendations once my doctoral study has been approved.

Resources, Supports, and Potential Barriers

The writing of the white paper report did need many resources and used existing supports from my research study. Several resources were used to conduct the study from the CCSD and from Walden University. Support from colleagues in the CCSD helped to analyze and interpret the results from the study. Mentors from Walden University helped ensure the accuracy of the results from the study.

A potential barrier to this project would be if the writing coordinator or the director of the instruction unit does not accept the white paper report.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

A preliminary report was shared with the writing coordinator in the CPD Division and the director of the instruction unit for formative evaluation purposes. I wanted to share my report with them so they could provide feedback before finalizing the report. Once my doctoral study has been accepted and approved by Walden University, I will immediately deliver and discuss my final white paper report to the writing coordinator in the CPD Division and to the director of the instruction unit.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

My main responsibility is to provide my research results and white paper report to curriculum leaders and to the writing coordinator. If the writing coordinator and curriculum leaders would like to act on my white paper, then I will be happy to help support and participate in the implementation of the recommendations in my report.

Project Evaluation

A formative evaluation of the white paper was included in my report. I identified the problem, included research results, and provided recommendations for the school district to consider. I did ask for ongoing feedback from colleagues and my dissertation chair during the creation and formation of my white paper project. I will receive further evaluation of my white paper report when I deliver the finalized document to the writing coordinator and to the director of the instruction unit.

Project Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

Students in the CCSD need better writing instruction in order to be ready for college and the workforce. Currently, more than half of the students are not ready for college or for a career (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). Students who do not acquire the necessary writing skills will be at a disadvantage because poor writing habits will affect hiring practices and even delay opportunities for advancement (Coker & Lewis, 2008). By providing the white paper report, the school district will be able to discuss the recommendations of creating a district-wide writing framework that will address how to improve student performance.

Far Reaching

Student writing achievement is a national concern identified by NAEP (2008) because student performance is not at adequate proficiency levels. By increasing student writing performance, school districts can better prepare students for the 21st century by providing employable skills (NCW, 2006, 2010). Schools across the nation may be interested in reading my white paper report and the recommendations of implementing a unified writing framework. Implementing a unified framework across a school district or state will help keep writing instruction consistent, will provide schools with a common structure, will arrange a common time frame, and will include research-based instructional strategies for teachers to implement that will positively impact student achievement.

The goals, rationale, supporting literature, implementation, evaluation, and implications for social change of my writing committee project were discussed in Section 3. This project includes useful information that may help schools across the CCSD implement district-wide expectations that can aide in improving student performance.

The white paper report will impact students, teachers, and curriculum leaders by addressing the instructional practices of writing teachers and by reviewing the recommendations of creating a writing framework across a large and diversified school district. Implications for social change could happen at the local level and beyond if the CCSD implements the recommendations. The writing framework could include a specified timeframe for teaching writing, include professional development for teachers regarding best practices of writing instruction, include a common rubric for teachers to evaluate writing, and include district expectations for each grade level to determine writing performance of students before students reach fifth grade and are required to take the state writing assessment. Section 4 will focus on my reflections, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Discussion

Section 4 includes my reflections and conclusions based on the project study. Project strengths, recommendations for remediation of limitations, scholarship, project development, evaluation, leadership, and change are discussed. My personal reflections are shared in relation to my analysis as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. The potential impact of my doctoral project study in the area of social change is share, and the implications, applications, and directions for future research will conclude this section.

Project Strengths

A strength in conducting this research was discovering a local problem in the CCSD, which was that fifth grade writing achievement scores were not at proficient levels. Through the study, I discovered that there were 14 different writing programs in place and that many teachers were using pieces of several programs to teach writing. The lack of common writing expectations has led to inconsistencies in writing instruction across the school district. The CCSD does not have a framework or expectations for teachers to use when teaching and assessing writing. The greatest strength of this project was the content of the white paper report, which included the recommendation of creating a writing framework and district expectations. By developing a common framework, teachers can gain knowledge of when and how to teach writing, how to assess writing with common assessments, and how to participate in ongoing instructional support.

Another strength of this project is the minimal resources it will take to implement. The CCSD already has the resources of personnel to create the common framework, and no additional monetary expenditures are required. The CCSD has a K-12 Literacy Department within the CPD Division and a writing coordinator who could support and implement the recommendations from the white paper report. Beyond the CPD Division, the school district has personnel in the instruction unit and in AARSI who could help support the CPD Division and the writing coordinator in creating a unified writing framework. The school district also has six lead instructional coaches and an instructional coach at each of the 217 elementary schools to support the recommendations from the white paper report. A final strength of this project is the impact it could have on other school districts with similar problems in writing instruction and student achievement.

Project Limitations

The main project limitation is that the white paper report is limited to the CCSD. If other districts wanted to consider the recommendations in this report, then the white paper would need to be published beyond this study. The findings from this study were inconclusive, and another district would need to duplicate the study, making sure that only fifth grade chair people responded to the survey and that only fifth grade student scores were incorporated into the study.

Another limitation to this project is that the school district may not have the time to implement the recommendations from the white paper report in one year. A plan may need to be made to create and implement the recommendations from the white paper over

the course of two to three years. A final limitation is that district personnel may not agree with the recommendations. Although the report contains data analysis related to the problem that was studied, school district leaders may not agree with the recommendations and may choose to purchase a commercialized writing program that is grounded in research.

Recommendations for the Remediation of Limitations

The results of this study were inconclusive because data analysis did indicate that the number or frequency of instructional strategies did not significantly affect student achievement. Analysis of data also revealed that teachers used 14 different writing programs and that 13 teachers used a combination of writing programs. Another eight teachers indicated that a commercialized writing program was not used at all, which leads me to believe that the writing instruction taking place is inconsistent.

One main recommendation for the remediation of the limitation of this project is for the school district to consider purchasing and adopting one writing program. The selection of a writing program would need to be carefully considered and connected to components of effective writing instruction. The components of effective writing instruction were discussed in detail in this research study, with most teachers saying that many of the 11 components were taught, but not on a frequent basis. The writing coordinator at CPD and the director of the instruction unit may want to review the findings from this study and the 14 programs evaluated in this study as a foundation for further discussion.

Discussion Analysis

Scholarship

While working on my doctoral degree, my first challenge was define scholarly writing, which is academic research exhibiting the methods and attitudes of a scholar (Merriam-Webster, 2012). From there, I needed to be able to develop my scholarly voice and transform my writing style. The transformation process was not easy because I needed to be open to suggestions from colleagues, professors, and experts from the Walden University Writing Center. I also needed to be able to distinguish reliable sources of information from less credible sources in order to deepen my understanding of scholarly writing. There were times when I would research a topic extensively and think I was done, but then I discovered the art of research as the references of one article guided me to more information and other resources.

Through the research process, I was able to ask myself questions, look for the answers in several places, and review several resources. No longer was it acceptable for me to find only one source and not question its reliability. I now question almost everything I read and look for other resources to support my readings. Although I have learned much about the process of research, the depth of research, and the art of writing research results, I have discovered a sense of integrity when it comes to scholarly writing that I had not experienced before.

Project Development and Evaluation

I learned that project development and evaluation take a lot of critical thinking as I sought to select the best project option for the research problem. Early in my research, I had an idea for a project, but after collecting and analyzing the research data, I discovered that my first idea was not an option. During the course of several conversations with colleagues and family members, I generated a list of possible projects to develop. The first was to create professional development seminars to teach teachers the best practices of writing instruction from Graham and Perin (2007). I realized that this was not a viable option because the research data were inconclusive and the survey results indicated that teachers used several different writing programs and strategies. At this point, I considered researching all possible writing programs in order to recommend the use of one program. This project idea was not an option because it meant that the school district would need to purchase a program. Due to a declining economy, the school district had been facing budget cuts for a few years, and spending money on a program would not be practical. Another option was to create a writing committee to establish the formation of a writing framework for teachers. While this idea was closer to my actual project, creating a writing committee was not a solid project plan.

I decided to read a few more dissertations, journal articles, and newspaper articles to get more ideas for a project. During my research, I discovered the idea of a white paper report. White papers vary from informal reports to formal reports, and established guidelines for writing a white paper have not been established. However, the purpose of a

white paper is to report information and recommendations to a group of people (Purdue, 2012). I knew I wanted to share the findings of my doctoral study with district leaders and propose a solution to the problem, which meant that the white paper option was a viable one for my project study. Through the writing of the white paper, I was able to share information about my study, the results, and several recommendations for district leaders to consider.

The evaluation of the white paper project came from sharing a draft version with the writing coordinator in the CPD Division and with the director of the instruction unit. The combined feedback I received from those two colleagues helped me revise my report and to create a final version to share with district leaders. The final evaluation will come from district leaders as I ascertain whether they will follow the recommendations in the white paper. My project development and evaluation techniques have developed and deepened during my doctoral study.

Leadership and Change

Leadership development and change are ongoing for me as I grow and expand my knowledge in the field of education, specifically in writing instruction. For most of my life, I have been a natural leader that others look up to, and I attribute my leadership skills to the Girl Scouts program and to my parents. Through the Girl Scouts, I was able to learn about leadership and develop my leadership skills by participating in scouting programs, committees, and service learning projects. Throughout school, college, the process of becoming a teacher, and my work as an administrator, I have had many

opportunities to develop and practice my leadership skills on a regular basis. To me, leadership comes down to knowledge and creating a shared vision.

For example, when I began my doctoral journey, I knew our district struggled with writing instruction, and I personally struggled with teaching writing effectively to my students. When it came time to select a project study for my doctoral journey, I knew the focus would need to be on writing instruction. I wanted to learn more about writing instruction, the components of effective writing, and how our district could provide more support to classroom teachers so that they could better prepare our students for college and beyond. I had the goals of clearly understanding how to teach writing effectively, discovering gaps in writing instruction in the CCSD, and providing recommendations for district leaders to consider implementing. My vision was to influence change and work toward a common goal, which was to improve writing performance in order to help students be successful (Wagner, 2008).

Since I have been working on my doctoral degree, I have learned that leadership and change can occur in many different situations and that there are different leadership styles. My leadership style tends to be situational as I work with leaders from different schools, departments, and divisions. There have been times when I have had to be a quiet leader and lead by example. There have been other times when I have led schools through a necessary change. I also have come to realize that I am a person who thrives on change. I understand that change can take time and that others may not necessarily like change or adapt to change quickly. I am challenged when I work with people who do not like

change because I have to practice being patient. When working with people who are adverse to change, I practice my leadership skills and support them through the change process by sharing information, validating concerns, and sharing the vision of what is coming next. The development of my leadership skills will not conclude with this doctoral journey, but will be strengthened by it. I will continue to learn and evolve as a change agent in education.

Analysis of Self

Scholar

When I began my doctoral journey, I was not a confident researcher or scholarly writer. Before enrolling at Walden University, I researched local universities for educational leadership programs, but did not find anything that matched my requirements. I wanted a program that would challenge me to become a greater researcher, scholar, and practical leader for social change. I truly wanted to become a change agent to help teachers, schools, and administrators improve the education process for our students because they are our future. Walden University answered my desires, and I have taken a great journey to develop my scholarly research and writing skills.

I am now able to decipher the difference between primary and secondary sources, between scholarly sources and warehouses of information, and between peer-reviewed studies and individual articles. Several times while writing the literature reviews for this project study, I came across information that was nice to know, but was not supported by

research. I spent several hours on the literature review to evaluate the quality of the information in the sources of information to be incorporated into my study.

Through my research on writing instruction, I have added to the body of knowledge on writing instruction for elementary teachers. My journey as a scholar has been enlightening and is not over. I will continue to research, read, explore, and advance my knowledge in writing instruction. I have strengthened my confidence in myself as a scholar and a writer.

Practitioner

A scholar practitioner has been defined as a person who engages in intellectual work and continues to practice the skills necessary to educate future generations (Nganga, 2011). As I reflect on my myself as a practitioner, I realized that I have tried to practice what I have learned throughout my educational experiences. Several times, I have attended college classes, professional development sessions, and educational conferences to expand my knowledge in education. Each and every time, I have learned something new and have attempted to apply these newly learned concepts into the classroom. I have sought to share my learning with colleagues, and now I hope to share my knowledge with district leaders.

My expanded knowledge in the area of writing instruction has increased my understanding of how writing could be taught in the classroom. I want to apply the skills and concepts of writing instruction more broadly by discussing the possibility of creating a common writing framework for my school district with the CPD Division and the

writing coordinator. My goal and focus in education is to prepare students for college and the workforce. I may not be in the classroom effecting change, but I am in the school improvement department and work with other departments in the school district to effect change on a broader scale.

Project Developer

I first learned about the idea of a project study through my first residency at Walden University. When I joined the Walden community, I discovered that the end product of my doctoral journey could be a traditional dissertation or a project study. The project study idea intrigued me because I truly felt that it would be the ultimate way to develop my scholar practitioner skills. I would be able to research a topic I was passionate about, apply my research knowledge and skills through a study, and practice my understanding of becoming a change agent through the development of a project. As I went through the doctoral study process, I discovered that developing a project was not as easy as I thought it would be.

Early on in my doctoral study proposal, I wrote my theoretical foundation and began to conceptualize my research focus. While reading several articles, journals, books, and discussion boards, I began to think about possible projects to develop. Once my proposal was approved and I began to implement my methodology, I had a preconceived notion of what I thought the data results would indicate. Through the data analysis, I discovered results of my study did not turn out the way I thought they would. For several weeks I had been developing a project that would closely align with my theoretical

framework, and I came to the realization my idea was null and void. This was difficult for me to admit because I felt I failed. Through many conversations with my doctoral committee, mentors, colleagues, and family members, I was able to process through the actual findings from the study and developed a new project.

The next project I developed was not accepted by my committee and after a phone conference, I understood the rationale. My fifth and final attempt at creating a project was something new to me. I had some experience in creating projects for work and in the classroom, but I had never created a white paper report before. I came across the idea in my research for project ideas and initially discarded the idea. After some reflection, I realized this was the best option to portray my research findings and to offer recommendations to my audience, which was district leaders in the CCSD.

Overall Reflection and Impact on Social Change

Social change is central to Walden's mission, which is to "provide a learning experience that encourages them [students] to pursue and apply knowledge in the interest of the greater good" (Walden University, 2012). Walden's mission statement was the deciding factor for me in selecting a program of study. I wanted to learn more about myself as a scholar, understand how I could apply my skills in a practical way, and more importantly, how I could become a change agent.

The doctoral study process has changed my life by how I think, how I conduct research, and how I interact with others. Although I had never been involved in a formal research study before, I had a desire to be part of something greater. I wanted to become

an agent of change and to have a positive impact on students. I knew I could effect change in the classroom, but I wanted to make a difference on a larger scale. By enrolling in Walden University and going through the doctoral process, I began to develop my research skills. Developing my project proposal was the most difficult thing I had ever experienced and I wanted to give up several times. With the support of my colleagues and family, I was able to keep reading, researching, and writing to refine and articulate the problem of writing instruction. The literature review was rather daunting as writing instruction was a very broad topic. As I researched, I found I was able to narrow the scope of my research to focus on instructional strategies. Narrowing my focus allowed me to deepen my understanding of the topic to share with others.

My project study examined the effects of instructional practices on student achievement and identified a structure for implementing a unified writing framework. The local social impact was creating the white paper for district leaders to consider recommendations for improving writing performance. The larger impact on social change can be far reaching as this project study could be implemented in any district across the nation that struggles with effective writing practices. The biggest social impact occurs at the student level as students will benefit from stronger writing instruction that will prepare them for college and the workforce.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The purpose of collecting data was to answer the following research question: Do students of teachers who implement seven or more of the 11 components of Graham and

Perin's effective writing instruction model have a statistically higher distribution of student achievement scores in the *meets* and *exceeds* categories than those who implement six or fewer as measured by the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency exam? Although the results of this study were inconclusive because there was no student achievement difference in teachers who used more of the 11 components of effective writing instruction on a regular basis versus teachers who used fewer of the components on a less regular basis, I did discover there were inconsistencies across the school district in how writing was taught. Bringing awareness to the inconsistencies is important for this school district because information has not been available to district leaders on the types of writing programs or strategies teachers used. A second implication from this study was creating an increased awareness of best practices in writing instruction. I was able to learn about the 14 different writing programs that were identified by teachers in the survey and examine how the programs aligned with Graham and Perin's (2007) model of effective components of writing instruction.

Through the results of this study, the CCSD is able to read the white paper report and discuss possible recommendations to make changes that will help support writing instruction. The CPD Division of the CCSD has taken a step toward improving writing performance of students by hiring a writing coordinator. I have contacted the writing coordinator and shared my white paper report with her. We both want to discuss the recommendations within the literacy department at the CPD Division and with the director of the instruction unit. Writing has not been a focus of the school district for a

long time due to the vast and quick enrollment the school district faced for years. With the enrollment stabilizing in the last three years, the CPD Division and the instruction unit have been able to take a closer look at increasing the rigor of the curriculum and the instruction. I truly feel the CCSD is at the tipping point of effecting great change on increasing the support teachers need to provide rigorous instruction that will lead to improved student performance and to prepare students for college and the workforce.

One recommendation for future research would be to duplicate this study in a larger context that would include more participants. This study was limited to the highest and lowest performing school in each of the performance zones or geographic clusters of schools. The schools that fell in the middle were not included and examining more instructional practices across the school district would help to increase the validity in the findings from this study. A second recommendation would be to duplicate this study, but adjust the methodology by only having one fifth grade teacher participate in the survey and by adjusting how schools were placed into the two groups to compare student achievement scores. A third and final recommendation would be to further evaluate each of the writing programs schools used in order to determine which programs have the greatest impact on student achievement.

Conclusion

The final section of this project study focused on reflections and conclusions from the doctoral study. Project strengths, limitations, and recommendations for the remediation of limitations of the white paper report were discussed and shared. The white

paper report will serve as information the school district may consider when analyzing poor writing performance of students and how to increase the rigor of instruction.

The next portion of Section 4 included reflections of scholarship, project development, evaluation, leadership, change, practitioner, and the impact this study has on social change. I was able to connect my desires for becoming a scholar practitioner with the doctoral process Walden University offered. I developed my skills as a project developer and expanded my leadership skills by sharing my research findings with the CPD Division and the instruction unit.

The final subsections of this project study provided a reflection on my doctoral journey and the impact the doctoral process has on my life. The doctoral journey has given me the skills and resources to expand my knowledge of the research study process. The journey has also provided an avenue to share my study findings to become a change agent and a leader in education. My journey is not done, and I will continue to increase my knowledge in the area of writing instruction because I am dedicated to improving instruction that will better prepare students for college and the workforce.

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Appendix A: White Paper Report

Clark County School District Writing Framework

This white paper report discusses current performance of fifth grade students, highlights the problem many schools face with effective delivery of writing instruction, provides results from the study, and offers recommendations the Clark County School District (CCSD) may consider to provide consistent writing instruction across the school district to improve student performance.

The Problem

The results of the 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam indicated that more than half of the fifth graders (53.5%) in the CCSD were not proficient in writing (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). The percentage of CCSD's fifth graders who performed at proficiency level or higher was 46.5%, which was below the state target of 63.8% (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). The *proficient* level on the 2011 Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam encompassed the *meets standard* or *exceeds standard* categories based on the state assessment writing rubric (Nevada Department of Education, 2011). The Nevada Department of Education (2011) identified the *meets standard* as a score between 12 and 15.5; the *exceeds standard* as a score between 16 and 20. The writing exam was scored by two evaluators with each evaluator giving a score according to the adopted and approved rubric (Nevada Department of Education, 2011).

Many schools in the CCSD have addressed the low writing performance of students by using various writing programs, implementing mock writing exams on a

regular basis, and holding grade level meetings to discuss strategies to increase the effectiveness of writing instruction (CCSD, 2011). Despite the importance of writing instruction, students are not able to meet the demands set forth by teachers, state assessments, and even beyond into the workplace.

The focus of this doctoral study on instructional writing practices was selected because the school district has allocated time to teach Language Arts, which could include writing instruction, but writing has not specified. The Curriculum and Professional Development (CPD) Division has identified four key components of effective writing instruction, which are writing process, writing traits, writing assessment, and types of writing (CCSD, 2011). The CPD Division has also published a writing continuum document for K-12 identifying the types of writers throughout the grades, but more detail on how to teach writing within a framework is needed. The results from this doctoral study indicated teachers need more support that utilizes research-based writing strategies in order to meet the curricular needs set forth by the Nevada Department of Education and the needs of their students.

Currently, the CCSD does not have an adopted writing program nor does the school district know how the instructional strategies teachers use impact student achievement. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to compare the distribution of student writing achievement scores for fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction to the distribution of student scores for teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11

components of effective writing instruction. Through a meta-analysis research study, Graham and Perin (2007) were able to narrow the list of effective writing instruction to strategy instruction, summarization, peer assistance, setting product goals, word processing, sentence combining, inquiry, prewriting activities, process writing approach, study of models, and grammar instruction (Bernabei et al., 2009; Coker & Lewis, 2008; Graham & Perin, 2007). Follow up research and analysis at the elementary level was conducted by Coker and Lewis (2008), Kiuahara, Graham, and Hawken (2009), and Gilbert and Graham (2010) to survey teachers and evaluate the 11 components defined by Graham and Perin's research.

Data Analysis

The purpose of collecting data was to answer the following research question: Do students of teachers who implement seven or more of the 11 components from Graham and Perin's effective writing instruction model have a statistically higher distribution of student achievement scores in the *meets* and *exceeds* categories than those who implement six or fewer as measured by the 2012 Nevada Writing Proficiency exam? For this study, a survey was given to fifth grade teachers from the lowest and the highest performing school in each performance zone or geographic cluster of schools across the school district to discover how many of the components from Graham and Perin's (2007) model were used. Two groups were formed by categorizing schools that responded as having used seven or more of the 11 effective components of writing instruction into Group (A) and the schools that responded as having used six or fewer of the 11

components into Group (B). The distribution of student achievement scores were then compared between the two groups. Schools in Group (A) had a distribution of scores with 666 students scoring in the *meets* category and 157 students scoring in the *exceeds* category. Group (A) had a proficiency rate of 44% on the writing exam. Schools in Group (B) had a distribution of scores with 140 students scoring in the *meets* category and 25 students scoring in the *exceeds* category. Group (B) had a proficiency rate of 40.7% on the writing exam. The results of the chi-square test indicated there was no statistical difference in the distribution of the rubric scores based on the use of the Graham and Perin (2007) model, $\chi^2 (2, N = 2278) = 3.05, p = .384$, and the distribution of scores were similar to each other. This quasi-experimental research study indicated there was no statistical difference on the number of writing instructional strategies that were taught and student achievement scores.

Survey results did reveal eight out of 31 teachers did not use a writing program and of the 24 teachers that did use a writing program, 13 indicated they used parts from several different writing programs. In fact, 14 different writing programs were identified in the survey. The types of commercial programs varied with the most common programs being “Write from the Beginning” (N = 11), “Lucy Calkins” (N = 5), and “Trophies” (N = 6). Research on the identified 14 writing programs appears in alphabetical order followed by a table to demonstrate the alignment between the programs and the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007).

Being a Writer

Being a Writer is a research-based writing program written and created at the Developmental Studies Center in California (DSC, 2012). This program is designed to enable K-6 students to build the skills and creativity they need to write. *Being a Writer* also supports the development of social and ethical values in students (DSC, 2012). Much of the program uses trade books to immerse students in various genres of writing, provide models of good writing, and reinforce the skills and strategies taught in the lessons. The DSC (2012) made correlations to the Common Core State Standards in June 2011 to help teachers make the transition from state standards to the Common Core State Standards. This writing program is comprehensive, addresses all 11 components of effective instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007), and is outlined on the company's website.

Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test

This is a book resource with a CD-ROM for teachers to use. *Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test* contains several classroom strategies to help students succeed on a state writing assessment (Kiestler, 2006). Teachers can use the book to reproduce activities and strategies to help students build writing skills that will increase the passing rate on state assessments (Kiestler, 2006). The resource addresses six of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007): strategies for planning and revising, summarizing, prewriting, sentence combining, models, and grammar (Kiestler, 2006).

Easy Grammar

Through the research conducted in this study, two references to easy grammar surfaced. The first reference was a book entitled *Easy Grammar Plus*, which includes information on grammar concepts such as capitalization, sentence types, phrases, clauses, and punctuation (Phillips, 1995). The second reference was a website called *easygrammar.com*. This website is designed to help teachers teach, learn, and remember how to use grammar through a series of books and online support (Easy Grammar Systems, 2011). Both of these resources only address one of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007), which is grammar.

Lucy Calkins

Lucy Calkins is a professor, researcher, and author who founded the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and wrote several books to help teachers teach writing (Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, 2010). Teachers in CCSD use the book series *Units of Study* by Lucy Calkins. Calkins's book series and professional development sessions help teachers use the writer's workshop model and six research principles. The principles are as follows: Teachers should (a) teach the traits of writing, (b) use the writing process, (c) provide direct instruction, (d) provide students more time to write, (e) give support to struggling writers and English language learners, and (f) combine writing and reading (Firsthand, 2008). The *Units of Study* program addresses eight of the 11 components of effective writing instruction defined by Graham and Perin (2007): strategies for planning and revising, summarizing, collaboration, prewriting,

process approach, sentence combining, using models, and grammar instruction (Firsthand, 2008).

Science Research Associates

One teacher identified Science Research Associates (SRA) as the writing program used for writing instruction. SRA was not defined in the survey responses and could refer to a few different programs. One possibility was *SRA Decoding Strategies*, which is a reading series to help students who have difficulties in decoding words (Engelmann, et al., 1999). A second possibility is a book titled *SRA Essentials for Writing* produced by the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company (McGraw-Hill Education, 2012). This program, designed for middle school and high school students, is focused on test-taking skills, grammar and language use, and helping students set goals to improve specific aspects of writing (McGraw-Hill Education, 2012). As SRA was not defined in the survey, assumptions or speculations concerning which program the teacher in the study meant to refer to could not be made. Therefore, an alignment analysis is not provided with the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007).

Step Up to Writing

Step Up to Writing is a research-based program with strategies and activities for teachers to teach writing (Cambium Learning Group, 2012). The writing program focuses on building common language and assessments across grade levels with strategies and practices that are grounded in research and focused on the genres of writing (Cambium Learning Group, 2012). Research supporting this program indicates nine out of the 11

components of effective writing instruction defined by Graham and Perin (2007). The nine components identified are strategies for planning and revising, summarizing, collaboration, prewriting, process approach, sentence combining, inquiry, models, and grammar (Sopris West, 2007).

Teaching the Qualities of Writing

One teacher identified the book *Teaching the Qualities of Writing* as a resource for teaching writing. The book focuses on developing writing ideas, writing voice, and strategies to teach students how to develop writing skills (Portalupi & Fletcher, 2010). The book contains 13 lessons and 11 video clips based on four principles: ideas, design, language, and presentation (Portalupi & Fletcher, 2010). The lessons are designed to be taught over a 6-week cycle (Portalupi & Fletcher, 2010; Seitz, 2006). This resource aligns with six of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007): establishing goals, collaboration, word processing, process approach, sentence combining, and grammar instruction (Portalupi & Fletcher, 2010).

Thinking Maps

Thinking Maps is a visual program that helps students to organize thought processes through eight graphic organizational tools (Thinking Maps, 2012). This program is designed to be implemented with another writing program because it focuses primarily on brainstorming and gives structure to help students develop critical thinking skills (Thinking Maps, 2012). *Thinking Maps* is a graphic tool that helps provide students with different structures when going through the writing process, but the program teaches

students how to use the tools and not how to become better writer (Smith, 2003). Only one specific connection can be made between *Thinking Maps* and Graham and Perin's (2007) model of effective components of writing instruction, which is prewriting (Thinking Maps, 2012).

Trophies

The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt publishing company produces a reading series called *Trophies* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011). The CCSD has officially adopted *Trophies* as one of the approved reading programs for teachers to use (CCSD, 2011b). The reading program encompasses reading, writing, and grammar. The writing portion of *Trophies* includes writing prompts embedded in the genres of writing (e.g. narrative, expository, etc.) to be used when teaching the reading series. *Trophies* includes 4 of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007): collaboration, prewriting, sentence combining, and grammar (Bowling, 2011).

Words Their Way

Words Their Way is an instructional approach that helps students study words, study phonics, and study spelling (Dearnley, Freeman, Gulick, & Neri, 2002; Pearson Education, 2009). The focus of this program is to teach students how to study words, separate letters, separate syllables, identify patterns, and identify meanings (Pearson Education, 2009). Unfortunately, no research was found to determine how this program is used for writing instruction, therefore, an alignment was not made with Graham and Perin's (2007) model of 11 components of effective writing instruction.

Write From the Beginning

The program *Write From the Beginning* is a writing program created from Thinking Maps Incorporated (2012). This program is designed to be either a core program or a supplemental program and is aligned to the traits of effective writing (Thinking Maps, 2012). The program establishes a focus for teachers across a school to differentiate instruction (Thinking Maps, 2012). *Write From the Beginning* provides teachers with support to teach the different genres of writing (e.g., narrative, expository, descriptive, etc.), but research regarding specific teaching strategies was narrow and limited. Further research into this writing program and its effectiveness is needed to measure the impact the program has on student achievement. According to Wriggle (2011) and Thinking Maps, Inc. (2012), only one component aligns with Graham and Perin's (2007) model of effective components of writing instruction, which is to have students establish goals in writing.

Writing A-Z

Writing A-Z is an online web-site for anyone who teaches writing or wants to improve writing skills. There are core lessons for teachers to download that include the writing process and genres of writing in correlation with the four developmental levels of students in different stages of the writing process (Klein, 2010). *Writing A-Z* bases most of its research from Graham and Perin's (2007) research and incorporates all 11 components of effective writing instruction (Klein, 2010; Writing A-Z, 2012).

Writing Academy

The Writing Academy is an in-house training academy the CCSD CPD Division provides for teachers who wish to voluntarily extend knowledge in writing. Teachers sign up for the multi-week academy through an internal system called Pathlore (CCSD, 2011b). The focus of the training is on standards and strategies for increasing the rigor of writing instruction (CCSD, 2011b). Detailed information on which types of strategies that could align with the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007) was not available. Researching the components and effectiveness of the writing academy could be an area for future research.

Zaner-Bloser

Zaner-Bloser produces handwriting programs along with reading, vocabulary, spelling, and writing programs for teachers. A main writing program by Zaner-Bloser is called *Strategies for Writing* (Zaner-Bloser, 2008; 2013). *Strategies for Writing* was first published in 2008. The program focuses on six traits of writing, having students and teachers use a rubric for self-assessment, a rubric for instruction, includes test practice, and grammar practice (Crawford, 2003). Overall, this program addresses seven of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007): strategies for planning and revising, establishing goals, collaboration, prewriting, process approach, models, and grammar (Crawford, 2003; Zaner-Bloser, 2008; 2013).

Table A1

Summary of Writing Programs Aligned to Graham and Perin's (2007) Model of Components of Effective Writing Instruction

Program Number in parentheses indicated how many components were addressed	Strategies for Planning & Revising	Summarize	Establish Goals	Collaboration	Word Processing	Prewriting	Process Approach	Sentence Combining	Inquiry or Research	Models	Grammar
Being a Writer ($n = 11$)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Blowing Away State Writing Assessments ($n = 6$)	X	X				X		X		X	X
Easy Grammar ($n = 1$)											X
Lucy Calkins ($n = 8$)	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X
SRA ($n = NA$)											
Step up to Writing ($n = 9$)	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Teaching the Qualities of Writing ($n = 6$)			X	X	X		X	X			X
Thinking Maps ($n = 1$)						X					
Trophies ($n = 4$)				X		X				X	X
Words Their Way ($n = 0$)											
Write from the Beginning ($n = 1$)			X								
Writing A-Z ($n = 11$)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Writing Academy ($n = NA$)											
Zaner-Bloser ($n = 7$)	X		X	X		X	X			X	X

Teachers in the CCSD have been using several writing strategies and programs to teach writing. Results from this doctoral study indicate there is inconsistent writing instruction and use of instructional programs. The inconsistent writing instruction across the school district indicates there is a lack of structure and expectations for teaching writing. By providing a unified framework for teaching writing, teachers across the school district will be able to consistently teach writing, to communicate with other teachers, and to positively impact student achievement.

Recommendations

The first recommendation would be for the CCSD to develop a district-wide writing framework for teachers to implement. The unified writing framework would include a specified timeframe for teaching writing, identify instructional strategies grounded in research, provide a common rubric for teachers to evaluate writing, and specify district expectations for each grade level to determine writing performance of students before students reach fifth grade.

A second recommendation would be for the CCSD to provide ongoing professional development, or writing seminars, for teachers throughout the school year to support the implementation of the writing framework. The seminars could focus on implementing a district-wide framework and to help provide the missing alignment teachers need. The school district has recently hired instructional coaches for each elementary building. The instructional coaches could provide ongoing training for

teachers at each site to help support the school district in implementing a writing framework.

The third recommendation would be an evaluation piece to evaluate how writing instruction has changed and the impact the writing framework has had on student achievement. The school district could examine ongoing formative assessments that the committee has established, survey teachers, host focus groups, analyze results from state writing assessments, and interview teachers to gather information on the implementation of the writing framework.

Conclusion

This white paper report examined writing instructional practices of fifth grade teachers across the CCSD. The goal of this study was to examine the distribution of student writing achievement scores for fifth grade teachers who used seven or more of Graham and Perin's (2007) 11 components of effective writing instruction to the distribution of student scores for teachers who implemented six or fewer of the 11 components of effective writing instruction. Results indicated there was no significant difference in the number or frequency of the 11 components of effective writing instruction as defined by Graham and Perin (2007).

The CCSD is encouraged to implement the recommendations from this white paper report, which include the creation of a writing framework, providing ongoing professional development, and establishing ongoing formative assessments for evaluation purposes.

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Appendix B: Permission for Survey

National Writing Survey Instrument  | X | X | X

Sue Muehl to steve.graham [show details](#) Sep 1 (5 days ago)  

Hello,

My name is Sue Egloff and I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation at Walden University (focusing on components of writing instruction). I have read and cited several articles you have authored. One in particular caught my attention: Teaching Writing to Elementary Students in Grades 4-6: A National Survey, authored by you and Jennifer Gilbert. Attached is the article.

I am writing to ask permission to use your survey. While a sample of the survey was not included in the article, the description of the survey matches my needs exactly. If you allow me to use your survey, I would also need a copy of the survey.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please email me if I can answer any questions regarding my intended study.

Respectfully,

 Teaching Writing to Elementary Students in Grades 4.6 A National Survey.pdf
126K [View](#) [Download](#)

Graham, Steve to me [show details](#) Sep 4 (3 days ago)  

Sue

I lost the memory key with the survey on it, but it can be reconstructed from the attached file

steve

Graham, Steve steve.graham@vanderbilt.edu Nov 17   

to me 

Sue

You are welcome to revise the survey as needed. All validation information is presented in the article.

steve

Appendix C: Writing Practices of Fifth Grade Teachers Survey

Section 1: Background Information

1. By clicking yes below, I give consent to participate in this research study.
 Yes No
2. School Location Code or School Name:

3. Please check your gender:
 Female Male
4. Please check your ethnicity:
 Asian Black Hispanic White Other
5. Please check your highest education level:
 Bachelor's Bachelor's plus Master's
 Master's plus Doctorate
6. How much formal preparation in teaching writing have you received in teacher education courses taken during college?
 Not applicable as I took no teacher education courses
 None Minimal Adequate Extensive
7. How much formal preparation in teaching writing have you received after college (e.g., assistance from another teacher, in-service preparation at your school, and so forth)?
 None Minimal Adequate Extensive
8. How much preparation have you undertaken on your own to learn how to teach writing?
 None Minimal Adequate Extensive
9. How many years have you taught?

10. Do you teach writing?
 Yes No
11. If you do not teach writing, please briefly explain why:

12. If you do teach writing, do you teach more than one class?

_____ Yes _____ No

IF YOU TEACH MORE THAN ONE CLASS, PLEASE PICK JUST ONE CLASS TO DESCRIBE BELOW (THIS SHOULD BE THE CLASS THAT YOU FEEL BEST REPRESENTS HOW YOU TEACH WRITING).

13. During an average week, how many minutes do your children spend writing? (This does not include instruction. It does include time spent planning, drafting, revising, and editing text that is paragraph length or longer).

14. During an average week, how many minutes do you spend teaching writing? (This only includes time where you directly teach writing skills, processes, or knowledge).

15. Do you use a commercial program to teach writing, handwriting, spelling, or any other aspect of composing?

_____ Yes _____ No

What programs?

Section 2: Instruction Methods

16. Circle how often you teach students strategies for planning (with the goal of students using the strategies independently).

_____	Never	_____	Several Times a Year
_____	Monthly	_____	Several Times a Month
_____	Weekly	_____	Several Times a Week
_____	Daily	_____	Several Times a Day

17. Circle how often you teach students strategies for revising or editing their writing (with the goal of students using the strategies independently).

_____	Never	_____	Several Times a Year
_____	Monthly	_____	Several Times a Month
_____	Weekly	_____	Several Times a Week
_____	Daily	_____	Several Times a Day

18. Circle how often you teach students how to summarize in writing what they read.

_____	Never	_____	Several Times a Year
_____	Monthly	_____	Several Times a Month
_____	Weekly	_____	Several Times a Week
_____	Daily	_____	Several Times a Day

19. Circle how often you establish specific goals for what students are to include in their written assignments.

_____	0 (Never)	_____	1	_____	2	_____	3
_____	4	_____	5	_____	6	_____	7

(Always)

20. Circle how often students work together (collaborate) to plan, draft, revise, or edit a paper.

_____	0 (Never)	_____	1	_____	2	_____	3
_____	4	_____	5	_____	6	_____	7

(Always)

21. Circle how often students complete writing assignments using word processing.

_____	0 (Never)	_____	1	_____	2	_____	3
_____	4	_____	5	_____	6	_____	7

(Always)

22. Circle how often you have students complete a prewriting activity (e.g., read about the topic or complete a graphic organizer) before starting a writing assignment.

_____	0 (Never)	_____	1	_____	2	_____	3
_____	4	_____	5	_____	6	_____	7

(Always)

23. Circle how often you used a process approach to writing instruction in your classroom (at a minimum this includes students engaging in cycles of planning, drafting, and revising while writing; writing for real purposes, creating a supportive environment, and treating writing as a social activity where students work collaboratively with peers and the teacher).

_____	0 (Never)	_____	1	_____	2	_____	3
_____	4	_____	5	_____	6	_____	7

(Always)

24. Circle how often you teach students how to write more complex sentences using sentence combining procedures.

_____	Never	_____	Several Times a Year
_____	Monthly	_____	Several Times a Month
_____	Weekly	_____	Several Times a Week
_____	Daily	_____	Several Times a Day

25. Circle how often you have students engage in inquiry/research activities when writing a paper where they must gather, organize, and analyze information or data

_____	Never	_____	Several Times a Year
_____	Monthly	_____	Several Times a Month
_____	Weekly	_____	Several Times a Week
_____	Daily	_____	Several Times a Day

26. Circle how often you have students study and then imitate models of good writing.
- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------|
| _____ | Never | _____ | Several Times a Year |
| _____ | Monthly | _____ | Several Times a Month |
| _____ | Weekly | _____ | Several Times a Week |
| _____ | Daily | _____ | Several Times a Day |
27. Circle how often you teach students strategies for writing paragraphs.
- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------|
| _____ | Never | _____ | Several Times a Year |
| _____ | Monthly | _____ | Several Times a Month |
| _____ | Weekly | _____ | Several Times a Week |
| _____ | Daily | _____ | Several Times a Day |
28. Circle how often you have students assess their own writing performance (e.g., with rubrics, checklists, or other assessments).
- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------|
| _____ | Never | _____ | Several Times a Year |
| _____ | Monthly | _____ | Several Times a Month |
| _____ | Weekly | _____ | Several Times a Week |
| _____ | Daily | _____ | Several Times a Day |
29. Circle how often you have students used writing as a tool for helping them learn content information in subjects like science, social studies, and math.
- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------|
| _____ | Never | _____ | Several Times a Year |
| _____ | Monthly | _____ | Several Times a Month |
| _____ | Weekly | _____ | Several Times a Week |
| _____ | Daily | _____ | Several Times a Day |
30. Circle how often you used direct instruction methods (modeling, guided practice, and review) to teach basic writing skills (grammar, usage, etc.).
- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------|
| _____ | Never | _____ | Several Times a Year |
| _____ | Monthly | _____ | Several Times a Month |
| _____ | Weekly | _____ | Several Times a Week |
| _____ | Daily | _____ | Several Times a Day |
31. Circle how often you teach spelling.
- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------|
| _____ | Never | _____ | Several Times a Year |
| _____ | Monthly | _____ | Several Times a Month |
| _____ | Weekly | _____ | Several Times a Week |
| _____ | Daily | _____ | Several Times a Day |
32. How many other kinds of writing instruction?

33. What type of instruction?

34. How often?

Appendix D: District Approval Letter

Assessment, Accountability, Research and School Improvement Division
School Improvement Department
 Clark County School District
 4212 Eucalyptus Ave., Bldg. 5, Las Vegas, NV 89121
 Phone (702) 799-1041, Fax (702) 799-5067



December 20, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter will recognize that I have received a request from Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, "Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers" in the Clark County School District.

When this research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research and School Improvement of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as Coordinator of Assessment, Accountability, Research and School Improvement for the Clark County School District, I agree to allow access to contracted teachers in fifth grade and the student writing scores, whose names and contact information will be anonymous, to participate for the approved research project. Their participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We reserve the right to withdraw from this proposed project study at any time if our circumstances change. I understand the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB. I understand that if I have any concerns regarding this proposed project study, then I may contact Susan Egloff's doctoral study chair, Dr. Kim Nisbett, at kim.nisbett@waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

 Authorized Representative

 Date

Dr. Jeff Halsell, Coordinator

Appendix E: CCSD Research Department Approval Letter

Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement • Research Dept.

4260 Eucalyptus Ave, Annex C • Las Vegas, NV 89121 • (702) 799-5195 • FAX (702) 799-0292


**CLARK COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

 Dr. Linda E. Young, President
 Deanna L. Wright, Vice President
 John Cole, Clerk
 Lorraine Alderman, Member
 Erin E. Cranor, Member
 Carolyn Edwards, Member
 Chris Garvey, Member

Dwight D. Jones, Superintendent

March 14, 2012

Susan Margaret Muehl Egloff

Dear Sue:

The Research Review Committee office of the Clark County School District has received your request entitled: *Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers*. We are pleased to inform you that your sponsored proposal has been approved with the following provisos:

1. Participation is strictly and solely on a voluntary basis,
2. Provide letter of acceptance from principals who agree to be involved with the study.

This research protocol is approved for a period of one year from the approval date. The expiration of this protocol is March 13, 2013. If the use of human subjects described in the referenced protocol will continue beyond the expiration date, you must provide a letter requesting an extension *one month* prior to the date of expiration. The letter must indicate whether there will be any modifications to the original protocol. If there is any change to the protocol it will be necessary to request additional approval for such change(s) in writing to the Research Review Committee.

Please provide a copy of your research findings to this office upon completion. We look forward to the results. If you have any questions or require assistance please do not hesitate to contact Brett Campbell at 855-7783 or e-mail at bdcampbell@interact.ccsd.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John N. Carpenter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "C".

 John N. Carpenter, Ph.D.
 Coordinator IV
 Chair, Research Review Committee

clk

 c: Brett Campbell
 Byron Green – SPONSOR
 Jeff Halsell – SUPPORT
 Pedro Martinez
 Research Review Committee

 Pam Simone – SUPPORT
 Aalya Page – SUPPORT
 George Anas - SUPPORT
 Catherine Maggione - SUPPORT

RRC-46-2012

Application Number 46-2012

Applicant Susan Margaret Muehl Egloff

**CCSD RESEARCH REVIEW
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Congratulations! Your application to conduct research in the Clark County School District has been reviewed and approved. The final step in this process requires you to read and agree to the conditions set forth below. Your signature indicates your agreement to meet the conditions as indicated. Once this signed form is received in the Department of Research and Evaluation (Department), you may proceed with the research as approved.

1.0 AGREEMENT TO FOLLOW APPROVED PLAN FOR RESEARCH

The researcher agrees to conduct all research in accord with the plan set as detailed in the application.

2.0 AGREEMENT TO REQUEST MODIFICATIONS TO RESEARCH PLAN

The researcher agrees to request approval for any deviations from the plan through the Department of Research and Evaluation. This will be initiated by calling the Department and scheduling an appointment to discuss the request. The Director or Coordinator will provide guidance regarding the specific steps to be taken to receive approval for a modification, depending upon the nature and scope of the requested deviation. The administrator of the Department may require a new application or a modification of the original application.

3.0 AGREEMENT TO REQUEST DATA NOT IDENTIFIED IN RESEARCH PLAN

The researcher understands and agrees that access to any additional data sets that were not approved in the original application must first be requested through and approved by the Department of Research and Evaluation. Like a request to modify the research plan, this will be initiated by calling the Department and scheduling an appointment to discuss the request. The Director or Coordinator will provide guidance regarding the specific steps to be taken to receive approval to access the additional data. The administrator of the Department will determine whether the request has merit in light of the original research design(s) and the nature of the data being requested. If the administrator determines that there is merit to the request, he/she will judge whether the request requires submission of a new application or if a modification of the original is needed.

4.0 AGREEMENT TO SECURE NECESSARY PERMISSIONS FROM SUPERVISORS

The researcher agrees to make all necessary arrangements for access to subjects through the supervisors of the offices/schools within which subjects are located.

5.0 AGREEMENT TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY AS REQUIRED BY THE DISTRICT

The researcher agrees to maintain all data strictly confidential. He/she agrees to ensure that at no time and under no circumstances shall the identities of any subjects or the names of subject school sites or departments be made known to any person/entity outside of Research and Evaluation. Further, he/she will take all steps required to secure consent and assent of subjects to their participation and to institute procedures to protect their identities from disclosure. This shall also apply to all reports made by the researcher. Any deviations from this agreement will be requested in writing through the Department.

Application Number 46-2012Applicant Susan Margaret Muehl Egloff

CCSD RESEARCH REVIEW
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

6.0 AGREEMENT TO USE DATA FOR AUTHORIZED PURPOSES ONLY

The researcher agrees that data collected for his/her research shall be used only for the purpose(s) set forth in the application. Any request for additional uses will be submitted to the Department in writing. Such requests will state the purpose, identify the audience(s), and describe in detail how the rights of subjects will be protected if the request is approved.

7.0 AGREEMENT TO COMPLY WITH CCSD DATA SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

The researcher agrees to maintain data in a location that is secure as specified by the Department for a period of three years after the completion of the research. Further, the researcher agrees to keep the Department informed of the location of the data by completing and submitting the "CCSD Research Data File Location" form at least annually, or more frequently if requested to do so, to the Department.

8.0 AGREEMENT TO REPORT PROGRESS AND FINDINGS TO CCSD

The Researcher agrees to provide the Department with the following reports as appropriate:

- A final report of findings and conclusions within three months of the completion of the project,
- One copy of any dissertation, thesis, journal article, book, book chapter, evaluation report, or other document in which the findings and conclusions of the research are made public, and
- An annual progress update by May 31st of each year for projects that span more than one school year.
- Additional requirements as set forth on the attached page.

Susan M. M. Egloff

Name of Applicant (Printed or typed)

Susan M. M. Egloff

Signature of Applicant

4/12/12

Date

John N. Carpenter

John N. Carpenter, Ph.D., Coordinator IV, Research Department, AARSI

Appendix F: Principal Approval Letters



Clark County School District
James Bilbray Elementary School
9370 Brent Lane
Las Vegas, NV 89143
Phone 799-4646 or Fax 799-4538

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

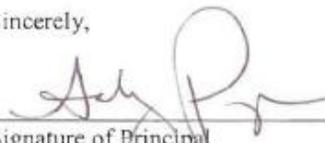
Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Bilbray Elementary I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



 Signature of Principal

3/6/12

 Date

Aalya Page - Principal

 Print Name and Title

Bulldogs

Richard H. Bryan Elementary School

8050 Cielo Vista Avenue
Las Vegas, NV 89128

Telephone: (702) 799-1460
Fax: (702) 799-1469

Steve Piccininni, Principal

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Richard Bryan Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Steve Piccininni
Signature of Principal

3/23/12
Date

Steve Piccininni, Principal
Print Name and Title

KERMIT R. BOOKER, SR. EMPOWERMENT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2277 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Las Vegas, Nevada 89106
Telephone (702) 799-4720 Facsimile (702) 799-4727

Mr. Marcus J. Mason
Principal

"Power to Exceed"



**B
O
B
C
A
T
S**

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

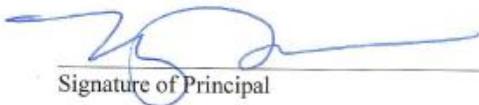
Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Booker Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,


Signature of Principal


Date

Marcus Mason, Principal
Print Name and Title



Manuel J. Cortez Elementary School

Ariel Villalobos, Principal

Jorge Palacios, Assistant Principal



Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Cortez Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



 Signature of Principal

03/30/12

 Date

Ariel Villalobos Principal

 Print Name and Title



Jack Dailey Elementary School
"Knights of Discovery"



Mrs. Jacqueline Lyons, Principal

March 21, 2012

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Dailey Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

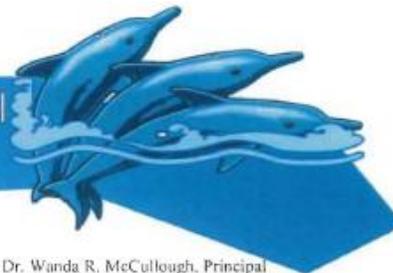
Sincerely,

Jacqueline Lyons
Principal

MAR 23 2012
46-2012

Laura Dearing Elementary School

3046 S. Ferndale St. Las Vegas Nevada 89121
(702) 799-7710 FAX:(702) 799-8798



Dr. Wanda R. McCullough, Principal
Kevin W. Nellis, Assistant Principal

March 28, 2012

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Dearing Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Wanda R. McCullough

Digitally signed by Wanda R. McCullough
DN: cn=Wanda R. McCullough, o=Clark
County School District, email=wmcullough@ccsd.net,
c=US
Date: 2012.03.28 11:05:53 -0700

Signature of Principal

March 28, 2012

Date

Wanda R. McCullough, Principal
Print Name and Title

Ruby Duncan Elementary School

Rick DiTondo, Principal

250 West Rome Boulevard, Las Vegas, NV 89084
 phone: 702-799-7100 fax: 702-799-7094

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Duncan Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Richard P. DiTondo

3/20/2012

 Signature of Principal

 Date

Richard DiTondo, Principal

 Print Name and Title

MAR 28 2012
 46-2012

CCSD
 CLARK COUNTY
 SCHOOL DISTRICT
 5100 W. Sahara Avenue
 Las Vegas, NV 89146

BULLDOGS

Elizondo E.S.

4865 Goldfield St.
N. Las Vegas NV 89031
702-799-1730

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Elizondo Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



Signature of Principal

3/28/2012
Date

H.P. FITZGERALD



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2651 N. Revere St. • N. Las Vegas, NV 89030

Phone: (702) 799-0600 • Fax: (702) 799-7045

Laure Forsberg
Principal

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Fitzgerald Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Laure Forsberg 4/13/12
 Signature of Principal Date

Laure Forsberg Principal
 Print Name and Title



Judy & John L. Goolsby Elementary School

Lorraine Blume - Principal

11175 W. Desert Inn Road • Las Vegas, NV 89135 • Phone (702) 799-2520 • Fax (702) 799-1233

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Goolsby Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,


 Signature of Principal

3/15/12
 Date

LORRAINE BLUME, PRINCIPAL
 Print Name and Title



E.W. GRIFFITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

"Home of the Grizzlies"

324 Essex East Drive, Las Vegas Nevada 89107

Phone: (702) 799-4200 Fax: (702) 799-0319

Office Hours: 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Principal: George Anas

SUCCESS BY DESIGN

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

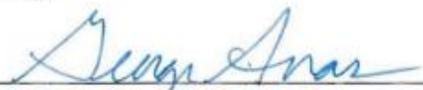
Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

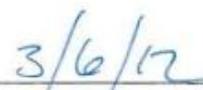
When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Griffith Elementary I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



 Signature of Principal



 Date

George Anas Principal

 Print Name and Title



Claude and Stella Parson Elementary School
4100 Thom Blvd.
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Toni L. Kuiper, Principal

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Parson Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Toni L. Kuiper
Signature of Principal

3/20/2012
Date

Toni L. Kuiper / Principal of Parson ES
Print Name and Title

MAR 23 2012

46-2012



UTE V. PERKINS ELEMENTARY
HOME OF THE PATRIOTS
 1255 Patriots Lane, Moapa, NV 89025

Phone: (702) 864-2444 Fax: (702) 864-2566 Mr. Ken Paul

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

APR 3 2012

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Ute Perkins Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



 Signature of Principal

3/29/12

 Date

Kenneth D. Paul, Principal

 Print Name and Title



CAROLYN S. REEDOM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

APR 24 2012

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Reedom Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Margarita Gamboa
 Signature of Principal

04/13/12
 Date

Margarita Gamboa, Principal
 Print Name and Title

10025 Rumrill St, Las Vegas, NV 89178
Phone (702) 799-5702 Fax (702) 799-5722
Margarita Gamboa, Principal Owen Kelsall, Assistant Principal

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Roundy Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



Signature of Principal

4/20/12
 Date

G. Paul Knowles / Principal

Print Name and Title



HCR 31 BOX 111 / SANDY VALLEY, NV 89019(702) 799-0935 (702) 723-1800 / fax (702) 723-1802

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

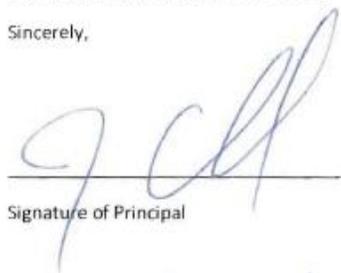
Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Sandy Valley Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



Signature of Principal

4-24-12

Date

Jerry Cornell

Print Name and Title





James E. & Alice Rae Smalley Elementary School
 304 E. Paradise Hills Drive
 Henderson, NV 89002
 Telephone (702) 799-8090 Fax (702) 799-8094
 Pamela Simone, Principal ~ Michael Calkins, Assistant Principal

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

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This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Smalley Elementary I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Pam Simone
 Signature of Principal/Division/Department Head

3-6-12
 Date

Pam Simone, Principal
 Print Name and Title



Joseph E. Thiriot Elementary School

5700 W. Harmon Ave.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89103
(702)799-2550 (702) 799-2545 fax

Sonya Holdsworth
Principal

Christopher Sparrow
Assistant Principal

January 10, 2012

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

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When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Thiriot Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Sonya Holdsworth
Signature of Principal

3-15-12
Date

Sonya Holdsworth, Principal
Print Name and Title



J. M. Ullom
Elementary School Belinda Jones, Principal

4869 E. Sun Valley Drive * Las Vegas, NV 89121 * Phone: 702-799-7780 * Fax: 702-799-0719

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

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This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Ullom Elementary I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Belinda Jones
 Signature of Principal

4/26/12
 Date

Belinda Jones, Principal
 Print Name and Title



Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Vanderburg Elementary I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

Catherine Maggiore
 Signature of Principal

3-9-12
 Date

Catherine Maggiore - Principal
 Print Name and Title



Gene Ward Elementary School
1555 East Hacienda Ave.
Las Vegas, NV 89119
799-5650

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

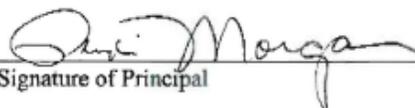
Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Gene Ward Elementary I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



Signature of Principal

04/11/12

Date

Phyllis Morgan, Principal

Print Name and Title



PREPARATORY INSTITUTE,
SCHOOL FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AT CHARLES I. WEST HALL

2050 Sapphire Stone Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89106

Phone (702) 799-3120 / Fax (702) 799-3126

Mr. Mike Piccininni, Principal

Ms. Jaime Ditto, Assistant Principal

Mr. Anthony Marentic, Assistant Principal

Ms. Nicole Chappell, Dean of Students

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for West Prep Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,

M. Pic
Signature of Principal

3.26.12
Date

Mike Piccininni, Principal
Print Name and Title



Whitney Elementary School

5005 Keenan Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 89122

(702) 799-7790

Fax (702) 799-0933

Sherrie Gahn, Principal

Shannon Williamson, Assistant Principal

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
Coordinator III
Research Department
Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
Clark County School District
4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

APR 3 2012

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

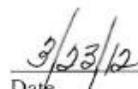
When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Whitney Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,



Signature of Principal



Date

Sherrie Gahn, Principal

Print Name and Title



CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Eva M. Wolfe Elementary School

4027 W. Washburn Road • North Las Vegas, NV 89031 • Telephone 799-1860 • Fax 799-1869

Sylvia Ann Glass, Principal

Brett Campbell, Ph.D.
 Coordinator III
 Research Department
 Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement Division
 Clark County School District
 4260 Eucalyptus Avenue, Annex C
 Las Vegas, NV 89121-5207

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at a CCSD Facility

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Susan Egloff to conduct a research project entitled, Instructional Writing Practices: A Survey of 5th Grade Writing Teachers at Walden University.

When the research project has received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the Department of Research of the Clark County School District, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as site administrator for Eva Wolfe Elementary School I agree to allow access for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the Department of Research at 799-5195.

Sincerely,


 Signature of Principal

March 16, 2012
 Date

Sylvia Ann Glass, Principal
 Print Name and Title

Appendix G: 2011 Nevada State Writing Proficiency Exam Analytic Scoring Guide*

VOICE

5: The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text, and the writing is writing to be read.

- The writing is appropriate to purpose and audience.
- The paper is honest. It has the ring of conviction.
- The word choice brings the topic to life and clarifies the writer's attitude towards the subject.
- The writer establishes a strong connection with the reader and clearly convinces the reader of the writer's commitment to the topic.

3: The writer seems sincere, but not genuinely engaged, committed, or involved. The result is earnest, but short of compelling.

- The writer seems aware of an audience but stands at a distance to avoid risk.
- The writing communicates in an earnest manner and may occasionally interest or move the reader.
- The word choice reveals the writer's attitude toward the topic in some places but may become general, vague, tentative, or abstract in other places.
- The writer establishes a connection with the reader and demonstrates some commitment to the topic; however, the writing hides as much of the writer as it reveals.

1: The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the writing is flat, lifeless, or mechanical. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- The writer does not connect with the audience or have a sense of purpose.
- The writing communicates on a functional level. There is no presence of the writer on the page.
- The word choice tends to flatten all potential highs and lows of the message.
- The writer is not yet sufficiently engaged to take risks more make a commitment to the topic.

*The Nevada State Department of Education gratefully acknowledges Vicki Spandel, the teachers of Oregon, and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory who developed and revised the original trait scoring guides, as well as Nevada teachers who have contributed to the final revisions.

2011 Nevada State Writing Proficiency Exam Analytic Scoring Guide*

IDEAS AND CONTENT (DEVELOPMENT)

5: This paper is clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader’s attention. Relevant anecdotes, details and/or evidence enrich the central theme or story line. Ideas are fresh and engaging.

- The writer seems to be writing from experience and/or knowledge showing insight/creativity.
- The writing has balance; main ideas stand out.
- Supporting, relevant details give the reader important information that he or she could not personally bring to the text.
- The writer words with and shapes ideas, making connections and sharing insights.
- The writer controls and develops the topic in an enlightening way.

3: The paper is clear and focused. The topic shows promise, even though development is still limited, sketchy, or general.

- The writer seems to be writing from experience and/or knowledge but has some trouble going from general observations to specifics.
- Ideas are reasonably clear and purposeful, even though they may not be explicit, detailed, expanded, or personalized to show in-depth understanding.
- The writer is developing the topic. Even though it is fairly easy to see where the writer is headed, more information is needed to “fill in the blanks.”
- Support is present but doesn’t go far enough yet in expanding, clarifying, or adding new insights.
- Themes or main points blend the original and the predictable.

1: As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose. To extract meaning from the test, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy details. More than once of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- The writer may restate the topic but has not yet begun to develop it in a meaningful way.
- Information is very limited or unclear.
- The text is very repetitious or reads like a collection of random thoughts from which no central theme emerges.
- Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what’s critical.
- The writer lacks a sense of direction.

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2011 Nevada State Writing Proficiency Exam Analytic Scoring Guide*

ORGANIZATION

5: The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or thesis. The order or structure is compelling and moves the reader through the text.

- Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly things about it.
- An inviting introduction draws the reader in, and a staisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of completion.
- Details seem to fit where they're placed; sequencing or structure is logical and effective.
- Transitions are smooth and weave the separat threads of meaning intoa cohesive whole.
- Progression of ideas is very well controlled; the writer delivers needed information at just the right moment and then moves on.

3: The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader from point to point.

- The organization, despite a few problems, does not interfere with the main point or storyline.
- The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not create a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not leave the reader with a sense of completion.
- Sequencing or structure is usually logical. It may sometimes be too obvious or create some confusion.
- Tranisitions often work well; however, some connections between ideas may be weak or may call ofr inferences.
- Progression of ideas is fairly well controlled, although the writer sometimes spurts ahead too quickly or spends too much time on the obvious.

1: The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a random, haphazard manner or list, or else there is not identifiable internal structure at all. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- Lack of organiation make sit hard for the reader to understand the main point or storyline.
- The writer has not yet drafted a real lead or conclusion.
- Sequencing of details is limited or nonexistent.
- Transitions are vauge or missing; connections between ideas are confusing or incomplete.
- Progression of ideas is not controlled; too much time is spent on minor details, or there are hard-to-follow leaps from point to point.

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2011 Nevada State Writing Proficiency Exam Analytic Scoring Guide*

CONVENTIONS

5: The writer demonstrates a good grasp of grade appropriate standard writing conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, sentence structure, paragraphing) and uses them effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few and minor the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searing for them.

- Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style.
- Internal punctuation and external punctuation contain few, if any, errors and guide the reader through the text.
- Spelling is almost always correct, even on more difficult words.
- Sentence structures are varied and add to the stylistic effect.
- Capitalization is correct.

3: The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of grade appropriate standard writing conventions. The writer handles some conventions well but may make some errors that do not significantly distract the reader.

- Usage and grammar are almost always correct.
- External punctuation is almost always correct; grade appropriate internal punctuation is present.
- Spelling is usually correct on high frequency words, and some more difficult words may be misspelled.
- Sentences are generally structured correctly and show some variety; an occasional run-on or fragment may be present.
- Capitalization is almost always correct.

1: Errors in grade appropriate spelling, punctuation, usage and grammar, capitalization, sentence structure and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- Errors in grammar and usage are very noticeable and interfere with meaning.
- Punctuation is often missing or incorrect.
- Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.
- Sentence structure is seriously flawed; run-ons and fragments may impede meaning.
- Capitalization is incorrect or missing.

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Appendix H: 2010-2011 CRT/HSPE/Writing Cut Scores

Grade	Test	Subject	Achievement Level							
			Emergent/ Developing From To		Approache s Standard From To		Meets Standard From To		Exceeds Standard From To	
3	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	360	361	500
		Math	100	249	250	299	300	348	349	500
4	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	378	379	500
		Math	100	249	250	299	300	375	376	500
5	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	373	374	500
		Math	100	249	250	299	300	473	474	500
		Science	100	249	250	299	300	372	373	500
	WRT	Writing	0	7.5	8	11.5	12	15.5	16	20
6	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	366	367	500
		Math	100	182	183	254	255	405	406	500
7	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	342	343	500
		Math	100	209	210	266	267	388	389	500
8	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	342	343	500
		Math	100	200	201	266	267	374	375	500
		Science	100	249	250	299	300	377	378	500
	WRT	Writing	0	3.5	4	6.5	7	9.5	10	12
10, 11, 12, Adult	HSPE	Reading (Gr. 10)*	100	249	250	299	300	435	436	500
		Reading (gr. 11, 12, Adult)	100	194	195	250	251	306	307	500
		Math (Gr. 10, 11)	100	104	105	241	242	322	323	500
		Math (Gr. 12, Adult)	100	229	230	303	304	350	351	500
		Science (Gr. 10, 11)	100	249	250	299	300	387	388	500
		Science (Gr. 12, Adult)	100	250	251	299	300	646	645	500
		Writing	0	3.5	4	6.5	7	9.5	10	12

*All Reading and Grade 8 Writing Cut Scores were revised in the spring of 2011.

Appendix I: 2012 Nevada Department of Education Writing Proficiency Holistic Rubric

<p style="text-align: center;">FOUR: EXCEEDS STANDARD</p> <p>This paper exceeds grade level standards and is above average. It exhibits All OR MOST of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insightfully develops the topic and purposefully shapes ideas with relevant details • Supports an opinion conveying depth of understanding (opinion items only) • Deliberately links ideas using appropriate and smooth transitions to support the organizational structure and purpose • Vivid and expressive language connects the audience to the intended purpose • Controls Standard English grammar/usage, mechanics, and sentence structures for effect 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREE: MEETS STANDARD</p> <p>This paper meets grade level standards and is adequate. It exhibits All OR MOST of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses and develops the topic; conveys ideas with details and/or facts • Develops an opinion using reasons supported by details and facts (opinion items only) • Begins with a clear introduction, organizes and links ideas logically with transitions, and provides a conclusion appropriate to text type • Uses concrete words and phrases, precise language, and/or sensory details appropriate to audience • Demonstrates command of Standard English grammar/usage and mechanics; uses various sentence structures that flow smoothly
<p style="text-align: center;">TWO: APPROACHES STANDARD</p> <p>This paper approaches grade level standards and is inadequate. It exhibits All OR MOST of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses and begins to develop the topic with few relevant details and facts • Expresses an opinion but reasons may not be sufficient or supported by details and facts (opinion items only) • Demonstrates some organization; may digress and/or lack logic and coherence; introduction, transitions, and conclusion may be present • Uses words, phrases, and language that may be simplistic, imprecise, or inappropriate to audience and purpose • Demonstrates inconsistent use of Standard English grammar/usage, mechanics, and/or sentence structures 	<p style="text-align: center;">ONE: EMERGENT/DEVELOPING</p> <p>This paper is below grade level standards and inadequate. It exhibits All OR MOST of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentions the topic supported by unclear or irrelevant details and facts • May have an opinion with little or no support (opinion items only) • Has little or no organization; reads as a list of random thoughts; no transitions • Uses unclear and/or repetitive word choice with little or no connection to audience and purpose • Consistent misuse of Standard English grammar/usage and mechanics which impedes meaning; uses simplistic and/or incomplete sentences

Appendix J: 2011-2012 CRT/HSPE/Writing Cut Scores

Grade	Test	Subject	Achievement Level							
			Emergent/ Developing From To		Approache s Standard From To		Meets Standard From To		Exceeds Standard From To	
3	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	360	361	500
		Math	100	249	250	299	300	348	349	500
4	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	378	379	500
		Math	100	249	250	299	300	375	376	500
5	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	373	374	500
		Math	100	249	250	299	300	473	474	500
		Science	100	249	250	299	300	372	373	500
	WRT	Writing	0	1	2	2	3	3	4	4
6	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	366	367	500
		Math	100	182	183	254	255	405	406	500
7	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	368	369	500
		Math	100	209	210	266	267	388	389	500
8	CRT	Reading*	100	249	250	299	300	342	343	500
		Math	100	200	201	266	267	374	375	500
		Science	100	249	250	299	300	377	378	500
	WRT	Writing	0	1	2	2	3	3	4	4
10, 11, 12, Adult	HSPE	Reading (10, 11)	100	249	250	299	300	435	436	500
		Reading (12, Adult)	100	194	195	250	251	306	307	500
		Math**	100	104	105	241	242	322	323	500
		Science	100	249	250	299	300	387	388	500
		Writing	0	3.5	4	6.5	7	9.5	10	12

*The Cut Scores for Grade 5 and 8 Writing Administrations are to be determined from Standard Setting.

**The Cut Scores for the CRT Math Administrations in Grades 6-8 and for the HSPE Math Administrations are *Transitional Cut Scores – year 3*.

Curriculum Vitae

Susan M. Egloff*Visionary Leader**Instructional Leader**Organized Manager***EDUCATION**

Doctorate:	Ed.D. Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning	Walden University Anticipated January 2013
Graduate:	MAE in Administration	University of Northern Iowa May 2005
Dual Major:	BA in Elementary Education BA in Middle Level Education	University of Northern Iowa May 2000

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Administrator	<i>Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement</i>	2012-Present
Facilitator	<i>Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement</i>	2010-2012
Learning Strategist	<i>Iverson Elementary, Clark County SD</i>	2009-2010
Teacher: 3 rd and fifth Gr	<i>Iverson Elementary, Clark County SD</i>	2006-2009
Teacher: 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th & fifth Gr	<i>Jewett Elementary, Waterloo CSD, Iowa</i>	2001-2006
Teacher: 7 th Grade	<i>St. Athanasius School, Jesup CSD, Iowa</i>	2000-2001

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Growth Model	Train teachers, principals, and district administrators	2011-Present
School Improvement	District-wide trainings for teachers and administrators	2010-Present
NCLB	Analyze data and defend NCLB Appeals at the State	2011-Present
Assessment	Consult, train, analyze, and interpret data at all levels	2010-Present

HONORS

Distinguished Educator Award for the East Region in Clark County SD, 2009

RAVE Review, 2009, 2011