University of Nevada, Reno

Teaching Writing: Exemplary Teachers Describe their Instruction

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By

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Abstract

This qualitative research study examined how exemplary 11th grade English teachers described their writing instruction. The seven teacher participants were selected for the study after receiving a "highly effective" evaluation and being identified by their principal, an assistant principal, and a department leader as being exemplary teachers of writing.

Each participant was interviewed twice and asked to describe their writing instruction, writing curriculum, how they plan for writing, and how Common Core State Standards and high stakes assessments have affected their planning and instruction. During the second interview, participants read and reflected on the transcripts from their first interview. The transcripts were analyzed for themes. Eight themes were strongly supported with multiple participant voices. The following themes were supported in the analysis: (1) exemplary writing teachers are readers and writers; (2) exemplary writing teachers are passionate and personal about their work; (3) writing is at the center of curricula; (4) exemplary writing teachers connect reading and writing; (5) exemplary writing teachers use models and modeling; (6) exemplary writing teachers are process oriented and communication oriented; (7) writing-driven, high-stakes assessments can facilitate curriculum planning; and (8) exemplary writing teachers are reflective practitioners.

The first seven themes are supported by the research of Graham and Perin (2007), Murphy and Smith (2015), and Smith et al. (2013). The teachers in the study all employ research-supported writing strategies and techniques in their classrooms that have been shown to improve adolescent writers. The final theme demonstrated the type of mastery

learning experience that Bandura (1977; 1993) suggested was important to increase self-efficacy and, therefore, showed that teachers who are confident in their own abilities as readers and writers have self-efficacy, which also helps improve student self-efficacy.

The study has multiple implications for consideration in the development of future teachers of writing, including how new and struggling teachers may be paired with mentor and model teachers and how learning to be a teacher of writing mirrors the process of learning to be writer. Additionally, the study revealed how strong curriculum frameworks such as Advanced Placement can be used to guide instruction in positive ways.

Keywords: teacher self-efficacy, teaching writing, writing curriculum, qualitative research on writing instruction, writing in AP, AP as a model

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The day I came home and told my husband I was applying to start a Ph.D., I was a little nervous. At the time, our children were one, four, and nine. I had already received all the information and at the top of this list was a statement to "make sure you have the support of your family." I always describe my husband as being supportive of whatever crazy idea I have. His answer to everything from me deciding to run a marathon to me deciding to start a Ph.D. with three young children has always been, "If this is important to you, we will make it work." I am not sure that he really knew how hard the five years would really be on him and the family, but as he has done throughout our twenty-three years together, he stepped up and did whatever he could. There were many nights of fast food eating while I was in class and Saturdays where he took our children out of the house so I could wade through hours of homework, but true to his word, he made it work. The days that I was done and overwhelmed, he was the one who always told me that I really could do this. He has often told people that he deserves a Ph.D. also because of everything he did to make sure I received mine, and he probably does. There is absolutely no way I could have completed this degree, this journey, without my husband, Dan, by my side every step of the way.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Those individuals who have spent any time studying teachers and teaching understand the intricate complexities that go into teaching on a daily basis. Shulman (2004) compared teaching to being an emergency room physician in moments of a natural disaster, stating "I have concluded that classroom teaching—particularly at the elementary and secondary level—is perhaps the most complex, most challenging, and most demanding, subtle, nuanced, and frightening activity that our species has ever invented" (p. 504). It has been estimated that the average teacher makes 1500 on-the-spot, classroom-based decisions a day regarding content, student needs, and instructional support (Heick, 2013). While this number certainly sheds light on the fact that the job of the classroom teacher is very complicated and involves constant multi-tasking, it does not take into account the number of decisions an exemplary teacher makes outside of the classroom in order to plan for the instruction that today's students need to be ready for tomorrow's colleges or careers.

To be effective in today's teaching world, teachers need to not only understand their own practice, pedagogy, and goals, but also have a clear understanding of how different curricular and instructional supports fit or do not fit into their classrooms (Mo, Kopke, Hawkins, Troia, & Olinghouse, 2014; Morgan & Pytash, 2014). They need to have a clear understanding of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the demands on students, a wide range of assessment knowledge, and be able to shift their instruction in the ways required to meet the demands of the CCSS.   Additionally, because the CCSS place a greater emphasis on writing and production (Conley, 2014; Student Achievement Partners, n.d.), teachers have to be able to "develop a framework for writing pedagogy

that allows them to question and modify existing practices and enact new ones [when] necessary" (Morgan & Pytash, 2014, p. 31). They need to be confident in their own ability as teachers and know that they truly have the ability to make a difference in the lives of the students they are teaching each and every day (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfok Hoy, 2000; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

Since the CCSS were first introduced in the summer of 2010, they have been adopted by forty-five states, the District of Columbia, and three territories (Conley, 2014; Rust, 2012). The CCSS were developed by studying standards from all 50 U.S. states and the International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement programs (CCSSO, 2010). As early as 1996, the National Governors Association (NGA) and corporate leaders founded Achieve, Inc., a bipartisan organization to raise academic standards. In 2009, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the NGA along with Achieve, Inc. led the creation of the CCSS (Rust, 2012). The CCSS defined the concept "career and college ready" in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics as a requirement for graduation from high school.

CCSS was not created in a vacuum and was intended to raise instruction, lower college remediation rates, prioritize the teaching of writing, and spur the creation of new assessments designed to measure deeper learning. However, according to Conley (2014), "This represents a new challenge to high schools, which were never designed to prepare the vast majority of students to be ready for postsecondary success" (p. 20).

The Shifts of Common Core

As the CCSS were released and states adopted the standards, districts and professional development organizations began the process of determining how to make

sure teachers understood that these standards were truly different from previous standards. One such organization, Student Achievement Partners (SAP), was founded and headed by Coleman, Zimba, and Pimental who had also served as lead writers of the CCSS (Student Achievement Partners, n.d.). SAP (n.d.) created a document summarizing the key shifts or changes that teachers need to make in order to meet the demands of the CCSS:

- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction
- Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
- Regular practice with complex text and its academic language

More specifically, the CCSS place a greater emphasis on writing and specific types of writing than many of the standards that came before. Argumentative writing is prioritized in the shifts: "The Standards place a premium on students writing to sources, i.e., using evidence from texts to present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information" (CCSSO, 2010, p. 1). But both informational and narrative writing are important as well: "The Standards also require the cultivation of narrative writing throughout the grades, and in later grades a command of sequence and detail will be essential for effective argumentative and informational writing" (CCSSO, 2010, p. 1). The standards not only specify three distinct types of writing, but also prioritize the teaching of writing as an instructional shift. Because standards authors created the documents supporting the shifts, it is assumed that the authors intended that the teaching of writing occupy a large space in ELA instruction in all grades.

Along with near unanimous adoption across the country, the CCSS were also paired with almost $330 million of Department of Education funding to test developers associated with the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) (Applebee, 2013; Klein, 2009).   The two consortia began creating assessments in 2010, which rolled out in the spring of 2015. The assessments were designed to measure the deeper learning demanded by CCSS (Conley, 2014) through selected response (multiple-choice), performance tasks, and technology enhanced items. These new assessments also represented a substantial shift for teachers. As Applebee (2013) stated, "the form and content of these new assessments will have more impact on curriculum and instruction than the CCSS themselves" (p. 30). Because the new assessments were supposed to look different in both form and content from any previous assessments and should measure the teaching of a standards-based curriculum, they could reinforce the type of instruction that the authors of CCSS intended. If the assessments looked like old assessments for new standards, teachers would likely not be motivated to change anything about their instruction.

Standards, Assessment, and Curriculum

While standards are not curriculum, standards can and do influence what is taught and how it is taught (Troia & Olinghouse, 2013). CCSS has not only called for a shift in what is taught but how it is taught, which means that teachers use the CCSS to plan for instruction.

According to Shulman, Whittaker, and Lew (2002), "a standards-based classroom integrates curriculum, instruction, and assessment as a three-legged stool…[where] real

integration means that assessments are embedded in instruction; matched to the goals, formats, and processes of instruction; and provide ongoing learning experiences for students" (p. 5). Curriculum and instruction together constitute the "teaching" part of instruction, while "assessments are distinct from assignments because they are not taught" (Dougherty, 2012, p. 27). In this model, standards may be thought of as the floor or base that the stool sits on or the set of learning goals the teacher uses to build curriculum, instruction, and assessment from in order to achieve student learning. This popular model of classroom instruction encourages educators to think about how the three components of the classroom support the learner: if one leg of the stool is too short or over-emphasized, the stool is off balance and will fall over (see Figure 1). For example, a teacher may spend substantial time on curriculum and instruction, which may be high-quality, but if there is a low-quality assessment that does not properly assess whether students have met the goals for student learning, then the stool is out of balance and the teacher cannot determine if the student is on track for the class (Dougherty, 2012).
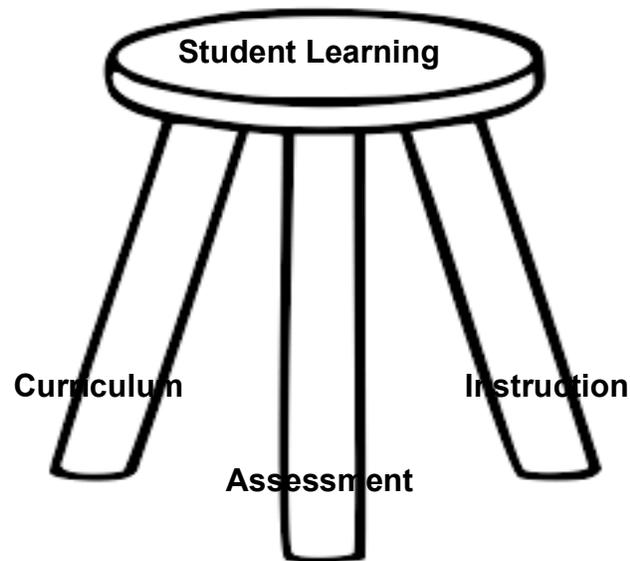
Figure 1: Three-Legged Stool of Student Learning. This figure illustrates the balance of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in student learning.

In its purest sense, a true standards-based classroom is one where the teacher has the ability to determine which assessment would provide information and feedback on the curriculum and instruction (Shulman, Whitaker, & Lew, 2002).   In a writing classroom, the assessment would be a piece of writing that is based on the specified standards that are being taught and the assessment may not look different from an assignment. In a well-crafted assignment aligned to standards where the assessment that has been determined before instruction begins, there is a "a distinct structure in order to set the stage for a cycle of instruction that moves from an introductory phase, through a period of production, and ends with a completed product" (Dougherty, 2012, p. 21). All the materials a teacher uses to teach and all the instruction that happens in the classroom on a daily basis would be for the purpose of helping the students learn what they need to know and be able to do in order to be successful on the assessment. If the grade-level standards

indicate that students are to write an argumentative essay, the teacher would break down all the skills and content necessary for the students to be able to do that. For example, maybe students need to know how to write a clear claim, evaluate different sources of evidence, determine which sources best support their position, and how to organize their evidence in a way that convinces a reader. The writing standards themselves provide some support for the component parts of a standard, but an individual teacher or teachers collaborating in groups do most of the work to determine what is important in each grade-level standard and how to teach it (Dougherty, 2012).

The 11th Grade Writing Curriculum: Writing Matters

In 2007, Graham and Perin suggested that the large numbers of students graduating from high school with sub-standard writing skills should be considered a national crisis. Troia and Olinghouse (2013) called proficient writing a "necessity" and an "expectation" (p. 344) for everything from college success to personal health. In Conley's (2014) survey of faculty members at leading U.S. universities regarding what it takes for students to succeed in entry-level courses at the college level, the results were clear: college faculty prioritized speaking, listening, and writing skills over subject area knowledge. They want students who know what to do with the content they are learning, as opposed to students who simply know content. Considering Conley's research, as well as the demands of the CCSS and the assessments that are attached to them, it is necessary that the focus of high school English classes be on writing and on teaching students to write well for a variety of different audiences and purposes.

Teachers of high school juniors are uniquely positioned at the precipice of a student's future. High school juniors will have just completed the new End of Course

examinations, ELA I (reading) and ELA II (writing), at the end of the tenth grade year in

the state in which this study is taking place. Those students who have successfully

passed will be eligible for graduation, pending the completion of two more years of high

school English. Those students who have not been successful will be in need of

remediation before another exam attempt. This state has recently adopted ACT plus

Writing for all high school juniors as a measure of college readiness. In addition to the

four multiple choice sections that measure a student's college-readiness in English, math,

reading, and science, the ACT plus Writing includes a 40-minute writing test designed to

measure writing skills that are supposed to be part of high school curricula as well as

those needed for college-level writing. The writing test measures a student's ability to

analyze an issue, take a stand on an issue, and compare his or her perspective on an issue

to others. Generally speaking, this writing is an argumentative essay where students are

asked to consider a counter-perspective and compare their views to that perspective.

Beginning in September of 2015, the writing test has been enhanced and includes tasks

that more closely resemble real-world writing. Students will now be provided more

structure during the planning process and more time to compose their essays (ACT,

2016). The presence of important assessments can and does impact instruction for

teachers of juniors: they are either remediating students who have not yet passed or

preparing students for the next wave of important tests.

Additionally, as students enter their last two years of high school, teachers

become more focused on teaching writing and truly preparing students for the next steps

in their lives. Junior year is when many schools teach the AP Language course, which is

primarily a composition course, and students in the non-AP track are often getting their

first taste of large research projects with lengthy writing assignments. Junior years tend to include instruction in resume and application writing, along with whole-school Career Days for students to practice interview skills. By the end of the year, teachers of juniors are preparing students for the college application process by teaching them how to fill out applications and beginning work on college application and scholarship essays.

Teacher Preparedness

There is little argument when one looks at the new demands of the CCSS, the deeper assessments that are being used to evaluate all students, and what is now expected to be considered college-, workplace-, or life-ready that being a writing teacher may be the most important job of an 11th grade English teacher. Whether or not the teachers are ready for the new demands at the upper levels of English is a question that needs to be asked. Although all high school English teachers are content specialists because they are 7-12 certified and have taken more classes in their content area than in education itself, this preparation does not mean that all high school English teachers see themselves as writing teachers or have been adequately prepared to teach the types of writing needed to prepare students. In a 20-year review of research literature on teacher preparation, Morgan and Pytash (2014) found only 31 studies that showed that preservice teachers (PSTs) were well-prepared to be able to teach writing.

Many teachers seek professional development in teaching writing after they begin teaching; however, there are still large gaps between what teachers are learning and what they are teaching to their students. Despite professional development organizations like the National Writing Project, who is in its 40th year of national professional development and reaches at least one in every three teachers (NWP Annual Meeting, 2014), "teachers

report frequently giving writing assignments that require little analysis, interpretation, or actual composing and devote less than 3 hours per marking period to instruction related to writing strategies" (Troia & Olinghouse, 2013, p. 345). Considering the standards demand that students be taught "careful analyses" and the "cultivation of narrative writing," (SAP, p. 1), the goals of the standards or college-ready writing will never be met with less than three hours of instruction per marking period.

The Study

This study is important because the Western state where the study was conducted adopted and implemented CCSS in June of 2010 and was a governing state for SBAC. According to SBAC (n.d.), "Governing members are fully committed to Smarter Balanced and have a vote in policy decisions." States that were governing members were involved in early field testing and had teachers participate in item writing and content and bias reviews, as well as have a formal vote in SBAC policy decisions. The district also worked closely with SAP and was one of the first districts to implement the shifts and use the document for professional development. Because the primary researcher is a former high school English teacher and is currently a curriculum coordinator who has worked with English Language Arts teachers in both a curriculum and professional development role and has been key in implementing the standards, she is in a unique position to conduct this study.

The researcher used a phenomenological approach to collect and analyze the data (Seidman, 2013), focusing on the actual experiences of individuals who are currently teaching writing and make meaning based on their experiences. The purpose of this

qualitative study is to examine how exemplary 11th grade English Language Arts teachers describe their writing instruction.

Self-efficacy has been studied since the early '70s and substantial work has been done connecting self-efficacy to both teacher and student efficacy. Research has established that when teachers are involved in curriculum planning and empowered in important decisions at their school site, their sense that they are doing a job that matters increases (Bandura, 1993; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). The meta-analysis done by Graham and Perin (2007) has definitively connected theory and practice in adolescent writing instruction. Overall, it is known how to increase teacher efficacy and what effective instructional practice looks like, but there is a gap in the research that connect the two. Currently, there are not any studies where exemplary teachers of writing share what they do every day in their classrooms to reach their students. This study is an attempt to fill that gap by giving a voice to exemplary teachers and allowing them to describe their writing instruction.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the research related to teacher self-efficacy and curriculum and helps define teachers' descriptions of their role in writing instruction. The literature review consists of three parts. In part one, teacher efficacy, both self and collective, is discussed. Teacher efficacy is a way of describing the "how" and "why" of teaching. Part two reviews the literature on curriculum as related to both standards and their impact on curriculum, as well as the role teachers play in developing curriculum. Curriculum, composed of both standards and strategies used to teach, is a way of describing the "what" of teaching in a timeframe that is contextualized. The final section is a synthesis that brings the two strands together.

Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy is rooted in psychology and the work of Bandura (1977, 1993), specifically in the area of human behavior. According to Bandura (1977) an "efficacy expectation is the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes" (p. 193). Unlike many other behavioral theorists of the time, Bandura explained that behavior was controlled not by immediate consequences but by individual beliefs in ability to perform tasks.   Essentially, individuals' belief in their ability to perform a task affects their performance. Bandura further stated, "the strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with given situations" (p. 193). People who do not believe or who questions that they can or will be effective may cause them to not even try to tackle a situation in which they already feel potential self-defeat.

Bandura perceived an individual's expectations of the outcome of a situation be different from an individual's belief in his or her own effectiveness or efficacy expectations. His self-efficacy theory focuses on efficacy expectations and an individual's willingness to continue to persevere despite previous outcomes.

Improving efficacy is a change process and, therefore, requires input from a source other than the individual in order for the change to occur. Bandura described four sources that cause changes in an individual's self-efficacy: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal.

Performance accomplishment is the first way an individual's self-efficacy can be changed or improved. Performance accomplishment is experienced mastery, self-directed learning, modeling, and performance. The participant has to be doing the task in order for his or her self-efficacy to change or improve. According to Bandura (1977), performance accomplishments (mastery learning) have the greatest impact on efficacy because they are related to mastery and early successes are particularly important because they lead to high personal expectations. Later failures can be minimized by early successes. For example, a young child learning to play baseball who has early successes in hitting the ball will be less likely to give up when he or she faces a slump and cannot hit the ball than a child who has never hit the ball. Likewise, if the child hit a homerun early in his or her baseball career and knows what that feels like, he or she has high expectations of repeating that performance every time he or she is up at bat.

Bandura discussed the importance of modeling when trying to increase mastery learning and suggested that increasing an individual's level of performance accomplishment is dependent upon many factors. Observing others who are

successfully performing a desired skill can help individuals determine how they, too, should perform. This is known as vicarious experience and is the second dimension of self-efficacy. Vicarious experience does not have the same impact as performance accomplishment because there is no guarantee that an individual will observe someone and see what is intended. Directed modeling, or knowing exactly what one is supposed to look for, can increase the impact of vicarious experience. Vicarious experience is most effective when coupled with personal accomplishment, meaning that an individual has the opportunity to see something performed and then practice the same skill on his or her own (Bandura, 1977).

The third source or way to affect self-efficacy is through verbal persuasion. Verbal persuasion is described as the process of being convinced through oral communication to become efficacious. Verbal persuasion is most often used because it is the easiest and least expensive. Verbal persuasion or suggestion is not transferable and is highly dependent upon who is giving the suggestions and the context of the situation.

The last and least effective means of changing self-efficacy is through emotional arousal. Emotional arousal is used when individuals are in high states of stress and are questioning their competency. Their emotional state can be used to get them to improve. This is a weak contributor because it relies on an individual being in a high state of stress and fear. Because self-efficacy has a lot to do with an individual's need to avoid unpleasant situations, the state of arousal can affect performance (Bandura, 1977). Long-term changes and improvement in self-efficacy are better accomplished through managing anxiety and fear and by focusing on mastery learning and modeling (Bandura, 1977).

Drawing on previous work, Bandura's 1977 study examined the self-efficacy of individuals with severe phobias. Adult snake phobics were assigned to one of three treatment groups where they either received modeling and then practice to overcome their phobias, modeling only, or no treatment. As was expected, the group that had the mastery learning experiences "produced higher, more generalized, and stronger efficacy expectations than did vicarious experience which in turn exceeded those in the control condition" (p. 205).

Bandura's work had important influence on education for several reasons. First, unlike others working in the field at the time, he separated self-efficacy from internal locus of control. Individuals can believe in an internal locus of control, but if they do not have faith in their own abilities and lack the skills necessary to complete the tasks, then they will have low self-efficacy; therefore, one can have high internal locus of control and low self-efficacy.

Second, Bandura found that self-efficacy is a better predictor of future success than past performance in multiple situations. Self-efficacy beliefs influence how individuals process failures. Individuals with low self-efficacy see failure as related to ability, while individuals with high self-efficacy see failure as related to the amount of work or effort put into a task. Low self-efficacy individuals tend to give up after one failure because they do not believe they have the ability to succeed, while high self-efficacy individuals will just work harder at success the next time. This concept is important for the field of education because how a teacher has performed in the past may not be as important to future successes as the belief in his or her ability to be successful. Teachers with low self-efficacy may attribute classroom failure to lack of ability to be a

good teacher, while high self-efficacy teachers may see classroom failure as an opportunity to do something differently.

Third, Bandura's work is generalizable. Although most of his experiments were with adults who were dealing with high anxiety situations, such as snake phobias, his work is applicable to any performance task that calls for specific skills set and requires mastery. Further, his work described what could create behavior changes in people, which is the piece that is very important for education.

Self-efficacy and teacher empowerment. Bandura's early (1977) work laid important groundwork for future studies in self-efficacy directly related to education. He found the degree to which teachers believe in their own ability to be successful with their particular students impacts both teachers and the students they teach (Bandura, 1993). If teachers feel confident about their abilities and see that their students are successful, then they continue to work harder to make their students successful. Both students and teachers have a higher level of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy. Bandura (1993) reviewed the ways that self-efficacy contributed to cognitive development and functioning and made important connections between self-efficacy and education. Bandura's findings that human behavior is purposive and influenced by individual appraisals of not only skills but also self-assessments of beliefs of abilities have major implications for both teaching and learning and this study. Self-efficacy affects cognitive, affective, motivational, and selection process, in short, "efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave" (p. 118).

People motivate themselves in two ways: by what they can do and by the outcomes of their actions (Bandura, 1993). Self-efficacy and motivation are related because people with low self-efficacy do not believe that they can do very much; therefore, they do not visualize great reward for their effort. Success or failure is the direct result of effort or ability. People with high self-efficacy, who fail, normally believe that their failure was the result of lack of effort, while people with low self-efficacy see failure as the result of lack of ability (Bandura, 1993).

Additionally, self-efficacy affects an individual's ability to deal with stressful situations. A teacher with high self-efficacy who deals with difficult and underachieving students probably thinks about the day, reflects on the successes, and looks forward to the next day with excitement. A teacher with low self-efficacy and the same group of students likely goes home at night and feels anxious, stressed, and possibly even depressed. This teacher looks to the next day with resignation and sadness, without hope for success. Self-efficacy impacts mental health and affects an individual's coping mechanisms (Bandura, 1977). Further, the more failures individuals experience the more likely they are to experience high levels of anxiety and the more difficulty they will have placing themselves in challenging situations.

Human beings do not like to do things that make them uncomfortable or feel like a failure; therefore, self-efficacy beliefs ultimately affect an individual's course in life because they influence selection processes or the choices people make. Individuals with low self-efficacy tend to exhibit low goal setting behavior, choosing activities where success would be easy, and only pursuing goals that would not lead to an uncomfortable

mental state. This choice, however, may also mean choosing the path of least resistance: choosing a life that is not very challenging out of fear of failure (Bandura, 1993).

In his review of the impact of efficacy on individuals, Bandura (1993) discussed three principal ways that efficacy contributes to education: student efficacy; teacher efficacy; and collective efficacy. While implications for students are important, more important for this research is Bandura's discussion of the teachers' beliefs and the staffs' collective efficacy beliefs, especially in describing their role in writing instruction. Teachers with high self-efficacy "create mastery experiences for their students" and those with low self-efficacy actually "undermine students' sense of efficacy and cognitive development" (p. 140). Teachers with high self-efficacy create the same in their students, while those with low self-efficacy actually hamper students' cognitive development.

In order to be prepared to make the important transition to college, work, or life, students need to have teachers who have self-efficacy and who are prepared to help them develop not only the skills but also personal efficacy to be prepared for the challenges they will face as the progress into adulthood. Because Bandura (1993) found that high collective efficacy is linked to teachers' views of a school and affects individual efficacy, collective efficacy is equally important. Collective efficacy is generally defined as the school's overall ability to educate students. High individual efficacy does not always mean a school will have high collective efficacy. Bandura's studies (1977; 1993) have shown that collective efficacy varies across grade levels as academic demands on students increase. When students enter school, there is a low sense of efficacy. This could be due to both the demands of learning in the early grades and the perceived unpreparedness of young children to function in an academic environment. In the

primary grades, as students become more accustomed to school where the demands of school are not necessarily overwhelming, there is a strong sense of collective efficacy. This efficacy declines again in upper elementary and succeeding grades as school becomes more difficult. The low sense of efficacy in teachers has an effect on students who then develop low opinions of their own academic capabilities. These students then have more difficulty in making the transition from elementary to middle school and are less likely to be successful in middle school (Bandura, 1993). School efficacy does not exist in a silo: it filters down to students' own sense of self-efficacy, which needs to be especially strong as students make important academic transitions.

Socioeconomic levels, student absenteeism, and student transiency have been shown to correlate with collective efficacy (Bandura, 1993). Bandura's research found the higher the student turnover and absenteeism and the lower the socioeconomic level, the lower the efficacy of the staff. "Adverse student body characteristics influence schools' academic attainments more strongly by altering faculties' beliefs about their collective efficacy to motivate and educate their students than through the direct effects on school achievement" (Bandura, 1993, p. 143). These factors are more important to teachers' beliefs than they are to student achievement. Bandura also suggested that any positive impacts of teacher longevity might be outweighed by "a jaundiced view of their schools' collective instructional efficacy" (Bandura, 1993, p. 143) that long-term teachers may bring.

Related to the idea of efficacy is a teacher's belief in his or her students' ability to grow and improve. Dweck (2009) is well known for her work in the area of student persistence and intelligence. Dweck (2009) found that students who are praised for effort

are more likely to persist than those who are just praised for intelligence. Dweck's work (2009) on the "growth mindset" (p. 57) has also found that even intelligent students are likely to give up when problems or work become difficult or they experience failures if they feel their actual ability or intelligence is being questioned. According to Dweck (2009), "Researchers around the globe have shown that students who believe their intelligence can be developed show superior academic performance across challenging school transitions, enhanced learning on challenging cognitive tasks, and superior performance on IQ tests" (p. 57). Her research specifically showed that how students felt about their intelligence played a key role in their performance. Like Bandura (1993), Dweck (2009) found that students who have a high sense of efficacy are more likely to persevere through challenges and ultimately outperform those who do not. The principles of the growth mindset are particularly important as related to writing because many students (and teachers) come to writing with a fixed mindset and the idea that they are good writers or bad writers. Students who already believe that they cannot improve as writers are not likely to do so and will not persevere through the difficult work of becoming better writers. Likewise, teachers who label students and do not see that students can grow as writers no matter where they start are not likely to help students become better in their craft.

Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfok Hoy (2000) built on both their previous work and the original work of Bandura. They were the first to extend the concept of individual teacher efficacy to an organization. The authors detail the historical perspective of teacher efficacy as an individual state of being and point to Bandura's work (1993) connecting teacher efficacy to self-efficacy. Goddard et al. (2000) reiterated the four sources of self-

efficacy for teachers: mastery experience; vicarious experience; verbal persuasion; and physiological experience.

In addition to the factors of self-efficacy, teachers engage in two types of what Goddard et al. (2000) called task analysis at both the individual and school levels. The first type of task analysis is the analysis of the teaching task. According to Goddard et al. "Factors that influence the task include the abilities and motivations of students, the availability of the instructional materials, the presence of community resources and constraints, and the appropriateness of school's physical facilities" (p. 485). The second component of task analysis is the assessment of teaching competence. During this phase of task analysis, "teachers make explicit judgments of teaching competence of their colleagues in light of an analysis of teaching task" (p. 485). Teaching competence is also judged at both an individual and school level. Efficacy, therefore, can depend on the context and it can change based on circumstances. As a result, these researchers posited that there are four sources of efficacy and two dimensions of task analysis. Goddard et al. used this information to create a model to explain collective efficacy of the school in general. Because their previous research indicated that individual teacher efficacy was linked to student achievement, Goddard et al. believed that collective or group efficacy could, in fact, help explain differing levels of school success; it could possibly even explain why some schools are very successful with unlikely groups of students. Their research is important because if collective efficacy is connected to student achievement then school administrators could attend to collective efficacy.

Goddard et al. developed a 16-item version of the Gibson and Dembo (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale, a common and well-researched instrument for measuring teacher

efficacy. The version developed contained both positively and negatively stated questions because the researchers had found that the wording of items influence how teachers respond and how teachers may express efficacy beliefs. The 16 questions were designed to measure the four categories of teacher efficacy as well as the two dimensions of task analysis. A panel of three experts reviewed the instrument before it was field tested with six teachers. A pilot study was conducted with 70 teachers from five different states. From the results, only one item did not load higher than expected when submitted to factor analysis. Overall, the pilot test demonstrated that individual teacher efficacy and collective teacher efficacy were moderately and positively correlated. Teacher efficacy and teacher powerlessness were significant and negatively correlated, meaning that the more powerless teachers felt the less efficacious they felt. There was high, positive correlation between collective efficacy and trust between colleagues. These results could indicate that in schools where collective efficacy is high, teachers have more trust in their colleagues and may share more with each other. Bandura (1977; 1993) indicated that vicarious learning experiences contribute to self-efficacy. For teachers to learn from each other, they must first trust in each other's abilities.

In what Goddard et al. (2000) called Bandura's "groundbreaking study," two important conclusions were reached:

(a) student achievement (aggregated to the school level) is significantly and positively related to collective efficacy and (b) collective efficacy has a greater effect on student achievement than does student SES (aggregated to the school level). (p. 497)

In an effort to connect this research to the Bandura study (1993) and to connect self-efficacy to collective efficacy, Goddard et al. included student achievement data in the study. Instead of using aggregated student data like most previous research, this study used multilevel modeling. The study found that collective teacher efficacy was a significant predictor of student achievement for both mathematics and reading. In fact, collective teacher efficacy was a better predicator of student achievement than any of the demographic variables. The researchers summarized, "The negative association between SES and achievement is more than offset by the positive association between collective teacher efficacy and student achievement" (p. 500).

Teacher empowerment. Sweetland and Hoy (2000) studied teacher efficacy and student achievement through the lens of teacher empowerment. While teacher empowerment has multiple definitions, Sweetland and Hoy defined teacher empowerment as "the extent to which teachers believe they are involved in important classroom and instructional decisions" (p. 704). They reiterated the importance of this involvement being real and not nominal. While there was extensive research on teacher empowerment, most of the research had failed to establish a link between teacher empowerment and student achievement. According to Sweetland and Hoy, the relationship was complex and "only when teachers are involved in issues of curriculum and instruction will there be a positive relationship between empowerment and student achievement" (p. 710).

Sweetland and Hoy (2000) tested a sample of 2,741 teachers from 86 New Jersey middle schools as the basis for the study that used four different measures for climate and effectiveness data and two different measures to collect student achievement and SES

data. Schools selected were urban, suburban, and rural and were from different geographic areas of the state; additionally, they represented all socioeconomic levels of the state.

The first three hypotheses were related to teacher empowerment and school climate. The first hypothesis tested the correlation between collegial leadership and teacher empowerment; the second, teacher professionalism and teacher empowerment; and the third, academic press and teacher empowerment. These relationships were supported with moderate positive correlations. Principals who demonstrated collegial leadership had more empowered teachers, and principals who were supportive and egalitarian were more conducive to the empowerment of teachers ($r = .55$, $p < .01$) (p. 718). Further, teacher professionalism "in the form of commitment to students, respect for the competence of colleagues, friendship, and engagement in teaching" correlated with teacher empowerment ($r = .49$, $p < .01$) (p. 718). Academic press was also correlated with teacher empowerment ($r = .58$, p $< .01$) (p. 718). Schools with high academic press were "likely to have teachers who were empowered in teaching and learning decisions" (p. 718). Academic press was defined as a school that presses students academically by setting "high, attainable goals, in which students responded positively to the challenge of such goals, and in which the principal worked to get resources and use influence to support these activities" (p. 718).

The remaining hypothesis explored the relationships between teacher empowerment and other elements of school effectiveness. Although SES was related to student achievement, "academic press and collegial leadership made significant, independent contributions and were the two strongest predictors of empowerment" (p.

719). The researchers suggested that SES did not affect achievement as much as academic press and collegial leadership; these two factors were significantly correlated with teacher empowerment.

The final two hypotheses examined reading and math achievement data to determine whether teachers who are more empowered had higher student achievement. As predicted, "Both SES and teacher empowerment made significant and independent contributions to the reading and mathematics achievement of students" ($R =.78, p < .01$; $R = .80, p < .01$) (p. 720). The researchers concluded that in the schools where teacher empowerment was high, student achievement data was also high.

In summary, the research studies indicated teacher empowerment is positively related to self-efficacy. Sweetland and Hoy (2000) concluded, "teacher empowerment at the school level will be effective only to the extent to which empowerment and climate produce a sense of collective efficacy among teachers" (p. 723). Teacher empowerment occurred when teachers were truly engaged in tasks that affect teaching and learning. Both Bandura (1997) and Goddard et al. (2000) established a relationship between student achievement and individual teacher efficacy, as well as the importance of collective efficacy to student achievement.

Standards and Curriculum Development

Educators do not teach or function in a cultural vacuum. Because this study specifically targeted descriptions of writing instruction, curricular implementation, and possible teacher and community efficacy, it was important to understand the culture in which teachers create writing curricular materials to meet the new standards. Further, since this study attempted to add to a body of research in the area of writing instruction,

curriculum development, and professional development in the area of standards implementation, curriculum was the second major area for this literature review. In looking at how standards, curriculum, and instruction interact, this portion of the literature review is organized to provide a context by first discussing how national standards and assessments have affected instruction in other countries. Then, the review discusses the CCSS and how writing was prioritized in the standards. The section on effective writing instruction in general and specifically effective writing instruction in CCSS provides a context for descriptions of the type of instruction that is necessary for students to be successful in CCSS. Last, this section returns to both international and national studies that focus on curriculum development within both national standards and high-stakes testing environments.

National standards: International studies. While national standards are new to the United States, other countries have had national standards for many years and experienced some of the potential effects on teacher agency. England transitioned to a National Curriculum in 1993, and there was extreme governmental pressure to not just standardize curriculum but also standardize lesson planning in teachers' classrooms. In fact England created the Office for Standards in Education that employed officers to do classroom inspections to check teachers' lesson plans to ensure that they were using the intended format and that they were citing the standards as they should within their lesson plans.

Bage, Grosvenor, and Williams (1999) conducted an eight-year case study with three schools in England. The article focused on one year of the study and specifically on the area of curriculum planning. This study was important to consider as the U.S.

transitioned to CCSS, as it showed how teachers kept their agency even in very structured systems. In this case study, Bage et al. (1999) had repeated opportunities to interview teachers about their lesson planning practices and procedures and delve into the thinking behind their planning processes. They identified two distinct types of planning: comprehensive and incremental. Comprehensive planning was essentially the overall global planning that relates to what a teacher does with standards or a comprehensive framework, while incremental planning focused on the day-to-day instruction that is more related to what actually happens in the classroom.

Through their conversations with and observations of teachers, Bage et al. (1999) realized additional forms of instruction occurred in classrooms that are not described or explained in teacher plan books: predictive planning or responsive planning. In predictive planning, teachers "anticipate imagined future curriculum events, often related to long- and medium-term curriculum planning but also to the objectives and curriculum content of lessons" (p. 53). For example, teachers who write "discuss" or "check for understanding" in their lesson plans do not know how long that will take nor what the outcome of that activity will be, but they know that activity is an important piece of their curriculum. The responsive planning mode encompasses the decisions teachers make in the moment that lead to better learning opportunities for their students. These are the teachable moments that teachers seize in their classrooms that cannot be anticipated ahead of time or ignored when they arise because doing so would actually inhibit learning. These two modes of planning are important because they cannot be accounted for on lesson plans; yet, they reflect important concepts about teacher planning. Teachers in the research study discussed writing the lesson plan in the prescribed format that would

satisfy the inspector, but also described having their real lesson plans, the plans that truly worked for them, ready for when the inspector left.

The Bage et al. (1999) research demonstrated two key points. First, teacher planning should be for the purpose of student learning, not "to satisfy conformist notions or technical prescriptions of what planning should look like" (p. 67). This point is reinforced by the idea that there is so much variability in planning and the modes of planning that teaching cannot be accounted for on paper. Secondly, because much of what happens in the classroom cannot be accounted for in the planning process, it is important to acknowledge that "when compared to sophisticated mental planning … written representations will be crude oversimplifications" (p. 67). It is important to remember that standards are a part of planning for student learning. While the standards and assessments should guide the learning (Dougherty, 2012; Shulman et al., 2002), the teacher in the classroom needs to provide the curriculum and instruction necessary to match the individual learning needs of students.

While England shifted to a nationalized curriculum in the early 1990s, Japan has more recently adopted a national curriculum. In Japan, teachers were once held in the highest regard and teaching was seen as a "sacred profession" (Mitsuno, 2007, p. 96). The national curriculum, based on a western model of society and education, adopted in 2002 is more "flexible and child-centered" (p. 96) than previous models of education and is designed to fit the new and changing Japanese society. Japanese teachers believe this new curriculum ignores the experience of the teachers by asking teachers to create curriculum that is based more on individual needs of students. New curriculum models

in Japan are more student-centered, while previous models favored a more teacher-centered approach.

Mistsuno's (2007) study provided a close look at a country struggling with a reform movement that has dramatically changed the role of the teacher. Mitsuno examined and traced teacher blogs in Japan and included excerpts from those blogs in his study. The purpose of his research was to illustrate how teachers were trying to negotiate the new demands of the curriculum and their new role in the classroom.

Teachers in the blogs expressed the need to pursue what was important and to teach their own way; there was acknowledgement of the predictive and responsive planning that Bage et al. (1999) discussed. However, unlike the teachers in England, the teachers in Japan have not yet figured out how to continue to honor their own professional knowledge as teachers within the national curriculum that has been prescribed: they have not found a way to maintain their agency within the system. Not only has the new curriculum called for a change in teaching, it has also created a change in the culture of teaching and a change in the student-teacher relationship with which many teachers are extremely uncomfortable (Mistsuno, 2007). Statistics from Japan since the reform movement show "there are a growing number of teachers on sick leave and a growing number of teachers leaving the profession earlier in Japan [and] the number of teachers taking sick leave because of psychiatric reasons is growing dramatically" (p. 98). This situation has been interpreted by some as teachers' inability to cope with change (Mitsuno, 2007).

Mitsuno's (2007) study is significant because it shows the kind of discord that can occur when outside forces make decisions that do not involve teachers. Beyond simply

leaving people in a state of flux about their professional lives, people leaving the profession and going on sick leave for psychiatric reasons are serious consequences of "reform" efforts. Verbal persuasion, or simply telling people they must change, is one of the weakest contributors to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1993) as it does not promote any mastery learning.

Sweetland and Hoy (2000) discussed the importance of teacher involvement in decisions about teaching, learning, and curriculum in order to feel empowered. When decisions are made by others, teachers feel less empowered. In England, teachers were given a specific format to use for lesson planning, and the plans were inspected by employees from the Office for Standards Education. These lesson plan formats failed to account for individual differences in the teacher planning process. Teachers need to have an opportunity to engage in activities where they improve personal mastery in order to improve self-efficacy. One way to create personal mastery is by creating something and then changing it to suit individual needs (Bandura, 1977, 1993) which the teachers were not able to do with the prescribed lesson plan formats.

National Standards: The Potential of CCSS

Mo, Kopke, Hawkins, Troia, and Olinghouse (2014) praised the attention given to writing in the CCSS and were optimistic about the possible impact that the CCSS could have on writing instruction. Mo et al. (2014) first discussed the fact that the most recent NAEP scores still showed that 70% of students in grades 8-12 did not write proficiently. They further noted that fewer than 30 minutes a day was devoted to writing instruction in elementary classrooms while 80% of high school students reported that their writing assignments averaged only one page in length. Mo et al. (2014) joined other researchers

(Dougherty, 2012; Shulman et al., 2002) in acknowledging the importance of the role of standards in curriculum. Because there was some empirical research that indicated that writing instruction changes when changes have been made to standards in different states, Mo et al. (2014) were hopeful that "writing achievement can be enhanced through strong writing standards" (p. 447) with the adoption of the CCSS. As others (Applebee, 2013; Smith, Wilhelm & Fredricksen, 2013) have argued, Mo et al. (2014) stated that the CCSS for Writing and Language (CCSS-WL) are "not a neutral, value-free set of standards" (p. 447), as is true of all standards. Because the standards reflect what may be considered the values or biases of many philosophies of instruction, they must be examined thoroughly and the instructional implications should be carefully considered.

Mo et al. (2014) used a coding system to evaluate the writing standards in the CCSS for seven different strands: processes, context, purposes, components, conventions, knowledge/metacognition, and motivation. The authors acknowledged that although standards are intended to provide the "what" in instruction, there is often an underlying "how" or a signal to how the standard can be achieved. Their goal in this evaluation was to determine "what content is privileged in the CCSS-WL and what instructional practices are suggested…and what practices, although important…must be supported through external sources of pedagogical knowledge" (p. 448). They supported their analysis with suggestions for not only achieving the standards but also for supplementing in areas where the standards may fall short.

In the analysis, the CCSS-WL received favorable reviews in the areas of writing processes, content, purposes, and components. Overall, the analysis found the standards addressed the writing process thoroughly when the standards were considered as a whole.

However, Mo et al. (2014) noted that the CCSS-WL did not address the writing process as being recursive and something students should return to multiple times during the composing of an individual piece. Writing context and purposes were also well covered in the standards with students having the opportunity to write for a variety of contexts and purposes throughout their school careers. The reviewers reminded teachers the CCSS-WL are not inclusive and that genres such as poetry or relevant business communications are not mentioned at all. Mo et al. (2014) advocated, in each of the areas, that teachers both model writing for students and use models of specific text types and structures in order to help teach the CCSS-WL.

The Mo et al. (2014) analysis was more critical of CCSS-WL in the areas of conventions, knowledge/metacognition, and motivation. In conventions, the CCSS-WL are very general, with no mention of specific skills that students should master, especially after the elementary level. Other research (Graham & Perin, 2007) has indicated that sentence combining is particularly effective in helping adolescent writers improve, and Mo et al. (2014) advocated this approach as well. While the CCSS discussed concepts such as parallel construction or varying sentence length for reader interest, sentence combining was not specifically referred to.

Writing knowledge, both genre and procedural knowledge, and metacognition are not addressed at any grade level. Primarily, the CCSS-WL demands that students produce writing of different genres, but there is no demand that students have any knowledge of frameworks with which to do this. Because the standards do not provide this information, the teacher, then, is left to determine what the different genres of writing are supposed to look like and understand the different structures students may use to

produce those types of writing. The standards specify the types of writing but teachers are expected to use their knowledge of writing to determine what different types of writing are supposed to look like.

Writing motivation and thinking about oneself as a writer are also not addressed in the standards, either in the CCSS-WL or in the front matter of the CCSS. Motivation to write, nor self-efficacy as a writer, nor situations that create the motivation to write are addressed in the CCSS-WL. It is important, therefore, that teachers link motivation to conversations about text forms and writing purpose. This lack of discussion about motivation is what demonstrates that this is a document about "what" to teach and not "how" to teach (Mo et al., 2014).

In conclusion, Mo et al. (2014) do believe that the CCSS-WL can have a positive impact on writing instruction by bringing writing to the front. They emphasize that the standards are a document that need to be coupled with best practices and supported by technology in order to achieve the desired changes. They encourage educators to think of the standards not as a burden but as an opportunity for reflection and personal growth.

Conley (2014) designed two separate studies related to college-readiness and the CCSS. In one study he spoke with more than 400 faculty members at leading U.S. universities regarding what it takes for students to success in entry-level courses at the college level. "With near unanimity, they stressed in no uncertain terms…that students needed to know what to do with the content they were learning…to use their content knowledge in ways consistent with the subject area's rules and premises to generate intellectually important outputs" (p. 33). While most faculty did identify that subject area content was important and was in line with what high school instructors were currently

teaching, what university faculty also found was that incoming students did not know what to do with the information they knew. Students "struggled to make inferences, interpret inconsistent or novel data, posit multiple explanations for phenomenon, generate an original thesis and explore it, or extrapolate it from a given set of information to a new and novel setting" (p. 33). In summary, university faculty want students who can do more than regurgitate memorized facts and content. They want students to do something with the facts and content: they want students to think about the facts and content and produce something with their knowledge.

In a second study, Conley (2014) asked instructors from two- and four-year institutions from approximately two thousand courses to review the CCSS for their applicability to their own courses. If the instructor determined the course was applicable, they were asked to rate how important an individual standard was to success in a course. Overall, the ELA standards were much more applicable than math standards to a wider range of college and university courses. In conclusion, postsecondary instructors found the CCSS are "applicable to and important for success in their courses" (p. 173). Standards that called for students to master comprehension of non-fiction text, extract key ideas and details, and produce a wide range of writing, use research to support written analysis, and write routinely for long and short periods of time were all seen as being the most appropriate and important for postsecondary success.

Conley (2014) was supportive but realistic about the CCSS: "Common Core State Standards can be a catalyst for better alignment with postsecondary expectations, the challenge remains for schools to design instructional programs that directly address the expectations those standards contain in order to improve college and career readiness

for all students" (p. 7). The CCSS is not a silver bullet that will magically have all

students ready for college unless teachers make the instructional changes necessary to

actually get them there. Conley suggested that preparedness is more than just being

"content ready," but that changes will have to be made in many facets of K-12 education

(p. 56).

Conley (2014) states, "The standards clearly demand a great deal of writing" (p.

182) and this comes at a time when research indicates a downward trend in the amount of

writing that teachers have been assigning over the past ten years. He further notes that

writing has to include a wide range of writing expectations that go beyond the "six-

paragraph essay, which has become commonplace in many schools located in states in

which writing is assessed based on such a model" (p. 182). But he also is aware that the

challenge in front of schools and teachers is large because preparing the majority of

students for college was not how high schools were originally designed. In many ways,

the system still functions the same way it did when the majority of students did not go to

college even though the goals of the system have changed dramatically.

The CCSS does have its critics, however. Arthur Applebee (2013) sat on both the

review panel for the CCSS and the Validation Committee that provided oversight for

standards development. Applebee made it clear that the CCSS are political documents

that encompass long-standing debates in education. He stated, "It is critical that they be

implemented within the context of our best professional judgment about the dimensions

of effective teaching and learning and that the many special interest groups not be

allowed to use CCSS selectively to further their own agendas" (2013, p. 25). Applebee

provided background for the CCSS and discussed previous attempts to nationalize

English Language Arts standards: one of those was a joint project by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The project lost funding after two years because although standards were developed, they were very global compared to the specific standards that individual states had developed, and not the type of document that the funders were looking for. Other subject areas and organizations attempted to develop national standards before No Child Left Behind Act made standards the responsibility of the states. Variations in standards and more specifically, variations in assessments from one state to another and differences in what constituted proficiency in each state led the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association to create a national standards document.

The process of creating the standards started by examining the concept for students to be "career and college ready," a concept based on many years of research from Achieve, Inc. Starting with the ideal picture of a "college and career" ready graduate and defining what that meant, the standards were then backward mapped from grade twelve, creating standards for each grade-level. There were multiple opportunities for public feedback, and authors were committed to including the feedback in revised drafts. The CCSS were billed as having fewer standards and clearer outcomes than previous state standards, but the length of the document alone calls that into question. Further, Applebee (2013) contended that because of the speed of creating the documents and multiple opportunities for feedback and many layers of revision, the resulting document:

contains the residues of all of our professional disagreements about the teaching of the English language arts. Whatever you consider most important in the teaching of reading and writing, you can find it somewhere in the standards and its accompanying documentation. And so can those who disagree. (p. 26)

The problems that Applebee cited within the standards are important to this study for several reasons. First, the backward mapping from grade twelve requirements to create grade level standards and curriculum was forced in many places and was not logical in others (Murphy & Smith, 2015). In an effort to create a differentiated standard at each grade level, writers often added one word to differentiate one grade level from the previous grade level (Applebee, 2013). While this type of sequential instruction is easy and may make sense in mathematics, it is not that simple in ELA where effective instruction is more circular. Because the skills spiral, often, what differentiates one grade from the next is not the skill itself but the type of text being used in the classroom. For example, English teachers do not teach students how to find theme differently each year they are in school, but students are finding the theme in increasingly more complex text as they move through school. It is not, therefore, the skill that is different, but students' ability to perform the skills in different texts and situations that becomes more complex. Citing the example of textual evidence, Applebee (2013) noted, "As a guide to curriculum and instruction, this breakdown is at best bizarre; nobody is going to wait until grade 9 to suggest that students select the best evidence to support their point, or wait until grade 8 to ask for 'several' pieces of evidence when more than one is available" (p. 28). Applebee (2013) further stated, "such specification can lead to a distortion of curriculum and instruction" (p. 29).

Like Mo et al. (2014), Applebee (2013) is concerned about the grade-by-grade specifications in the standards and the lack of opportunity he sees for spiraling or recursive instruction. Applebee (2013) expressed concerns that a writing curriculum built directly from the standards would be "very formulaic" (p. 30). Different types of writing are defined in the appendix to the CCSS; and a more holistic approach for the teaching of writing, one driven by audience and purpose, is discussed. Applebee applauded the appendix for this vision, but that same vision is not contained in the standards where writing is reduced to a set of skills. The greatest issue for most states and districts is time, and Applebee's fear is that in the pressure to implement the new CCSS and the impending assessments and accountability that are connected to standards, that "few states or districts seem willing to take on the challenge of how best to reach those goals, rather than focusing curriculum and instruction directly on the standards themselves" (p. 30).

According to Applebee (2013), another potential issue with the CCSS and the ensuing curriculum is how they are translated into assessments. Although the creation of the CCSS was driven by two organizations that represented states, they immediately became federalized as the U.S. Department of Education made the choice to support Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) with approximately $330 million (Applebee, 2013; Klein, 2009). When the two consortia began creating assessments in 2010 with a roll out date of 2014-15, the time seemed available and the plans were grand. Originally, the assessments were to contain selected response (multiple-choice), performance tasks, and technology enhanced items. Applebee stated, "the form and

content of these new assessments will have more impact on curriculum and instruction

than the CCSS themselves" (p. 30).

While Applebee (2013) appears to be highly critical of the CCSS, he is more

critical of how the standards are being implemented in classrooms and interpreted by test

makers. Formulaic teaching and narrow interpretations of the standards accompanied by

assessments that are quick and easy to grade but fail to test students' true depth of

knowledge have the potential of narrowing curriculum and negatively impacting

instruction and student learning. Above all, he is concerned that educators are entering a

"teach to the test" culture and that the professional judgment of an educator will no

longer be valued. Applebee is not alone in his concerns that the assessments will drive

instruction. Many researchers (Conley, 2014; Mo et al., 2014; Murphy & Smith, 2015)

discuss fears of high-stakes tests driving classroom instruction; however, well-designed

curriculum that honors both the CCSS and effective writing practices is possible, even in

the CCSS era (Graham & Perin, 2007; Smith et al. 2013).

Effective Writing Instruction: In General and In CCSS

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been

administering periodic, national assessments of students in multiple subjects for many

years. National assessments in writing were conducted in 1998, 2007, and 2011. The

2011 NAEP writing assessment was the first large-scale assessment to measure students'

writing using word-processing tools. The NAEP samples both eighth and twelfth-grade

students in their ability to write for specific purposes (the three genres of CCSS) and to

specific audiences. In 2011, 28,100 twelfth-graders were tested. A proficiency scale

ranging from 0-300 with a mean of 150 was developed to report assessment results.

Nationally, 79 percent of twelfth-graders sampled performed at or above the basic level in writing in 2011, and twenty-seven percent of students at both performed at or above the proficient level. Only three percent of twelfth-graders were considered advanced-level writers.

There were not substantial improvements in student writing between 1998 and 2011. Because three-fourths of the student population consistently is shown to not even possess basic writing skills, Graham and Perin (2007), along with the Carnegie Corporation, performed an extensive meta-analysis to determine the best instructional recommendations for teaching writing to students in grades 4 – 12. *Writing Next* (2007) was a meta-analysis on the state of adolescent writing in the United States. The authors believed a meta-analysis was the most effective approach to study effective writing instruction because it compares the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies. *Writing Next* is a cumulative analysis, encompassing previous studies of adolescent writing and extending the categories of previous researchers. The Graham and Perin (2007) study was influenced by nine factors. The study was limited to studies that focused on students in grades 4-12 only. The study included all research on both writing-to-learn and learning-to-write as well as all relevant studies from a previous meta-analysis (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2004). Only studies that were conducted in regular school settings were included. Studies had to have an experimental or quasi-experimental design and data, including an effect size, to be included.

Graham and Perin's (2007) meta-analysis yielded eleven key elements of effective adolescent writing instruction. The authors noted, "In an ideal world, teachers would be able to incorporate all 11 key elements of the key elements in their everyday

writing curricula…the elements should not be seen as isolated but rather as interlinked" (p. 11). The elements are not meant to create a curriculum and have not been created based on the observation of effective writing instructors, but rather are "specific practices that have demonstrated effectiveness in a number of contexts" (p. 13). Because writing quality was used as the "sole outcome measure" (p. 14) of the studies included in the meta-analysis, the elements are presented with the highest effect size first, meaning that the first element is the one that has the highest impact on student writing performance. However, the authors continually reinforce the idea that the elements must all be included for writing instruction to be effective.

The eleven elements of effective writing instruction, all supported by "rigorous research" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 4) that resulted from the meta-analysis are writing strategies, summarization, collaborative writing, specific product goals, word processing, prewriting, inquiry activities, process writing approach, study of models, and writing for content learning. The strategies are listed and described from those with the highest effect size to the lowest effect size.

According to Graham and Perin (2007), teaching writing strategies is the most effective element in improving adolescent writing. Student writers need to be taught specific strategies for all stages of the composition process and for different types of writing tasks. The average weighted effect size was larger (1.02) for struggling writers than for average writers, which shows that the more difficulty a student has writing the more he or she benefits from explicit strategy instruction.

A wide range of summarization strategies was shown to be effective when teaching adolescent writers to summarize text. Direct instruction in summarization

techniques and the use of models of good summaries were both effective instructional models.

Collaborative writing projects were also shown to have an overall positive effect on student writing ability. As with writing strategies and summarization, students need direct instruction in all pieces of the writing process as related to a collaborative project. Studies on collaboration compared students who helped each other in several aspects of the writing process to those who worked independently. When students were engaged in collaborative writing projects, the quality of their writing improved (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Graham and Perin (2007) identified having specific product goals as being an important element of effective writing instruction. They identified product goals as "identifying the purpose of the assignment as well as characteristics of the final product" (p. 17). Effect sizes indicated that weaker writers more strongly benefited from having specific product goals than average writers, but that knowing the goals of an individual writing assignment is important for all students. The idea of backward design or beginning with the end in mind has been reinforced and popularized by the extensive research of Wiggins and McTighe (2005).

The use of word processing as an instructional tool in drafting, composing, and revising ranked as the fifth most effective strategy to improving student writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). The distinction with word processing as a writing strategy is that students are not just being asked to type their papers, but that they are being taught how to use word processing tools throughout the composition process. Again, this strategy had a moderate effect size for students in general but was larger for low-achieving

writers. Dave and Russell's (2010) research on word processing with undergraduates supported the notion that word processing in process as opposed to a final drafting technique helps students to make the more global revisions teachers expect in writing. At the same time, students are becoming more used to revising in process rather than completing multiple drafts of a piece of writing.

A student whose writing has more complex sentences is generally considered more effective than writing with basic or simple sentences, and teaching students to add complex sentences to their writing is a way of enhancing student writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). Sentence combining is the act of combining basic sentences into more complex sentences. Graham and Perin (2007) examined studies that compared sentence combining to traditional grammar instruction, defined or described as "explicit and systematic teaching of the parts of speech and sentence structure" (p. 21). The studies examined the effect of sentence combining on student writing as compared to traditional grammar instruction. The results were strong and positive and indicated that teaching sentence combining is an effective strategy in improving student writing and overall more effective in helping student writers than teaching grammar. As a side note to the research, Graham and Perin (2007) did examine studies that involved "explicit and systematic teaching of parts of speech and structure of sentences" (p. 21). For students across a full range of ability, the effect of this type of grammar instruction was small but significant and negative. This result indicated that traditional approaches to teaching grammar certainly do not help students become better writers and may, in fact, have an adverse effect on students' writing. The research does not suggest that grammar

instruction has no place in writing instruction, but that educators need to look at what types of grammar instruction are helping students improve their writing and what are not.

Teaching students specific techniques for pre-writing and modeling those strategies for students had a small to moderate impact on student writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). None of the research in the meta-analysis showed any differences in the general population and lower-level writers. What should be noted about most pre-writing research is that pre-writing needs to be taught and modeled. Simply assigning pre-writing or dictating certain pre-writing approaches is not effective for students.

Inquiry means "engaging students in activities that help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task by analyzing immediate, concrete data" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 19). Effective inquiry writing projects have specific goals, analysis of data, use specific data analysis strategies, and engage students in writing to apply what they have learned in the inquiry process. While Graham and Perin (2007) found this type of writing and the process to be effective in helping to develop adolescent writers, they also found no new research in this area since 1986. The focus on writing in CCSS, as well as writing to text (Conley, 2014; Mo et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2013), has the potential of spurring more inquiry-based writing.

Generally, when one thinks of the writing process the parts of the writing process (i.e., prewriting, drafting, peer responding, revising, final drafting, publishing) are called to mind. This view of the writing process is simplistic when compared to the process writing approach that Graham and Perin (2007) have identified as the ninth strategy to improve adolescent writing. A process writing approach is defined as a more complex set of activities that include:

…creating extended opportunities for writing; emphasizing writing for real

audiences; encouraging cycles of planning, translating and review; stressing

personal responsibility and ownership of writing projects; facilitating high levels

of student interactions; developing supportive writing environments; encouraging

self-reflection and evaluation; and offering personalized individualized assistance,

brief instructional lessons to meet students' individual needs, and, in some

instances, more extended and systematic instruction. (p. 19)

While many of the previous strategies' effectiveness were dependent upon the

teacher directly teaching or modeling the strategy for the students, this strategy showed a

higher positive effect when teachers had received training in the techniques. When

teachers had no training in the components of the writing process, the effect size was

negligible; however, when teachers had received training, the effect was significant. In

five of the six studies included in the meta-analysis, the training teachers received in the

writing process model was from the National Writing Project (NWP). Graham and Perin

(2007) noted that many of the components in the NWP model were the same as those

found through meta-analysis as being effective strategies to enhance student writing.

Showing students what good writing looks like by providing models for each type

of writing they are expected to complete has been shown to be an effective strategy for

improving adolescent writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). The study of models proved

effective for student writers when they were not just given models of various types of

writing but analyzed models for their critical elements and then were given a chance to

emulate the model.

The last strategy that Perin and Graham (2007) found to have significant, albeit small, effect is that of writing for content learning. Unlike the previous ten strategies, which have a positive effect on improving student writing, writing in the content areas helps students to learn content area material. When students are asked to use writing as a means to understanding content in science, social studies, and math, they are better able to process and understand the content in those subject areas. There were no significant differences in writing between subject areas or in grades 4-6 versus 7-12, which indicates that writing is an effective way to help students understand content in all content areas regardless of the grade level.

In their book, Murphy and Smith (2015) used informal case studies to illustrate what good writing instruction looks like in the classroom and how the teachers think about their instruction in CCSS. The authors discussed the role of writing in the CCSS and the best practices that emerged from working with teachers as they make sense of the CCSS. Murphy and Smith (2015) stated that writing is "back in fashion, due in part to the CCSS" (p. 3), but that teachers may feel overwhelmed and unsure of where to start. Because the standards themselves give guidelines in what to teach, but not how to teach (CCSO & NGA, 2010) there is no real guidance or suggestions of best practices in the CCSS document. Murphy and Smith (2015) posited that the major themes found in the CCSS-W are also those that are supported by previous research and constitute best practices in the teaching of writing. They also advocate for these practices because they "inhabit the writing lives of professional authors" (p. 4). Students should experience writing in the same way that authors do rather than in the artificial way that is sometimes presented to them in school.

Murphy and Smith (2015) first discussed the best practice in teaching writing of integrating English language arts. According to them, this integration included the integration of reading, writing, speaking, and listening within the instructional sequence. Deliberately planning for reading, writing, listening, and speaking within the context of writing instruction allowed for students to be more effective writers. Starting with speaking and discussion allowed student writers to develop ideas, while reading text often gave students something to write about, even narratives can and should be enhanced by the reading of model texts.

A second best practice that Murphy and Smith (2015) saw demonstrated in teachers' classrooms that is also supported by the CCSS is the idea of extending the range of writing. CCSS offers teachers a way to do this extension because the standards call for students to write for a variety of purposes, audiences, and tasks. Writing Standard 10 also asks that students "Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two)" (CCSSO & NGA, 2010, p. 41). Students are asked to write independently and to collaborate on writing assignments with their peers.

Spiraling and scaffolding are, according to Murphy and Smith (2015), not new concepts, but a combination of concepts in writing that are important to students becoming better writers. Spiraling in curriculum is really the opposite of mastery and is centered on the notion that concepts will occur many times, usually with higher cognitive demands, so they do not really need to master a skill or concept when it is first introduced. For example, the idea of writing a thesis is very complex for most students, and students are not expected to master the idea when it is first introduced so writing a

thesis statement occurs multiple times in the standards. Those who are more critical of the standards, like Applebee (2013), favor a spiraling curriculum and dislike the grade-by-grade specifications that are laid out in the CCSS. Murphy and Smith (2015) acknowledge that while the CCSS does have certain grade level specifications that teachers need to use their professional judgment about when to introduce skills and concepts and use scaffolding, such as mapping, modeling, or prior knowledge, to help students access the grade-level specifications as appropriate. Embedded within scaffolding are many of the effective strategies that Perin and Graham (2007) suggested for improving adolescent writers, including modeling and pre-writing.

The final best practice that Murphy and Smith (2015) believe is embedded within the CCSS and is part of effective writing instruction is that of collaboration, also a strategy supported by Perin and Graham (2007). Murphy and Smith (2015) noted that collaboration is not seen in the CCSS writing anchor standards, where students are only using digital tools to collaborate, but that if one looks to the speaking and listening standards, collaboration "appears at all points on the compass in the process of writing, from generating ideas to responding to drafts" (p. 99). While writing is often thought of as solitary work, for student writers talk and collaboration is critical for their development as writers primarily because discussion at all points of the process allows students to repeatedly "bump up against the idea of audience" (p. 99). When students share ideas, share drafts, share revisions, and read and talk about writing with their peers at different parts of the writing process, they begin to understand how different audiences react to their writing. Planning for collaboration among student writers is critical in their development as writers.

Smith, Wilhelm, and Fredricksen (2013) also believe the CCSS "emphasize writing convincing arguments about issues that matter, clear and comprehensive informational texts that can do meaningful work in the world, and compelling narratives…" (p. 45). At the same time, Smith et al. (2013) posit that students are doomed to failure under the CCSS if teachers continue to teach students using traditional approaches and formulaic writing structures. According to Smith et al. (2015) and others (Hillocks, 1986), to be effective writers and successful under the CCSS students need to regularly engage in five different types of composing: composing to practice, composing to plan, first draft composing, final draft composing, and composing to transfer. Additionally, students need to understand both form and substance as they relate to the different types of composing.

Smith et al. (2013) define declarative knowledge as "what, a kind of knowledge that can be spoken" (p. 46) and procedural knowledge as "how, a kind of knowledge that can be performed" (p. 46). Further, they contend that writers need to have both declarative and procedural knowledge of both form and substance in order to write effectively. Additionally, because writing does not occur in a vacuum, students need to also understand purpose, so effective writers have a fifth type of knowledge, which is a knowledge of purpose and context. Effective writing instruction, then, according to Smith et al. (2013) is writing instruction in CCSS moves students from just declarative knowledge, the most common form of instruction in schools, to procedural knowledge, which is emphasized by CCSS.

Smith et al. (2013) argue the best way for students to develop the five kinds of knowledge is through more robust instruction in the composing process and outline five

types of composing. Like Murphy and Smith (2015), Smith et al. (2013) contend that these instructional practices not only support students in becoming successful writers, but these practices mirror the work of real writers.

Composing to practice is based in the idea of allowing students substantial amounts of time to practice the skills embedded within larger writing assignments. The authors noted that normally students are given a writing task and then they are asked to go through all the pieces of the process. Students need to have the task broken down into miniature pieces and have time to practice. For example, one piece of argumentative writing is developing a defensible claim. Students should spend a lot of time writing many claims and practicing reading them to different audiences and revising them until they are solid. Through this type of practice, students will not only be able to explain what a claim is (declarative knowledge) but also develop the procedural knowledge they need to write defensible claims (procedural knowledge).

Composing to plan is the next type of writing practice students can do to help develop procedural knowledge (Smith et al., 2013). Unfortunately, this part of the process is generally done through brainstorming, but students need to be taught other ways to find or get information for writing. What happens after they have brainstormed? What if they do not have anything in their heads? According to Smith et al. (2013), "…if we want students to be ready for college, we must help them develop procedural knowledge of substance" (p. 47). In other words, students need to be taught where to get information when they do not have it, where to go for ideas when they do not have any, what to do if when they are staring at a blank sheet of paper and there is an essay due the next day.

First- and final-draft composing are the next two types. Instruction in first-draft composing helps students to overcome their fears of the blank page and having good instruction in composing to plan will help students with first-draft composing. It is essential that developing writers have "lots and lots of opportunities to get started, many more than the characteristic one or two a quarter" (Smith et al., 2013, p. 47) that they generally have in school. Multiple opportunities for students to practice with mini-assignments or smaller chunks of papers can help with first-draft composing. Additionally, students need specific instruction in revision. They need to be taught what revision can accomplish, what revision strategies are most effective, and what the difference truly is between sentence-level corrections and substantive revisions. This learning cannot happen if teachers just send students home with writing and ask them to revise. Revision has to be modeled, shown, and worked through in order for students to truly understand its procedural aspects.

Composing to transfer is the last type of composition, and "the issue of transfer is perhaps the single most important issue that teachers need to address" (Smith et al., 2013, p. 48). Teachers cannot assume students will understand how writing from one context or class transfers to another context or class. In fact, students likely will not make this transfer on their own at all as they see their school days and classes as being very segmented: by the time they get to science or social studies they forget they were even in English, so the idea of taking something learned from one place to another is a skill most students are not well-equipped to perform. It is up to teachers to create the context for transfer to occur by being deliberate in their instruction and giving students "conscious control" (p. 48) over what they have learned.

It is clear that effective writing instruction (Graham & Perin, 2007; Murphy & Smith, 2015; Smith et al., 2013) has not really changed even though the vehicle for implementing that instruction is different.   The research presented by Graham and Perin (2007) was critical because it was a meta-analysis that looked at over sixty years of writing research and what makes writing effective, while the research of Murphy and Smith (2015) and Smith et al. (2013) showed how writing could be effective by applying strategies to specific classroom practices. The first column in Figure 2 summarizes each of the eleven strategies from Graham and Perin (2007) that have an effect on adolescent writers. The second two columns show where Murphy and Smith (2015) and Smith et al. (2013) support the strategies from Graham and Perin (2007) that have an effect on adolescent writing.

Graham & Perin (2007)	Murphy & Smith (2015)	Smith et al. (2013)
Writing Strategies: teaching strategies for planning, revising, and editing	**Integration:** Integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.	**Composing to Plan:** teaching students specific strategies to get started with their writing. **First and Final Draft Composing:** teaching students specific strategies to get started as well as specific strategies to revise their writing.
Summarization: explicitly teaching how to summarize		
Collaborative Writing: using instructional arrangements in which adolescents compose together	**Collaboration:** students should talk and collaborate throughout the writing process	
Specific Product Goals: assigning students specific, reachable goals for products		
Word Processing: using computers as instructional support		**Final Draft Composing:** teaching students specific strategies for revision and final draft composing, which includes the difference between sentence-level corrections and revision
Sentence Combining: teaching students to construct more		**Final Draft Composing:** teaching students specific

complex sentences		strategies for revision and final draft composing, which includes the difference between sentence-level corrections and revision
Prewriting: engaging students in activities to help them generate or organize ideas for writing	**Integration:** integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.	
Inquiry Activities: engaging students in analyzing data for writing	**Extension:** extending the range and types of writing.	
Process Writing Approach: interweaving a number of activities in a workshop environment	**Spiraling and scaffolding:** allowing students to practice concepts multiple times throughout different writing types	**Composing to Practice:** breaking writing tasks into miniature pieces to allow students time to practice each piece
Study of Models: providing students with models to read, analyze, and emulate	**Integration:** integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.	
Writing for Content Learning: using writing as a tool for learning content material	**Extension:** extending the range and types of writing.	**Composing to Transfer:** students need to be taught how writing from one class or content can transfer and be used in another content

Figure 2: Exemplary Writing Practices. This figures combines and shows how the practices highlighted in the research come together and overlap.

Whether a supporter or dissenter, it is clear that the CCSS emphasize writing and will have an impact on instruction. Those who are critical of standards and the assessments that accompany them see this as a time that high-stakes assessments may once again control teachers and instruction for the worse. Those who see the promise in CCSS as a document that has placed writing on the front burner are looking at the potential of CCSS to prioritize writing and as a guide to better writing instruction.

Standards and Curriculum Development: Teacher Perception and Implementation

For many countries, national standards are often accompanied by national assessments, which can also give way to highly structured, national curricula. As pointed out in the studies from England and Japan, where teachers have struggled to find and

create roles in the classroom under centralized education systems. These tightly controlled systems have not always resulted in systems where teachers had more voice and choice in developing curriculum to meet standards and prepare students for assessments. Studies conducted by Mosothwane (2012) in Botswana, Hui and Kennedy (2006) in Hong Kong, and Carl (2005) in South Africa illustrate the importance of teacher voice in curriculum development as well as the connection between empowering teachers and increased self-efficacy. Although from different countries, these studies were all similar in purpose and produced parallel results.

Mosothwane's quantitative study (2012) considered curriculum development with 60 secondary mathematics teachers in Botswana. He used a 12-item questionnaire to assess the level of teacher involvement in curriculum development. Results indicated that teachers were only involved as implementers of curriculum and scorers of the national exam. There was very little involvement in national curriculum creation, and teachers claimed that they were not invited to write curriculum because they were not viewed as specialists in curriculum. The teachers did not see the national curricula as beneficial because it blocked creativity of the teachers and did not consider student differences. Teachers indicated that their involvement in curriculum efforts was important because it created ownership and they grew as professionals when they were involved with these types of projects.

The Kennedy and Hui (2006) study was a program analysis of specific training of site-based curriculum leaders in Hong Kong. Two hundred and twenty-eight curriculum leaders in Hong Kong, 83% female, 17% male, were given a Chinese version of the 12 item short-form *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (TSE) (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990),

referred to as the C-TSE (Kennedy & Hui, p. 121). The results of this study indicated that up-to-date knowledge and hands on practice were related to increased self-efficacy in the curriculum leaders. Kennedy and Hui (2006) concluded that developing teacher self-efficacy is an important objective of professional learning. Additionally, teachers needed to believe that they had power to influence reform. Bandura's (1977; 1993) work regarding the importance of mastery as a component of self-efficacy is supported by these results.

The Carl (2005) study investigated the concept of teacher voice in curriculum development and whether or not teacher input is truly honored in curriculum development. The context of the study was South Africa where a national curriculum has been phased-in over a ten-year period. Carl used a mixed methods approach to study the level of involvement of teachers in curriculum development. Teachers who completed the questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed that they should be involved in curriculum development from the ground up, even on a national level. Teachers indicated a strong desire to have their voices heard and not have curriculum handed to them, and they indicated they were not listened to in matters of curriculum development. Teachers stated they could contribute to curriculum that would be more relevant to their students, and that if they were involved in creating the curriculum, they would have more ownership over the curriculum.

While these three studies are in Africa, Hong Kong, and Botswana and each country has different demographic characteristics, all point to similar results. In the three studies, teachers were seen as implementers, not as creators, of curriculum. The Kennedy and Hui research (2006) in Hong Kong actually advocates for specific training in

curriculum development, but only for a very specific group of people, not for every teacher. This study demonstrates the importance of mastery learning through curriculum development, but at the same time only allows that opportunity for a few people who are seen as capable. The product will eventually be handed down to teachers, which the teachers in the Carl study indicated made them feel like they had no voice and were not capable.

All three studies establish a relationship between curriculum development at the teachers' level and teacher self-efficacy: when level of mastery is specifically attended to, teachers do experience increase in self-efficacy. These studies also show that teachers want to be involved and that their ownership increases when they are involved in curriculum development.

Curriculum Development and Implementation

In an environmental education, quantitative study, Gruver and Luloff (2008) considered the Pennsylvania watershed curriculum. Their research contained some important findings regarding teacher efficacy and curriculum materials that can be extended to materials used to teach writing. This study was based on the concept that the more confident teachers are about their subject knowledge and materials used, the more confidence they will have teaching that subject. Gruver and Luloff (2008) defined curricular behavior as teachers' ability to teach beyond basic standards and materials. In other words, a teacher who exhibits high curricular behavior sought a wide range of materials and took substantial time in preparing lessons to meet the needs of students. The dependent variable in the study was the level of curricular behavior. The independent variables were the sociodemographic makeup of the respondents. There were four

statements regarding the teaching of watershed curriculum that teachers were asked to self-rate on a 7-point Likert scale. These statements included items such as "I welcome students questions" and "I am at a loss when trying to help students understand watersheds" (Gruver & Luloff, 2008, p. 4). These statements were designed to measure components of teacher self-efficacy.

Two hundred and twenty-two responses were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Results indicated that teachers with high self-efficacy taught beyond the standards and taught more than expected. Further, the study indicated that teachers who were confident in their content knowledge and felt they understood their content well enough to communicate it to their students interacted more with their curriculum. Additionally, the teachers with the highest levels of self-efficacy also felt comfortable in making adjustments to the curriculum to meet the needs of their students (Gruver & Luloff, 2008).

The Gruver and Luloff (2008) study had two important implications for curriculum development. First, in order to affect student achievement, teachers had to know when and how to adjust their content and curriculum to meet the needs of their students. This research indicated teachers need to feel comfortable with their content knowledge in order to do this. Additionally, teachers with high self-efficacy also have high curricular behavior and used multiple resources to meet the instructional needs of students.

Shkedi's (1996) case study of five women and two men illustrated an in depth view of teachers in the process of curriculum development. The seven teachers were in the process of creating a school-based adaptation of a curriculum developed by an

external agency. Shkedi (1996) defined three dilemmas or dimensions of teachers'

thinking as they make decisions about curriculum: content (T-C), content and milieu (T-

CM), and content and the student (T-CS). Shkedi used the term "commonplaces" to refer

to a cluster or group of people that all share a common identity and because of that shared

identity have shared values. For example, a teacher is a commonplace and teachers, by

virtue of being teachers, have similar values, concerns, and needs. This categorization

does not mean that all teachers are the same, but they do have a certain amount of shared

identity. According to Shkedi (1996), "there are always two commonplaces in a

curriculum decision" (p. 700). When teachers think about the curriculum planning

process, a dilemma occurred between the teacher and the content. Content referred to

any outside information, such as a textbook or curriculum guide; content and milieu

refers to societal expectations to impart values through education or a school expectation

to cover certain content; content and student dilemmas are generally centered on

students' abilities to understand content due to background knowledge. Shkedi (1996)

observed the teachers as they worked with a coordinator to alter the prescribed

curriculum so that it would work for them and their students. Every time the teachers had

discussions about the content, he recorded the type of dilemma they were having and

how, based on that dilemma, the teachers changed or made adjustments to the prescribed

curriculum. For example, a teacher who is concerned about students' ability to

understand the complex content of a passage is raising a dilemma about content vis-à-vis

the student.

The purpose of the curriculum workshop was to adapt the curriculum and create a

student workbook for use with the commercial curriculum. At the conclusion of the six

workshop meetings, Shkedi (1996) found that of 206 total teacher comments, 87 (42%) were classified as T-C or content dilemmas and 100 (49%) were classified as T-CS or content vis-à-vis student dilemmas. This result supported the notion that outside developers do not always understand individual student needs, as half of curriculum dilemmas were centered around teachers' concerns about their students' ability to access the content. Shkedi concluded that education leaders need to value this type of teacher workshop because it creates a way for teachers to be authentically involved in school-based adaptations of the curriculum, which were creative and considered student need. This type of curriculum adaptation was seen in the Bage et al. (1999) studies and in the studies from other countries (Kennedy & Hui, 2006; Carl, 2005; Mosothwane, 2012) that showed that teachers take more ownership in curriculum that they help to design.

In a second study, Shkedi (2006) used the data from the 1996 case studies, but focused on the data through a different lens. The Jewish Values Program (an external curriculum developer) designed curriculum based on their own philosophy of how the material should be taught, sent the units to schools, and conducted initial trainings for the teachers. While overall the teachers responded positively to the materials, the materials were to be taught by teachers who already had a great deal of knowledge about both Jewish texts and Jewish values. Additionally, the teachers had the lens of their own personal interpretation of text and the values. Both the teachers' personal knowledge and values affected not only which texts they taught, but also how they taught certain texts. Some teachers adopted and taught the entire curriculum, while others chose specific sections, and still others did not teach any of the new curriculum. "In other words,

teachers absorb and adopt those elements that match their world-views and perceptions, and ignore or reject those elements that don't" (p. 725).

Ultimately, teachers taught the components of the curriculum that fit with their personal value set and those about which they already had knowledge. This finding was supported by the Bage et al.'s (1999) results: No matter what teachers are given in terms of curriculum materials or even demands placed upon them by external sources, the choices teachers make are very individual. In the case of the teachers in Shkedi's (2006) study, their individual values led to the choices that they made in the classroom. Both Shkedi's (1996; 2006) original research and his follow-up study supported the importance of teacher involvement in curriculum development and argued against the idea that external agencies can create suitable packaged materials. Additionally, Shkedi's (2006) model of allowing teachers time to make adjustments to previously designed curriculum supported Bandura's (1977, 1993) tenets of improving self-efficacy through performance accomplishment.

Curriculum Development and Teacher Self-efficacy

White's (2000) case study further supports the concept that prescribed curriculum in a writing classroom does not facilitate student learning or teacher self-efficacy. White studied two different teachers with very different teaching styles. Both teachers had a great deal of content knowledge but perceived their roles as teachers of writing very differently. The first teacher had a very teacher-centered classroom where he delivered the instruction. The teacher thrived on structure and because of the demands of the system in which he worked (England) he was required to develop an "increasingly prescribed curriculum" (p. 19). The researcher observed that while the teacher was able

to deliver well-informed instruction on writing, in the observations of student interactions about their writing, the students did not demonstrate commitment to their writing. Students were essentially going through the motions of sharing their writing. They did not seem to be invested in the writing, and the teacher-centered structure of the classroom was reflected in their work. For example, when two students were observed in peer response, they seemed eager to move to the other student's story. There was no dialogue about actually improving stories, and the students only seemed to stick to a basic story script provided them by the teacher; there was no passion displayed in their writing.

In contrast, a second teacher, who also had excellent content knowledge, operated a more student-centered classroom. The author noted that the teacher "sometimes directs, but she is willing also to adopt the role of learner, or of fellow-writer. Pupils switch easily into a teaching role" (p. 20). This style was seen when the teacher asked a student to tell the class more about how he creates rhyme in poetry. The teacher, very effortlessly, prompts and encourages the student to share what he knows about writing and his techniques as a writer with the class.

The differences in the two teachers in White's (2000) study can be described as more than individual differences among teachers and the roles that their personalities played in classrooms. Their interactions with students are a demonstration of their self-efficacy. Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to be more sensitive to student needs and spend less time delivering academics, while teachers with lower self-efficacy tend to have more rigidly structured classrooms with little student autonomy (Guo, Connor, Yang, Roehrig, & Morrison, 2012). The second teacher demonstrated the idea of being responsive to student needs, moving between different roles in the classroom as needed,

which demonstrates her level of self-efficacy. Additionally, the teacher showed high personal mastery, going beyond the basics of the curriculum and reflecting on how her students are interacting with the content in the classroom (Gruver & Luloff, 2008), and, therefore, high self-efficacy.

While self-efficacy can be improved in teachers, it can also be damaged. An important study from Brindley and Jasinki-Schneider (2002) demonstrated how teacher efficacy can be molded by materials. The purpose of the study was to determine how teachers balance their personal knowledge and beliefs about teaching writing with the pressures of the state exam and the very prescriptive nature of the district writing curriculum. The authors chose fourth-grade teachers for their research because in their state, fourth grade students take a state-wide writing assessment. The pressures to do well on this particular exam were extreme: School test scores were distributed to media outlets, school rankings and funds were tied to test scores, and students could even be retained for failing. Because there was so much at stake, the school district developed curriculum guides and in-service courses were designed to help teachers assist students. Instead of focusing instruction to help students become better writers, the materials and courses narrowly focused on strategies designed to increase test results.

Brindley and Jasinki-Schneider (2002) designed a mixed-methods questionnaire, which included a Likert-type rating scale and teacher comments. One hundred and twenty-five surveys were recorded and mean scores were calculated for each question to determine general trends. Teacher comments were first separated into two major categories about teaching writing—comments that dealt with instruction and comments that dealt with perspectives on writing development.

The results indicated that teachers who understand how to teach writing and those who do not, suffer equally when they are given curriculum that emphasizes certain aspects of writing instruction. The study found that teachers who understood the theories behind good writing instruction ignored or did not employ those methods or make any additions to the prescribed district curriculum even when the prescribed curriculum needed to be supplemented. For example, "68% of the teachers indicated that drawing was necessary [as a prewriting technique], but none of the teachers included drawing as part of their description of students' writing behaviors, nor did they list drawing as part of their instruction" (p. 333). This is extremely significant because it showed that even when teachers know the best methods for student instruction and have high self-efficacy in regards to writing instruction, they were reluctant to make additions to prescribed curriculum, especially when directed not to.

Another significant outcome of the Brindley and Jasinki-Schneider (2002) study was that teachers "felt they were modeling more often, and their writing instruction had moved beyond the basics despite survey results that revealed that isolated skills, grammar, and workbook instruction were still prevalent" (p. 334). This observation demonstrated the impact that some materials can have on teacher practice. In addition to affecting how teachers perceive writing instruction, the research also revealed, "teachers' perceptions of writing development are vulnerable under high-stakes pressure" (p. 338). Even teachers who may have had high self-efficacy, lose their ability to accurately judge both their instruction and their students' achievement when someone else is deciding how instruction should look. The materials and training in this study were designed only to increase scores on a statewide assessment, not designed to produce students who had a

wide range or depth of writing skills. Assessments can truly narrow the curriculum, and if those assessments are not measuring high-level skills, then the assessments may be narrowing curriculum in ways that are not in the best interest of students.

Synthesis

This literature review has described, in three sections, how writing teachers may describe their practice of writing instruction. First, as Bandura (1977, 1993) made clear, self-efficacy underlies and affects most of human behavior. Self-efficacy is a concept so powerful that it affects the goals individuals set, how they see failures, and how they deal with stressful situations. Self-efficacy was important to this study because writing teachers who have high self-efficacy described their writing instruction in a specific way. Numerous researchers (Bandura, 1993; Goddard et al., 2000; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000) have shown there is a direct link between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement as measured by state assessments. The most powerful way to increase teacher self-efficacy is through personal experience or mastery learning (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, teachers who believe they have the power to create positive outcomes no matter which students they are teaching will have better results than those who do not.

Secondly, this literature review has looked at studies that examined the art of teaching (Bage et al., 1999) and shown that teaching is a constant negotiation between what is written on paper and on the spot teaching decisions that require professional judgment. When teaching writing is involved, teachers describe this negotiation in very unique ways. Research in the area of teacher involvement in curriculum development and teacher voice, especially in countries with national standards and curricula, indicates that teachers are rarely consulted in the decision making process and this lack of

inclusion becomes disempowering. In some countries, the more nationalized standards, assessments, and curricula have become, the less opportunity teachers have to participate in the development of that curricula and those assessments. The degree to which teachers feel they are in control over what happens in their classrooms and the level of control they have in developing the curriculum to meet the needs of their students are important factors in teacher empowerment, which can contribute to a teacher's sense of self-efficacy.

CCSS "represents the first major reform effort in the United States that attempted to actualize the recommendations for the National Commission on Writing" (Graham, Early, & Wilcox, 2014, p. 970) and has the potential of influencing both teaching and learning in the U.S. and the ways which teachers describe their instruction. The CCSS prioritize writing (Applebee 2013; Conley 2014; Mo et al. 2014) and the need to create students who are considered college ready because they are able to produce something with the information they are receiving (Conley, 2014). In order to create the type of student who can be successful in high school, college and beyond, teachers need to teach students to write using specific strategies and best practices that have been found to be effective (Graham & Perin, 2007; Murphy & Smith; 2015). Graham and Perin (2007) in an important meta-analysis outlined eleven strategies that are effective in teaching writing to adolescents. These strategies have been reinforced by other researchers (Murphy & Smith, 2015; Smith et al., 2013). The best teachers are those who understand the interplay of good instructional strategies and the role of standards and assessment in curriculum development (Shulman, Whitaker, & Lew, 2002) and will find positive agency or ways to have more involvement in their curriculum and teach beyond the

standard curriculum (Gruver & Luloff, 2008).

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

This study used a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach to collect and analyze the data. Seidman (2013) identifies four themes that underlie and provide a rationale for a phenomenological approach using interviewing. He writes that the researcher 1) "focuses on the experiences of participants and the meaning they make of that experience;" 2) "strive[s] to understand a person's experience from [his or her] point of view;" 3) provides for the "the reconstituting of lived experience;" and 4) allows for "making meaning of lived experience" (pp. 16-18).

This method works best for this study as the goal is to explore how teachers describe their writing instruction. The best way to accomplish this goal is to focus on the actual experiences of individuals who are currently teaching writing and make meaning based on their experiences.   The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine how exemplary 11th grade English Language Arts teachers describe their writing instruction to identify ways in which teacher explanations of their writing instruction contribute to a broader understanding of curricular implementation and standards implementation.   This study is important because currently this is a gap in the research and there are no qualitative studies that connect teacher explanations of exemplary practice to quantitative research about effective writing instruction.

Researcher Background

I began my teaching career in 1993 at one of the highest achieving high schools in the local school district. During my twelve years as a high school English teacher, I had the opportunity to teach most grade levels as well as most student ability levels. I taught regular level freshmen and sophomores, as well as honors sophomores and proficiency

juniors. Early in my teaching career, I earned a Masters in Teaching English with an emphasis in Teaching Writing and, more recently, became a licensed educational administrator. Five years into teaching, I took a National Writing Project Summer Institute, which further developed my own skills in teaching writing to students as well as helped me to become a leader at my school site. I eventually became a Department Leader and ultimately left the classroom in 2006 to become the 7-12 ELA Program Coordinator in my district. In my current job role, I work with English teachers at 30 schools sites in everything from implementation of specific district initiatives to standards to how to teach reading and writing on a daily basis.

I have lived the experience of being handed the first set of standards my state ever produced, to being on the revision committees multiple times, to now being in the position of rolling out CCSS and offering training for the teachers in my district. I have a deep understanding of not only how changes in education and standards have impacted teachers and changed expectations, but also of how those changes are being translated into what is demanded of students on a daily basis.

Setting and Context

Understanding the curricular context in which 11th grade teachers function, provides a richer understanding of teachers' descriptions of their writing instruction. Beginning in the spring of 2015, students take End of Course examinations in English, ELA I (reading) and ELA II (writing), at the end of their sophomore year. This integrated reading and writing test replaced a stand-alone High School Proficiency examination in writing that students were previously required to pass to graduate from high school. Students who do not pass as sophomores require additional writing support

and remediation as juniors. Additionally, the state has added the ACT plus Writing for all junior students as a measure of career and college readiness.

Despite the high-stakes testing at the high school level, curriculum in English Language Arts classes is not decided at the district level, but at the school and department level. Writing curriculum, for the most part, is suggested and how and what is taught is decided by individual teachers.

In August of 2010, the state officially adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and in the district Curriculum and Instruction (C & I) office preparations were already underway to prepare all educators for the massive transition to this new set of standards. In addition to the new set of state standards, a local school district strategic plan had just been released, and one of the first items for action stated, "1.1.4. A comprehensive K-12 Writing Plan will be implemented that includes instruction on writing as a process for different audiences and with a variety of purposes (i.e., narrate, explain/inform, and argue)" (XXXX County School District, 2010, p. 12). A model and plan that centered on teacher experts to create writing curriculum was presented to the local district Deputy Superintendent to meet the strategic plan initiative.

The process of creating a district-based writing program began with the creation of the writing philosophy and a framework for lesson design (see Appendix A). This philosophy was created by looking at the National Writing Project's (NWP) framework for writing instruction, research on what it means when writing is taught instead of assigned, and models of writing professional development used in the district at the time. Multiple district stakeholders representing various departments and levels, including English Language Learners and university-level instructors, vetted the document and

revisions were made based on their feedback. The superintendent endorsed the document as the district writing philosophy.

Twenty-five teachers were tasked with creating district writing curriculum. They attended two days of initial training on the philosophy and the lesson framework and were taught how to write lessons using the specific template that had been designed for the project. The teachers helped to modify the lesson plan template during their training.

While there were many high-quality, peer-reviewed lessons to choose from at the 11th grade level in the District Writing Program, these materials were offered to teachers as a choice: there were no district or school mandates to use the materials. Teachers could use the lessons in the program, they could teach curriculum purchased by the school site, or they could create their own curriculum based on decisions within their department or grade-level team.

Study Participants

In the school district where the study takes place, there are fourteen local high schools. Eleven are traditional high schools, one is an admission only career and tech education high school, one is an admission only school on a community college campus, and one has multiple campuses serving at-risk populations. The researcher decided to represent 50% of the local high school population and select seven exemplary teachers who teach 11th grade English classes as participants in the study. Study participants were selected in the following manners. First, high school principals and assistant principals were simultaneously informed of the study and invited to nominate participants for the study via email. The email first described the goals of the study and then asked for participation in the study: "In order to select teachers for the study, I need your help. I

would like to invite you to submit the name of the 11th grade English teacher on your staff that received a "highly effective" evaluation in the 14-15 school year and that you believe is an exemplary teacher of writing. All teachers will be given pseudonyms and schools will not be identified in the study or research." A follow up email was sent to those principals and assistant principals who did not respond to the first email. Eight principals and six assistant principals eventually responded with teacher names.

High school department leaders were also informed of the study and asked to submit the name of the 11th grade teacher they believed was an exemplary writing teacher. Department leaders were told they could submit their own names. Ten department leaders responded with teacher names.

The researcher selected the seven final participants from the list of names submitted by site administrators and department leaders. In all cases, the teachers selected had been nominated for the study by at least two people. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction as well as literacy professors at the local university could have been consulted to verify names that were submitted (Newell, VandeHeide, & Olsen, 2014), but the researcher did not feel additional verification was necessary. The teachers all had a reputation of excellence in the district. All teachers agreed to the study in an initial email request; therefore, no additional selections needed to be made.

Eleventh grade was selected for this study because it is the grade in the high school where writing curriculum has the most potential to be influenced by external forces due to high stakes assessments and pressures to have students prepared for college and careers. The only criteria for inclusion in the study was that teachers were currently teaching at least one class of 11th grade English.

Following are descriptions of each participant:

Isabella began her teaching career in 1985 with substitute teaching and adult education classes. She began her first full-time teaching job in 1987 and has spent time working both in and out of the district. She currently teaches at one of the higher SES schools in the district where 87.75% of students graduate (Department of Education, 2015). She has a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education with an English major and a business minor. Although she has 32 graduate credits and constantly participates in professional development courses, she has never pursued her Masters. She was the only teacher in the study who is not currently teaching Advanced Placement (AP) English. She teaches regular juniors, regular freshmen, and a class of senior who are still trying to pass the writing portion of the high school proficiency exam. While she has probably been teaching longer than other teachers in the study, she has also had some career breaks and projects her retirement in 2020.

Sandra is in her twenty-ninth year of teaching. She has a Bachelor's degree, but at the time of the interview, was two months away from finishing her Masters in Curriculum and Instruction with and emphasis on Secondary Reading. She noted how excited she was about finishing, but also that it had been a challenge for her because it was online and doing something that required so much technology as she prepared for her retirement had been difficult. She completed her National Board Certification in 2013. She is currently teaching juniors in AP Language and Composition and regular seniors. Sandra taught middle school for six years before moving to the high school level. The school where she is currently teaching is considered a mid-level school, where

approximately 86% of the students graduate from high school (Department of Education, 2015).

Lisa has been teaching for fifteen years. She has a Bachelor's degree in English and Theater Speech Communication. Her route to teaching was not as traditional as some. She returned to college after her youngest child went to first grade: "I was a stay at home mom, and I was getting so bored." Lisa received her Masters in Secondary Education and began teaching high school English. After four years, the opportunity to teach AP English came up, and she agreed to teach the class. Currently, Lisa teaches AP Language and Composition, honors sophomore English, and a class of seniors who still need to pass the high school writing proficiency test. Lisa also teaches at one of the higher SES in the district with an 86.23% graduation rate (Department of Education, 2015). She received her National Board Certification in 2010.

Jason also describes himself as a non-traditional student. He earned his Bachelor's degree while working full-time at a job that offered full tuition reimbursement. His Bachelor's degree is in Secondary Education with an English major and a minor in general science. He explains that he was simply fascinated by science and the fact that his employer was paying the bill gave him more leeway to pursue things he was interested in. He then pursued a Master's degree in English and transitioned to teaching, first spending four years teaching at a community college. He is in his twelfth year as a high school teacher. He is National Board Certified and teaches juniors in AP Language and Composition. The school where Jason teaches has, over the time he has taught there, become a school that truly serves a working-class population. What was

once a suburb of new homeowners is now an aging neighborhood of renters. The graduation rate, however, is still 84% (Department of Education, 2015).

Terri started college with the intention of being a sports broadcaster. But she soon realized that a career in the media would force her to move to a big city, and she was not interested in that, so she became an English major to go into Law, another career she soon changed her mind about because she was tired of going to school. She jokes that this makes no sense because now she "goes to school forever." She decided on teaching when she thought of all her phenomenal high school teachers, and her desire to be like them made her decide to pursue teaching. She has National Board Certification. She spent four years teaching middle school before moving to the high school where she has been for the past fifteen years, one of the newest in the district. The high school is comprised mostly of two income households in a suburban area. The school has an 80% graduation rate (Department of Education, 2015). Terri teaches juniors in AP Language and Composition and also regular juniors in a combined class with a US history teacher called American Studies. She also teaches regular freshmen.

Meredith is a second-career teacher. Her Bachelor's degree is in Speech Communication and Journalism, and she had a career in advertising prior to having children. After staying home with her children, she decided she did not want to return to advertising: she sought something more personally rewarding. A love of reading and writing prompted a return to school to obtain a Masters degree in the Teaching of English with an emphasis in writing. She has been teaching for sixteen years, the majority of those years at her current school, one of the highest SES and most successful schools in the district. The school where she teaches boasts an 88.17% graduation rate (Department

of Education, 2015). The majority of students who graduate not only go on to college, but many are accepted at some of the top schools in the country. Meredith currently teaches juniors in AP English and regular freshmen.

Lilly has taught for nineteen years, all of them at her current school. She student taught there and does not expect she will ever leave. She teaches at one of the lowest SES schools in the district. It is a Title I school where all of the students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. It is truly a neighborhood school, and the only school where there are no busses because every student lives close enough to school to walk. The school is considered a minority majority population, with 69.8% of students being Hispanic. The graduation rate is 67% (Department of Education, 2015). Lilly teaches here because she understands these students. She explained that her own background is different: she did not go to college because she was poor. "I was a National Merit Scholar, but I didn't go to college because I was poor. I was brown. It wasn't expected, and I didn't even know what that meant." Instead, Lilly got married and divorced. She did go to college as a single mom with two babies. Her Bachelor's degree is in Secondary Education with double major in English and math, and she received the University Medal. The Medal is the University's most prestigious award and is awarded to the senior with the highest overall GPA. Lilly noted that despite her obvious academic ability she did not continue her education after her Bachelor's degree. She currently teaches juniors in AP Language and Composition and regular seniors.

Data Collection

This study used a series of two interviews with seven individual teachers. Data collection began in October of 2015, after receiving IRB approval, and was concluded in December of 2015.

Teacher interviews. Phenomenological teacher interviews using Seidman's (2013) model were the method of data collection used for this study. The purpose of the interview is to "understand the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2013, p. 9). In order to have an opportunity to both understand an experience and give participants a chance to make meaning, I used an open-ended, two-interview model.

During the first interview, approximately 90-minutes, participants were asked to "tell as much about him or herself in light of the topic" (Seidman, 2013, p. 21). Teachers were asked to "Describe how you became an English teacher" and "When did you first see yourself as a teacher of writing?" The first interview was designed to "concentrate on the details of the participants; present lived experience in the topic area of the study" (Seidman, 2013, p. 21). The purpose was to reconstruct the job of the writing teacher, so teachers were asked how they prepare to teach writing or what a class period looks like when they are teaching a writing lesson. They were asked to describe what their students looked like and what they had to think about as they prepared lessons for their students.

The purpose of the second interview was to ask participants "to reflect on the meaning of their experience" (Seidman, 2013, p. 22) and was scheduled for an hour. In most cases, the second interview was scheduled within two to three weeks after the first interview so that the information from the first interview was still fresh in the minds of

the participants. Participants were asked to read the transcript from the first interview during the second interview in order to facilitate the reflective process. Participants were asked to highlight anything in the transcript that they felt described them as a teacher of writing. After participants had time to read and highlight their transcripts, the second interview opened with the question, "Now that you have had a chance to read your transcript, can you point me to something specifically in the transcript that really exemplifies your writing instruction or shows you at your best as a teacher of writing?" The participants were then asked to explain why they selected the part they did. Because participants were supposed to reflect on the information from the first interview and make meaning of that in the second interview, the questions for the second interview (see Appendix B) were designed to encourage participants to go back to the transcript from the first interview.

Teacher interviews were recorded and transcribed. While teacher interviews were intended to be open-ended conversations, a list of questions was created (see Appendix B) to open and focus the conversations. The majority of the teacher interviews were conducted in the classroom of the teacher participant. Being in their classrooms allowed teacher participants the opportunity to access lesson plans or other materials during the interview. I did not interview Jason or Terri at their school sites. Terri was interviewed at a local restaurant during the early afternoon hours to minimize travel time for both of us. Jason was interviewed first in a meeting room and then in the library at another school, after a meeting where we were both present, for convenience.

Data Analysis

The interviews were analyzed for themes using Creswell's (2014) six steps of data analysis in qualitative research.   The six steps are organizing the data, reading the data, coding the data, generating themes, representing the themes in narrative, and interpreting the themes.

Step one is organizing the data, and it has two important purposes: to keep data from being misplaced and to ensure the anonymity of the participants. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant for the purpose of the study. A file was created on the researcher's computer for recordings and transcribed files. As interviews were recorded, a number that signifies both the date and a random recording number were automatically assigned to the file by the recording program in the saving process. Data for individual participants was saved using their initials and a number to designate the interview number (e.g., rec_20151112_145814.lf1). The only record of participant identity is an excel spreadsheet where teacher nominations were recorded. The teachers selected for the study were highlighted and the pseudonyms used to identify the teachers in the study were recorded on the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is stored in the PI's office until the expiration period. All work on the data was completed directly on the hard copies of transcribed files using pseudonyms of the participants.   Any names that were on data were removed prior to the file being saved. Hard copies are stored in a second, locked hanging file in the PI's office. Data in digital form will be deleted after the storage period. Data in hard copy will be shredded after the storage period.

Basic demographic information (years teaching, age, and teaching history) was collected at the beginning of the first interview to offer a complete description of the

participants, not as part of data analysis. This information remained on the original

transcription. The researcher reminded participants to not state their names in the

interview, but only their demographic information.

Creswell's second step is to read the data. The purpose is for the researcher to

reflect on the data as a whole. The first set of interviews was read quickly before the

second interview. This reading was necessary so that the researcher could point the

participants to different sections of the transcript and demonstrate an understanding or

refer back to conversations during the first interview. This reading gave the researcher a

general understanding of the interviews.

After the second interview, the researcher read and highlighted the data. This

analysis began the first of step three, the process of coding the data. During the first

reading of the coding, the researcher looked for responses that were most frequent or

prevalent and then looked for responses in the second interview that supported those in

the first. During coding, the researcher made notes on the transcribed files regarding

patterns. Then the researcher returned to all the highlighted portions of the data and

wrote a margin note with an explanation of what that meant or what was happening.

The researcher pulled a small sample from the data to have read by a graduate

student in literacy unconnected to the study to check analysis of the data and to ensure

both reliability and trustworthiness in the analysis.   The researcher pulled three-page

samples from three different participants and asked the reader to read and highlight the

text for anything that described writing instruction. After the sample reading, the

researcher checked her transcripts next to the readers to ensure that the same lines were

being highlighted.   On individual transcripts the alignment between the researcher and

the outside reader ranged from 50-82%. Differences in what was highlighted were

attributed to the fact that the researcher was more conservative and highlighted less on

the transcripts than the outside reader. Overall, the researcher felt confident with her data

analysis because the outside reader was highlighting in the same chunks of text that the

researcher did.

In step four, the researcher reread the margin notes and used the notes to create a

list of themes for analysis (Creswell, 2014). The researcher simply read the margin notes

and thought about how the note connected to writing instruction. For example, a note

that said, "teacher writes in front of students," prompted the theme, "modeling is key to

instruction." An ideal list of themes is five to seven (Creswell, 2014; Lichtman, 2013).

An initial list of ten themes was generated from the data analysis simply by combing

through the highlighted notes.

The researcher decided to present the information through a process of narrowing

and combining themes and deciding if the data truly supported the themes sufficiently.

For this study, the themes are presented individually and participants' words are used

liberally to support the themes that resulted from the data analysis. From the initial list of

ten themes, the researcher decided to present eight. Two themes were immediately

combined into one and one theme did not seem to be supported strongly enough across

all participants. In order for a theme to be considered, it needed to be supported by the

most of the participants. Because it is necessary to show balance between the

participants by representing them all as equally as possible, the researcher kept a tally

sheet and maintained balance between participants, ensuring each participant is equally

represented in the study. The researcher chose themes that were strongly represented by

every participant in the study; therefore, balance between the participants was easy to achieve.

Creswell (2014) suggested that it is not only important to state and describe themes, but to also show how themes are connected and to analyze how the themes fit together. The themes in the data analysis section are presented in the way in which the researcher came to believe teachers talk about their writing instruction: they talk about themselves as teachers of writing, they talk about their students, and they talk about their curriculum. The last theme, that of teachers as reflective practitioners, shows teachers' ability to reflect on what makes writing instruction effective and also shows how the themes of the study are interconnected.

The last step of the data analysis is making an interpretation (Creswell, 2014) based on the data. The themes have been interpreted and compared to the findings from the literature review. The researcher has referenced pertinent literature within the context of each theme throughout the data analysis chapter.

Limitations

The researcher chose to interview seven teachers for the study because this represented approximately half of the high schools in the district where the study took place. The data for the themes selected was consistent across the seven participants; however, future researchers could expand the number of participants in the study or add different voices to the study, such as students of the teachers. Additional participants or voices may produce additional or different themes.

The researcher also chose to interview exemplary teachers and created criteria for selecting those teachers that first specified a highly effective evaluation and then asked

principals and assistant principals to select the person they felt was the most exemplary writing teacher of the 11th grade English teachers on their staffs. Department leaders were asked also asked to nominate the most exemplary writing teacher. The criteria of a highly effective evaluation may have prevented some teachers who were exemplary writing teachers but had not received highly effective evaluations from being nominated. Changing the nomination criteria to selection by colleagues or even students could have changed the pool of potential participants. Future studies could consider different selection criteria or reverse the order of the selection process, allowing department leaders and colleagues to nominate an exemplary writing teacher first and then have the nomination verified by an administrator with the teacher evaluation component.

The position of the researcher, the English Language Arts Program Coordinator in the district, may have influenced the participants and what they were willing to say. While the researcher holds a non-evaluative position and felt the teachers were honest and open in the study, some participants may have believed that the researcher had positional power and, therefore, were more guarded in their interview responses. Expanding the study in the future to other areas where the researcher may not be viewed as having positional authority or power may produce different results.

To truly examine teachers' writing instruction, other methods of qualitative research such as ethnography or case studies that would allow long-term and truly deep studies of teachers would need to be employed. An individual teacher's instruction may change over the course of the year as testing season approaches. The only way a researcher would see this is to be embedded in a long-term study of an individual teacher. While the phenomenological interview approach allowed participant description, to truly

examine teachers as writing other methods of data collection, such as observation or lesson plan analysis, would need to be employed.

Every study has limitations. Although this study had some limitations, the results were informative. The goal of the study, to examine how 11th grade English teachers describe their writing instruction, was met. The teachers' voices and descriptions will contribute in important ways to the conversations around the role of exemplary teachers in effective writing instruction.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Seven exemplary 11th grade English teachers were interviewed and asked to describe their writing instruction. Their interviews were analyzed for themes. Eight themes could be strongly supported with multiple participant voices. The following themes were supported in the analysis: (1) exemplary writing teachers are readers and writers; (2) exemplary writing teachers are passionate and personal about their work; (3) writing is at the center of curricula; (4) exemplary writing teachers connect reading and writing; (5) exemplary writing teachers use models and modeling; (6) exemplary writing teachers are process oriented and communication oriented; and (7) writing-driven, high-stakes assessments can facilitate curriculum planning. The final theme is intended to show that when teachers are given the opportunity to describe their instruction and then reflect on that instruction that their reflection will support research-based best practice in writing instruction. The last theme, therefore, is "exemplary writing teachers are reflective practitioners."

What follows is a synthesis of all participants' interviews. The themes are presented in the way I believe teachers talk about their writing instruction: They talk about themselves as teachers of writing, they talk about their students, and they talk about their curriculum. The last theme, that of teachers as reflective practitioners, shows teachers' ability to reflect on what makes writing instruction effective and also shows how the themes of the study are interconnected in the way teachers describe what is important in their writing instruction. Because I chose themes that were strongly represented by every participant, the participants' voices are equally represented across

themes. The last theme is intended to show interconnectedness and reflection; therefore, all participants have been included.

Exemplary Writing Teachers are Readers and Writers

No two teachers in the study came to teaching the same way. Terri went to college right after high school. Jason was working full time at another job and pursued his teaching degree. Meredith and Lisa both returned to college after staying home with children. Regardless of how and when they came to teaching, all of the teachers in the study chose teaching. They all pursued teaching at some point in their lives because of a love for reading and writing, and often because of an early model of a great writing teacher.   While some teachers may have originally entered teaching because they more strongly identified with teaching literature, all the teachers in the study have become exemplary writing teachers by understanding themselves both as reading and writing teachers, a process that involved first seeing themselves as readers and writers and then feeling confident about their ability to teach writing.

The influence of a great teacher was common among participants. Although she was good student, Lilly did not enjoy school and certainly did not grow up dreaming of being a teacher "Obviously, I was a pretty good student, but I wasn't a good student in that I hated school. I hated most of my teachers. I grew up in a small town where all my teachers were coaches and they basically taught so they could coach." But there was a teacher who helped change Lilly's mind, "But I had a senior English teacher who, in many ways, I think saved my life...She made me just want to learn and want to think and want to do great things and I always was a reader. She turned me on to education. I still do one of her writing assignments. I've changed it, but I do it."

It was thinking about great teachers that helped Terri, who was unsure what she wanted to pursue in college, decide on teaching English. "I always loved English. I love reading. I love writing, and I was originally a creative writing major…[but] then I switched to literature. I thought of all my phenomenal teachers in high school, and I wanted to be them. So that's when I decided to switch."

A love of reading and writing and a sense of self-efficacy about reading and writing also influenced some of the participants' choice to become secondary English teachers. After a career in advertising, Meredith decided to become a teacher because of her personal interest in writing: "I've always like to read and write, and I hoped at the time I would be writing a lot with my students. I'm not writing as much as I thought I would be, but that's how I first decided to become an English teacher." Meredith explained that she was personally interested in nonfiction and journalistic writing and that her personal interest is very well matched to the junior curriculum that she currently teaches.

Sandra knew from the time she was young that she was going to teach. Her father was a teacher and she had an early love of reading: "He was always giving us books and taking us to the library and we were always reading." She explained that she grew up very sheltered on an Indian reservation and books were the way she discovered the outside world. She stated that she knew she wanted to be a teacher, but "I also knew I wanted to teach a subject that I really enjoy, that I felt passionate about." While Sandra was very certain about her passion and her love of reading, becoming a teacher of writing came a bit later. She talked about reading Nancie Atwell's *In the Middle* during her first years of teaching. "I knew that I didn't have a class of fifteen kids. I always had large

classes, but I just really liked the process of getting kids into the [writing] process…and I just started doing it." Sandra talked about continuing to grow as both a writer and a teacher of writing as her students were learning to write: "Instead of handing out assignments and writing, it was just like this whole process. I feel like that's the point where I really started becoming comfortable with the process."

Exemplary Writing Teachers are Passionate and Personal About Their Work

Being an exemplary teacher of writing is hard work. Every teacher pointed me to stacks of papers in their classroom. Every teacher had different tips and strategies for handling their paper load. Some teachers were frustrated by "exterior demands" placed upon them at school sites and at the district level that they knew did not make them better at their jobs. Even when experiencing frustrations at some of the difficulties of the job, every teacher expressed joy at doing what they do every day.

When asked about teaching, Terri said, "The kids are awesome. The kids crack me up. The kids are amazing and I teach high school students. Nobody thinks teenagers are amazing, and I think teenagers are amazing. They make me laugh every day. I shock them every day. They shock me every day. I have one girl—she's so cute. She says, 'Mrs. XXXX, you didn't give me enough feedback on that.' 'What?' 'You give the best feedback. Give me more feedback.' And I have another kid, who everything he does he brings it in to me for feedback: 'You will give me better feedback.' I'm like, 'Dude, I don't have time to do that. Okay, give me your paper.' But it's just that, I mean, the kids are still the best thing about education, about teaching." Exemplary teachers, like Terri, are so committed to their students and what they do for their students that they help them

even when they do not really have time. They help them because they need and want to help them.

Lisa's enthusiasm about her work was almost contagious, "I love it. I love it. I still love to come to work every single day. It's like, 'Let's go to work' just because it is challenging and we always share. If they write something and then have to come up to the podium, I go, 'This is your last soapbox. Who do you think, after high school, where are you going to talk to this many people and no one is throwing oranges?' For them to get up there and share what they wrote, it's like, yeah, that's great. We all give them kudos. It puts a glow—it makes me glow when I see kids who are proud of what they've produced. It's like saying you could do it and it just motivates them to keep doing it." Lisa's payoff for her work is seeing her students' transition and feel confident in themselves as writers. While she admits that she, too, is sometimes bogged down by the daily task of giving lots of feedback to students and sometimes feels frustrated when they only look for grades, she still has found that she sees her students grow as writers by taking the time to give them feedback.

Lilly also described a job that is difficult to do, but students who rely on her feedback and strive to get better. "It's way too much work. It's way too much work, but I like that part. I respond to their writing and they become very used to that and beg me to respond to it. They like response; they want response. And so I spend a lot of time reading and responding to my students. But I love my students and so when I'm responding to them, it's almost like I'm having a discussion with them and I see them in it and they'll come talk to me about it."

Lilly's own passion for writing and what she believes she is helping her students

to achieve was shown when she talked about spending time responding to her students' writing:

> I think stories link us and hold us together and give us hope as a species and so writing and reading their stories is inspiring and humbling, and I feel honored that they trust me. I keep doing it because I know, for me, the ability to write and tell my own stories and not just stories like narrative stories, but to be able to communicate my own perspective and my hopes and my beliefs, that has empowered me and given me a way to fight back and fight for what I care about. And I think I work with students who often feel like they don't have a voice and I feel like I can help them find their voice and develop that voice and fight for themselves. I really love my job. I wouldn't do anything else. I'd probably die doing it. Yeah. That's why I do it.

Lilly talked about the importance of being able to have a voice and that writing was what gave her a voice. She became emotional when she spoke about her role in helping students to form their own voice. For Lilly, responding to her students' work is not just her job, it is personal work.

Sandra explained that her joy in teaching comes from, "learning about kids, their individual selves, through their writing, their struggles, their passions. Learning about myself through learning about them. One of the things that I do at the beginning of the year is I write them a letter and I tell them about myself. I'm a cancer survivor. I grew up on an Indian reservation, and I used to go with my father every Sunday over to his classroom and write on the chalkboards. I used to line up all my little dolls and have a little classroom and play teacher. I tell them all of that in my letter and then I have them

write back to me. I learn so much about them and as the year goes on and I'm interacting with them, I can share that stuff with them." Sandra explained that this personal connection requires a lot of time reading and providing feedback to student work. "I just feel like you connect with them through writing. It's been a great way to connect with them because you can't always interact with every single kid every day because you have big classes. That's the joy of writing but it's also something that is an obstacle because grading all those papers and reading all their stuff [takes time] because I read everything they write. It takes a long time, it's hard, it's grueling, and some days I don't feel like it. That's where I am with writing. I love that part of it and I don't think I've ever lost enthusiasm ever since I started teaching. That's something I feel like I am really proud of." Even though Sandra often feels overwhelmed by the stack of papers in front of her, like other teachers in the study, she is committed to reading and responding to her students' work because she believes if her students have taken the time to write something for her then she owes them the time of her feedback. She looks past the sheer amount of work and thinks about the words her students have chosen to share with her; she considers it a privilege that her students share their writing.

The personal connection that the teachers in the study felt with their students, a connection that is only established and built through the words that they share with each other on paper, is special, and in some ways, propels teachers to do the work they do for their students. The teachers overall expressed that the relationship they have with their students is one that is built from reading their work and that they feel honored that their students allow them to share in their personal lives and thoughts in the way that they do. While the teachers were very determined that their work is important and that their goal

is to produce students who have writing skills, their reasons for putting in the time they do to make that happen were about individual connections to students.

Writing is at the Center of Curricula

Sandra discussed the role of writing in her classroom, "Everything that I do, writing is incorporated. It's a part of everything I do. It's not like we just do writing here and then we read a novel and we never write and we do this. Writing is incorporated in everything. When I plan, I always look at, where is the writing going to fit? How is the writing going to be a part of this? I've never planned anything without thinking of writing." Sandra pointed out many student-created posters in her classroom and discussed how her colleagues may look at those artifacts and assume there is not a lot of writing, but she explained the connections to writing: "It's not just put your stuff on a poster. There's a lot of critical thinking and writing." She pointed out that even though there may be some projects in her classroom that do not appear to be writing centered, writing is always her priority when planning her instruction.

When asked about her planning process, Terri stated, "Writing is a part of every single thing that I create. It just is a part of it. That's your first priority. The kids have to write and they have to be taught how to write, not how to design. It [writing] has to be taught, it has to be modeled, it has to be a focus. It can't just be an after thought." When asked how she incorporates or plans for writing, Terri stated that she starts her planning with thinking about the writing she is going to teach. "If I'm teaching this type of writing, this mode of writing, what book or what pieces work best with it?" Terri does not plan from the book or piece of reading first and then decide what writing goes with it;

rather, she begins her planning with the writing instruction that needs to happen and then determines what texts support her writing goals.

In Jason's classroom, everything leads to writing and becomes a writing assignment. "I turn everything into a writing assignment. I make my students write about everything. I don't have a lot of handouts. I don't use prepared lessons or that kind of stuff. I get them talking about things and then I have them write about things." Because Jason is centered on writing all the time and has a classroom where everything leads to writing or becomes something to write about, he notices that fellow teachers do not teach in the same way he does. "I think my colleagues don't make kids write enough and they need to write a ton. Kids have to write. A ton."

Although CCSS prioritizes writing, the teachers in the study were already teaching curricula that were writing centered because of the influence of AP in their curriculum. The teachers in the study did not feel that the shift to CCSS had affected their curriculum. If anything, they believed that CCSS had validated what they were doing, and they could clearly see the strong alignment between AP and CCSS.

When asked about CCSS, Sandra said, "When CCSS came out it was exciting to me because I actually felt like so much of what they were asking for, I'd been doing in AP Language. It wasn't scary. It wasn't threatening and because I've seen such a value in it and I've really changed as a teacher since teaching AP. When I started teaching AP, one of the things I realized was I really, really have to start writing more with my students in order to help them become better." Sandra, therefore, noted that becoming an AP teacher caused her to shift to a curriculum that was more centered on writing, which made the CCSS easier for her to implement.

Meredith also said that CCSS did not impact her writing instruction for her juniors. "When I first looked at Common Core, I said, 'Geez, it's written to a Language and Comp model,' so it hasn't really changed what I do [with my juniors]." Meredith, however, also teaches regular freshmen, and discussed how CCSS has changed her teaching of writing with her younger students: "I think it's good and bad, just talking about the writing because there are different types of writing pieces that are required now. With freshmen, they're in such a different place developmentally than my AP juniors. If we're doing the three different types of essays that they're supposed to do for Common Core, I feel like they never master any one kind, where before we would hit sort of argumentative literary analysis pretty hard all year. By the end of the year, at least I knew they were going into their sophomore year where they got it, knew what to do, and now, sometimes, I'm not sure if they're doing all different kinds of writing." Meredith's comments described the shift that did not have to occur in teaching for AP teachers, who were already teaching a CCSS-aligned curriculum, but also show the shifts that teachers in other grades and non-AP classes may need to make in order to teach a more CCSS-aligned curriculum.

Meredith went on to explain how teaching AP informs her teaching in her other classes: "I actually carry a lot of my AP stuff into my freshman class. My freshmen do an annotated bibliography just like my juniors do. My juniors do [an] annotated bibliography that works into their research argument essay. I have my freshmen do that as well, but it's a lot more scaffolding." Meredith also discussed how she was planning to bring an AP synthesis prompt into her freshman class with a lot of scaffolding, training them how to do it. Even though earlier she had discussed the difficulties of teaching

many types of writing to students who may not be ready to master more than one type, she was optimistic with her new teaching idea, "I think they can do it."

Lisa was also very unaffected by CCSS. When asked how CCSS impacted her writing instruction, she answered simply, "It hasn't." She then explained in more detail, "It really hasn't because I remember looking at it going, 'I think I've got this covered' [because my class is already really writing heavy]." Lisa, however, does understand that CCSS is a change for many teachers. She expressed a mixture of frustration and understanding of her colleagues and their transition to CCSS: "It didn't impact me but it's a risk by obviously how it would impact a lot of teachers. I'm not even just saying English. History, they're just like, 'What do we do?' It's not that hard. You don't have to know how to write essays. Little short answers. Outline books or produce something." Her frustrations were not uncommon: teachers who have a writing-centered curriculum are quick to feel irritated with teachers who do not spend as much time working with student writing.

Considering the CCSS were developed by studying standards from the AP program (CCSSO, 2010), it is not surprising that the teachers in the study, who were almost all AP teachers, did not feel that CCSS was a shift in their instruction. It is logical that an exemplary writing teacher in an AP class would see the connections between AP and CCSS and look at CCSS as catching up with the AP curricula.

Exemplary Writing Teachers Connect Reading and Writing

The participants in the study discussed their understanding of the relationship between and integration of reading and writing. Meredith starts her year by focusing her students first on learning to read like writers: "…how to read actively, how to pay

attention to what it is that writers are doing, and to understand how that affects us as readers. I spend the entire first semester focusing on that rhetorical type of analysis and close reading because you can't separate the reading from the writing." After her students have a solid foundation in rhetorical analysis and can begin to recognize elements of text that make writing effective, they are able to then incorporate those same elements in their writing. "They do a lot of practice writing and then they can take all of that, what they've learned professional writers do and move it into their own writing in the spring." Meredith does not teach her students to write without spending a lot of time analyzing text first.

Meredith so heavily relies on and values the verbal interactions she has with her students that she stated she cannot imagine teaching in an online classroom where she would not have the opportunity for those interactions on a daily basis. "I think there needs to be a lot of process sharing of how we get to where we need to be, anything from close reading to talking about something and someone will say, 'Well, this is my opinion,' and someone else will say, 'Well, why?' I tell them when you're incorporating quotes and you're writing, imagine that you are just talking to someone rather than actually writing it down because for some reason, weird stuff happens when we write. I put a lot of thought into trying to give them a way to think, and it's not just me, I have them help each other with that so that they can do what it is they need to do in their writing." Meredith explained how important discussion and interaction with peers is throughout the writing process in her classroom. "There's a lot of talk about writing process that goes on in this class that for those kids who are absent, they're just going to miss. It just happens as we are going through the day. If I'm returning an essay, I never

just return an essay. It's a whole process for the entire class period…an exercise they need to do with discussions we have, sharing of someone's writing, things like that, and maybe even talking about how someone ended up coming up with what they did. There's a lot of talk about process." It is clear that not only is Meredith integrating reading and writing, but also that discussion is such a valuable part of her curriculum that students who are not in class are missing part of her instruction.

Jason too integrates reading, writing, listening, and speaking in his classroom practice. "Everything is just a writing assignment for me and so, as we read things, as we talk about things, I just generate ideas for writing about those and then I always lead them towards how we can turn this into a writing assignment." Jason relies heavily on discussion and annotation in his classroom: "First semester, we do a lot of discussion about the essays. We'll talk about them together. We'll generate ideas together. I'll give them the prompt and have them annotate it beforehand and then the next day, we'll just get started writing." Discussion and talking about ideas and prompts together is an important part of the instructional sequence in Jason's classroom.

For Lilly, reading and writing is so integrated and connected that she said, "I don't know how to differentiate reading instruction from writing instruction because that would be like telling somebody I'm going to teach you how to play an instrument but we're never going to listen to music. It just doesn't make any sense to me…" Lilly relies on the use of high-quality text to begin discussions and teach students what writing looks like in her classroom. "I think a big part of my writing instruction is my reading instruction and I start, I use a lot of…model texts, both student text and non-student text and we read essays and we talk about good writing and we talk about techniques, but they

have to be writing about those. I don't know how you teach reading without writing."

She also described a process where she and her students are reading and discussing and

writing all the time in her classroom: "All of them have spiral notebooks. And while

we're reading something, we're constantly stopping and I'll say, 'Now, write about this.

What did you notice? I want to see ideas on the page.'" In Lilly's classroom, the

reading, writing, speaking, and listening processes are combined, integrated, and very

fluid. For Lilly, it does not make logical sense to teach one without the other.

As the only non-AP teacher in the study, Isabella's curriculum and planning

looked different from the other teachers who were interviewed; however, her integration

of reading, writing, listening, and speaking on a daily basis were still very clear. Isabella

spoke many times about how she is much more transparent with her students now than

she used to be, especially in terms of sharing with them what it is that they will be writing

about. "I started off today by actually taking the prompt question that's going to be on the

quiz when we finish this act. I just literally share it with them. I've learned---I think one

of the things I do much better now is it's okay for kids to know what the prompts are

going to be. It's okay for them to be able to think about it a little bit." Isabella explained

how she put the prompt up and then listed the characters that were involved. She had a

discussion with the class around the prompt, and then followed up with, "'You know

what, on your note page, on your study guide page for act three, write these names down,

start thinking about it. The essay is going to ask you to pick three of these people, use

three specific pieces of evidence, examples, concrete detail, from the piece about how

they made a bold move and then you are going to have to incorporate how and why that

was a bold move.'" In this way, she allowed her students to have a chance to pre-think

and prewrite about an upcoming essay test question. She also encouraged them to use post-it notes in their books to mark pieces of evidence as they were reading that might support the position they were going to take. In Isabella's classroom, reading, writing, and discussion were all happening together every day. She did not wait until students were finished reading the play before she had them start writing about it, and she talked repeatedly about the advantages of telling students upfront what they would be writing about.

The teachers in the study were masters at integrating all pieces of literacy into their curricula on a daily basis. They all talked about composition books and style sheets and places where their students practiced writing before they actually had to do writing. They also all understood that discussions are the most powerful prewriting strategy teachers have available and that it is through discussion that students understand text, themselves, and writing in a way that better positions them to be able to write when they get to the drafting stage. Some teachers, like Isabella, understood this as simply being more transparent about what she was asking students to do, while others, like Lilly, understood that her students needed to talk in order to be able to write.

Exemplary Writing Teachers use Models and Modeling

Showing students what good writing looks like by providing models for each type of writing they are expected to complete has been shown to be an effective strategy for improving adolescent writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). The study of models proved effective for student writers when they were not just given models of various types of writing but analyzed models for their critical elements and then were given a chance to emulate the model.

Jason was the most proficient teacher in the study at using his own work and writing regularly to teach his students how to write, as modeling writing was part of his regular classroom practice "Often times I will get them started writing and then once they've started, I'll get up on the Elmo with my own sheet of paper and I'll start writing my own essay up there in front of them. Some students will just ignore me and other students will glance up at the screen and watch what I'm writing and maybe they'll [get] some ideas off that or they'll just watch for a while and then figure out their own direction. The whole time I will write my own as a model for theirs. Sometimes I will write for them in a kind of 'explain my process' way, and I really love doing that." Jason saw this process as one of his strengths as a writing teacher and one of the ways that he is able to differentiate for the different students in his classroom. "I think what I just described helps because the kids who are pretty good, they can just ignore me and write and they don't need that but the kids who do need it can look up and see what I'm doing and be inspired by it. Often times, when I look at the essays [after they have been handed in], the kids who were struggling the most will write, it will be modeled a bunch on mine, like they're taking my ideas and putting [it in] their own words." While Jason does not use the words "model" or "modeling" initially to describe his classroom practice with students, he is using his own writing to serve as a model. He shows them what to do, he writes in front of them, and he thinks out loud in front of his students. He notices that different students use the model to different degrees. As students become more comfortable with writing, they are able to use their words more and his model less, but he never stops being at the front of the room modeling writing for his students.

Terri uses both published mentor text, her own writing, and student models in her teaching. When she begins any unit of instruction, her goal is to provide her students with as many published models as possible. She explained a unit that begins with a novel and ends in a synthesis essay. "I supplement a ton of different works. I have excerpts from *Hiroshima*. I have excerpts from Truman—everything Truman compiled on whether or not to drop the bomb. I have poems." Terri then explained how she uses student models to show students what to do: "And I show them a lot of examples, especially as kids have developed better ones I will keep them. And so I can say, 'This is a good really good one. Let's evaluate why.'" Terri also explained how her own writing adds to her instruction "And sometimes if I don't have an example, I will create one of my own. That actually just happened in my freshman class. They were struggling. So I decided to write an intro and one body paragraph so we kind of see where it can go. And I realized as I was typing it, 'This is too hard for them. They can't handle it.'" Terri explained one of the very valuable results that sometimes happens when teachers write the assignments that they are asking their students to write: They realize that their students are not ready or prepared to do the writing they are asking them to. Rather than just pushing forward, Terri restarted and taught her students what they would need to know in order to complete the assignment.

Isabella discussed how CCSS had prompted her to begin using more models with her students. "I think I have done more in the sense of always giving them a model essay which I did not do before but now I do. I have all kinds of student written essays that I will give to kids and on the side there's places for them to take notes about what [they] think the claim is, where the claim is and then write it over here. So I will give them

student written essays. I have examples from the SAT test, I have examples from all kinds of writing programs all over the place that are written by students, even our textbooks, as old as they are, they have great examples. So, I've gotten much better at that." When asked in her follow up interview what exemplified her as a writing teacher, Isabella stated, "When I talked about how I used models, exemplars, really good essays, really poor essays and let the kids discuss them." Isabella sees her strength as a writing teacher in her ability to provide students with models and exemplars of all types.

Every teacher in the study used models extensively in their teaching practice, including published mentor text, student models, and their own writing. Meredith discussed that one of the advantages of teaching AP Language and Composition is the access to models: "It's nice with Language and Comp that we have all of these models as resources. I have a lot of models now because…I have always saved representative samples. We've got enough writers in the room where I can grab something from a student that another student just gave a good score…there's a real lack of models and resources outside of Language and Comp…I think models are important for kids."

Lilly also relies on models in her instruction. "I use a lot of…model texts, both student text and non-student text and we read essays and we talk about good writing and we talk about techniques." Lisa talked about beginning her year with what she calls "voice lessons," showing students models of sentences. "I put up a…good sentence from a writer. We have to figure out the author's purpose and how it was created." Sandra discussed how her confidence as a writer had grown and that she is now able to write in front of her students. "I'm comfortable writing with them now and not threatened by the fact that I am not an expert writer. I'm not perfect, and I'm not afraid of that anymore

like I used to be." While using models and modeling writing may not be common for many secondary teachers, the exemplary teachers in the study wrote in front of their students and used their own writing and thinking to teach their students how to write.

Exemplary Writing Teachers are Process-Oriented and Communication-Oriented

By breaking assignments into miniature tasks and giving students substantial amounts of time to practice the skills embedded within larger writing assignments, students will not only be able to explain different types of writing, but also develop the procedural knowledge they need to accomplish those types of writing. The teachers in the study understood not only the complexity of the process, but also understood that teaching students to write well was important because their students need to communicate.

Lilly is committed to teaching her students how to communicate and give them a voice. "I think language is about communication and I think writing is one form of that communication and…it's one of the reasons I went into English because I think you can impact the world through language. We can control our own space if we can control language, and I wanted to give that power to students the best I can or at least help them find it." Because Lilly is passionate about writing and teaching students to communicate through writing, she has created a classroom environment where students feel comfortable establishing a voice and practicing their writing, which is not always easy.

Lilly talked about her school profile and how it affects not only the students she has but how they view themselves: "Most of my students are Latino, some Filipino, several Black. Most of them are poor. Most of them are at risk given the indicators of what it means to be at risk, most of them have more than one indicator. A lot of them

come from drug issues at home or single parents at home. Probably 50% of my students are second language. But I tell them my background and talk to them about some of the stuff I did. I think that helps them trust me that I'm going to be non-judgmental." Lilly's efforts to create community and trust in her classroom also extend to her classroom setup "One of the reason I have tables is we create a community so they trust each other so they can share their writing with each other, you need that."

In her process of teaching students to write, Lilly understands that her students need a lot of practice and has created a classroom situation that allows that to happen. "I think the hardest part for my students…is they have this idea but how do you put it on the page that makes sense of it? And they need tons and tons of practice on that and not just getting the idea on the page, but controlling the language while they're getting the idea on the page. That's the initial part of my writing instruction is we start by reading and they're writing about what they're reading and we're breaking down the language and what the language looks like and I'm reading those constantly and responding constantly to them. Then we start breaking them into writing papers and we go through peer response and all that and they're looking at each other's writing and we're talking about what's working and how to clean it up."

When asked for further clarification on this process in her classroom, Lilly talked about the spiral notebooks her students always have, and she clarified that these are spiral notebooks, not journals. To Lilly, a spiral notebook is where her students practice writing, not a place where they share their thoughts. Knowing that her students have difficulty getting ideas on paper, Lilly further explained that the notebook is full of essay starts for different genres of writing. "I call them essay starts in their notebook where

they have to just start writing about a topic. I give them a prompt and they write about it and I call them an essay starts." These become a resource for students to return to when they may be stuck, but they also provide a lot of practice in starting writing. The essay starts change based on what they have been reading and techniques they have been working with and studying.

Meredith's student population is on the opposite end of the spectrum from Lilly's. Meredith knows that others look at her teaching situation and her students and believe that teaching where she teaches is easy, and in some ways, she acknowledged that it is. "All of my students are college-bound. I'd say the majority of them are trying to get into really competitive schools. These are students who want to pass an AP exam, hopefully with the four of five if they can." But there are difficulties, too, with her students and the goals that she has for them as writers "and yet at the same time, these are students who are really busy kids because they're overextending themselves. They're taking sometimes three to five AP classes, they're involved in leaderships, [and] they're volunteering. They're doing everything to have these stellar resumes. I know my constant battle with them more than anything is to engage them. The battle is always getting them to engage and care about their writing and their learning instead of just trying to get through the day."

Even though the test and getting in to certain schools may be at the front of Meredith's students' minds, like Lilly, Meredith has bigger goals for her students as writers. "Overall…I want…my students…to be able to engage with their writing and care about it, and that's always my biggest challenge from the beginning of the year, no matter what level they come to because I think a lot of kids are used to just doing things for

points. It doesn't matter if it's what might seem like a boring piece of analytical writing or even a timed piece for the AP exam. I hope to teach them [that] there are always ways to connect with what they're doing on a personal level to engage with it and find an angle in to make it meaningful to them." Meredith tries to create ownership and a personal connection between students and what they are writing about "I try to teach them how to engage with topics. So that's a long process. It involves learning to care about what we're doing, there has to be a lot of class discussion…I want them to understand how to think more deeply about what they're doing."

Meredith hopes to engage students and create personal connections to what they are doing by creating an environment where students have choice but also personal responsibility and an investment in the class as a whole.   She has students choose independent, nonfiction reading books that become part of the class curriculum. Students have to get into groups and discuss their books with others. Meredith expressed irritation with a student she overheard asking other students about page numbers of books: "[He was] trying to look to find a short book to read for next time, and it just annoyed me, so I said something to him like, 'That's not the point. You're not getting it. Read something you are authentically interested in and learning about something.' Because, I don't know, it just matters." Meredith also talked about student choice in her research assignment, "Once I give them the assignment, I still give them another week or two to start signing up for their topics. We post topics on posters. They have to write down the research questions. It's really hard for them because these kids are not used to having to really care about something and think deeply."

Lisa breaks writing into what she considers its smallest pieces and then builds her students to a larger picture "I start by going over elements of good writing and what it basically comes down to is voice. How do you teach voice? I tear it apart or break it apart and we talk about diction, details, syntax, and all of this creates a tone…As a writer, we all have different voices. We can hear Stephen King. We know it's Stephen King because every voice is a unique fingerprint. Once we get this done, we have a voice lesson. We start picking apart diction. I always start with diction of word choice and put up a…good sentence from a writer. We have to try to figure out the author's purpose and how was that created. We look at keywords, why did the author choose *slender* instead of *gaunt*? After doing this every class period, we have composition books that we write in and we decorate them." Lisa showed me her composition book and talked about how the students, especially the girls, enjoy decorating their composition books and that the decoration creates ownership. Like Lilly, she said that it feels like a "little diary," but it is not. "They put all of their voice lessons in their notebook. They'll also jot down any other prompts that we use." In this way, the composition book is a resource and a place to practice writing.

Lisa builds in plenty of opportunities for her students to practice writing because she believes that the goal of her class is to become a college-level writer. "I know that this AP class is basically teaching to a test, but they learn so many skills that [they will be able] to take with them to college. That is really the teaching. There just happens to be a test at the end of the year. I think everyone should take AP Language and Composition because if you could just see how the writing improves over the nine months." After beginning her year with voice lessons, Lisa moves on to the pieces of writing that make a

good essay. "I teach introductions…at first we do thesis and then we do some templates. I give them templates that they can use to jump into the conversation. Yeah, basically, I am building. I am giving them two walls so that they can have self-confidence because when we start the year, the majority [do not feel confident as writers]. I give them templates to build up their self-confidence and then I just go rip it out." Lisa admits that sometimes she may be a bit too harsh when she is removing scaffolding that she has supplied for her students and that she should be "nicer," but she is also determined to help her students become proficient writers. She eases her students into writing with specific instruction and provides ways for them to practice their writing.

Although the AP teachers in the study have the goal of a test at the end of the year, the scores their students received did not drive the teachers. What the students will be tested on certainly affects the curriculum and teachers absolutely planned curriculum that ensured their students would be prepared, but all the teachers were driven by larger goals for their students: they all knew the overall goal was helping students become writers. They all expressed a deep understanding of the amount practice it truly takes for students to develop as writers and had set up classroom situations where students could practice their writing, and they all took their role in developing student writers very seriously. They knew and expressed that they were teaching students something that was far more important than passing a test or receiving a certain score.

Writing-driven, High-stakes Assessments Can Facilitate Curriculum Planning

The teachers in the study, six of whom were AP teachers, were not concerned about their pass rates on the test and did not feel pressure from their administration to have higher pass rates. (There are no penalties for not doing well on the AP exams.) In

general, the teachers were happy about the learning that was taking place in their AP classes and believed in the importance of AP for students and student learning.

Jason noted, "I'm proud AP enrollment had grown 400% in the twelve years I've been there, while the school has shrunk 20 percent." When asked why, he said, "I've created a class that has a good reputation. The kids enjoy it and they know it benefits them. I have my students do AP testimonials when they get to college. I've really tried to grow the thing because I think it's one of the most beneficial things we do there."

It is fair to say that the contents of the AP test influence what it taught in the course. However, in the case of the AP Language and Composition test, this course has created a solid goal from which teachers are able to backward plan. When asked about their planning process, every AP teacher referenced the three types of writing included on the test and how they taught their students to write through first a process of recognizing techniques authors use in writing (rhetorical analysis) and then analyzing writing for those techniques and using those techniques as a writer.

Sandra described her planning process and how knowing the writing required on the AP exam facilitates her planning: "With AP juniors…the direction is to go toward the test. We still used [the writing] process and it could be something like Sherman Alexie's essay on reading and writing or it could be a prompt from the test depending on what it is. I think about what direction is this writing going to go, how we are going to use it. Right now for example, we're just starting rhetorical analysis. We're looking at some different texts…Then they're going to be pulling out rhetorical devices. We're just starting and they have these style sheets and they're using [them] to present all the style elements that they find and then we're going to take those style elements and start writing

our rhetorical papers from that. We're just building, starting small and then, going from there into writing the papers…" The process that Sandra described, the terminology, the student ownership of the devices, the style sheets, and the close reading, were all common and typical in the discussions with the AP teachers. Their instructional methods for how to get students end result may be different. They sometimes had different sets of texts, although there was a lot of similarity in the texts the teachers used.   Sometimes the order of the writing was different because different teachers had different ideas about the best ways to scaffold instruction for their students. The framework for the instruction, however, was consistent because the AP teachers all have to get to the same goal by the same time of year.

Lisa explained the role of the test in her planning: "It's always in the back of my head because I have to—all year long I have to assess a rhetorical analysis and argument and synthesis questions so they have to do research. I create projects where they have to come up with six pieces of evidence, different passages and they'd synthesize that in a thesis. I don't have any busy work." She further explained that she does not mind the fact that her whole class is built around that assessment: "Because it's Common Core. AP Lang is Common Core. It's all it is. You have to know how to read and take those ideas, formulate ideas and view it on paper." Lisa, like the other teachers, mentioned the three specific types of writing that students would be assessed on during the AP exam. She also discussed how she used specific questions in her class and planned assignments to not only prepare her students, but also pre-assess her students on those writing types.

In addition to knowing and understanding what her students will be assessed on, Meredith makes a practice of using AP rubrics and scoring procedures in her classroom.

She is an AP reader and attends the AP scoring every summer in order to maintain her accuracy as a reader, which helps her to focus her instruction. "We read all day for seven straight days. I see a broad range of student writing from students all over the world. I can see how people from intercity schools are responding to this versus some of the top high schools in the country and I know where my students fall within that mix." In addition to seeing where her students fit within a range of writers, being a reader has also helped Meredith know what to teach her own students. "We also get some really specific feedback from the chief readers at the end of each reading about what kind of instruction we should focus on as we're looking at our data and our results every year with where our students fit it. Little things like you learn when you are reading all of that to teach kids in class to realize that they're in a bubble, they're in a box, whatever community they're in. When they're writing for a broader audience, they need to think outside of their own little school…and recognize that not everybody's going to have the same perspective as they have." Meredith's commitment each year to reading and scoring for the AP exam becomes professional development for her as a writing teacher because she learns how to interpret her data as well as learning how to better prepare her students for the exam.

Meredith, when asked, was the teacher in the study who was the most detailed about her planning process, but like the other teachers in the study, she was very clear that planning for an AP class was different from planning for a non-AP class. "When I first took over this class, I had to prepare my students to be able to pass an AP exam. The first thing I had to do was look at the end result and where they needed to be. I had to study the types of prompts and the type of writing that was required and worked

backward from there." Just as the other AP teachers in the study, Meredith began her planning for her AP students by looking at where they needed to be, and specifically, looked at the types of writing her students would need to master in order to be successful on the test. "After looking at that I had to decide which would make sense to teach first, and I still feel strongly that rhetorical analysis is the best essay to begin with. I work with a lot of colleagues across the country who do not do that. They start with argument and then they move on to rhetorical analysis and I've looked at what they do, I've looked at my data, and the reason I chose that one first is….they've never done rhetorical analysis, it's the least objective, it's the most difficult and it trains them to be close readers."

For AP teachers, the final products, the three types of writing on the AP test are clear from the beginning: these teachers always know the three types of writing that will be on the test and create a curriculum framework that prepares their students to succeed on that test. While even AP teachers acknowledge they are teaching to a test, most believe there is value in what the test is assessing. Meredith noted, "There's more emphasis on timed writing than I would like, and yet, at the same time, there's definitely a value to that. They're going to have to think clearly and quickly on their own when they move on in college classrooms with short answer responses, a lot of times for job applications now they have to do timed writing. They're definitely going to need to do that in the future, but it is just that I have to do more time-writing than I would like to do." The AP test does affect curricula, but AP teachers understand the value of what is being asked of students and also understand how to plan instruction to support the skills students need to know to be successful in school, not just on the test.

Exemplary Writing Teachers are Reflective Practitioners

In her reflection on her practices, Isabella quickly pointed to two key ideas that she felt demonstrated how her instruction had changed in the last ten years of her career. First, she found "several examples" of her use of modeling. She explained, "I talked about how I used models, exemplars, really good essays, really poor essays and let the kids kind of discuss." Secondly, she stated, "I don't believe in the idea of giving them a cold prompt anymore. I just don't think that is the right way to do it. I will actually give them a prompt in a discussion about something realizing and knowing that, that's going to be on the test on Friday when they take the test and so they will already have seen it and I'll let them discuss it because there's nothing wrong with that." Both of these ideas, modeling and discussing the final task beforehand, were both practices that Isabella noticed she had talked about two to three times in her original interview. She re-emphasized the importance of these changes in her instruction. When asked why these were good descriptions of her, she said she had never really seen herself as a writing teacher, she truthfully just assigned writing because she needed to. She explained a process of learning to teach writing: "I've realized more and more that showing kids the breakdown with outlines and taking care of this and little bits and writing just the intro and then doing this and then looking at an example essay that's along the same lines of what we're going to write on is helpful, so I think now I actually do try to teach kids how to write, not just assign."

Jason, too, pointed to his practice of modeling when he reread his transcripts. When asked when he is at his best as a writing teacher, he said, "I'm standing at the middle of the class on my own and they're writing and I'm writing and I'm either writing

as a model for the kids who need it the most and it's another kind of differentiation technique, those who don't really need it can look up and get some ideas or at least sometimes, they'll even model their writing because it's important for them to know what it looks like to write successfully in their own words even if their words are modeled after mine quite a bit." Jason understands and demonstrates his understanding, of the concept of modeling with students at its very best. He is not simply creating writing at home and showing it to his students. He made a further connection that by writing with his students he is differentiating because students can "use" his words as they need to.

When Jason was asked why this was the best descriptor of him as a teacher of writing, he said, "It's the thing I do most often and my students tell me how helpful it is to them. It also gives me a product that I can make copies of and give to the students as well." His answer indicates that this practice is something his students find helpful and it is a practice he uses regularly in his classroom.

While Terri first talked about "wanting great reading, great group thinking, and great writing" to come together in her classroom, she credited her ability to model for her students in order to achieve her classroom goals. "I'm modeling writing. My AP kids just wrote a compare and contrast prompt…so I sat down and modeled an essay so that they could see you have to show 'this is my idea' and 'it's here on the poem'…so that clicked for them. [If I] tell them 'elaborate and put in your piece, they look at me like I have three heads, but when they saw it in writing, then they take that and put it into their own because they understand that…Once I've modeled it then they can emulate it."

Sandra valued her ability to be a process-oriented teacher "…pushing through the process regardless of the type of kids I'm working with. Letting the kids know that the

process is important, more so that just the final product, because so often with writing, they're focused on the final product, they don't think about the process of going back and looking at themselves, analyzing why they work the way they did…That's important to me." When asked why this was important to her as a teacher of writing, she stated that this is how she identifies with her students: "[This exemplifies] how I've grown as a writer using the process, trial and error, taking risks, feeling afraid, feeling like the kids do and then just the fact that they recognize they don't have to be expert writers to write."

Like Sandra, Meredith also sees her strength as being able to identify with her students and recognize what they are experiencing. "The most important thing I do as a writing teacher is recognizing writing is challenging. It's hard to teach. It's hard to write. To remember how that feels for me as I'm teaching my students and to try to think about what it is they need to know in order to become better writers." In addition to really thinking about the difficulty of writing and being a writer, Meredith also tries to create a connection for her students between the skill of writing and the passion of being a writer "More importantly than [teaching them skills], I think it's always important to remember that writing has to be personally rewarding and that students need to know…how to engage in writing."

After reading her transcripts, Lisa recognized two strengths in herself as a writing teacher. First she said, "One of my strengths is first my enthusiasm at the beginning of the year to get these little children ready to write and to make it enjoyable and to make the classroom…a safe place to share their writing…" Secondly, Lisa noted her ability to break writing down into small chunks for her students. "We take baby steps…They'll

take their little paragraphs, their little voice lessons…that leads into their bigger works pieces."

Lilly talked about creating assignments that matter for students, but came back to the theme of communication, which threaded much of her original interview. "The paragraph that does the best to describe my philosophy [is the one] about 50% is what you have to say and 50% is how you say it. I like that because…one of my worries is we don't spend enough time talking to them about writing correctly, about controlling the language…They've got to control the language."

While teachers were prompted to reflect on their practice, all the teachers took the time to read their transcript thoroughly and then were able to point to specific practices that they believed made them exemplary teachers of writing. When asked to explain why they chose what they did, they were able to discuss why the practice was important for teaching writing and student learning. In their reflections, the teachers all chose indicators of their practice as writing teachers that align with research on effective writing instruction and support the other themes of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The eight themes were chosen because they were supported in the research about teaching writing and self-efficacy. When discussing their practice, teachers spoke of using an integrated approach (Graham & Perin, 2007; Murphy & Smith, 2015), using a variety of model texts in the classroom (Gallagher, 2011: Graham & Perin, 2007) and using a process approach and breaking writing into small pieces (Graham & Perin, 2007; Smith et al., 2013). Most importantly, however, was teachers' discussion of how they have grown as both writers and teachers of writing. All of the teachers were experienced teachers, and their discussions of writing with, alongside, and in front of students truly demonstrated their own self-efficacy as both writers and teachers of writing. Through the process of teaching, they have become exemplary teachers (Bandura, 1977, 1993).

Teachers who Teach Writing Must Engage in Literacy Practices

The teachers in the study all talked about loving reading and loving writing and having teachers who had modeled that for them; therefore, the idea that exemplary writing teachers must be readers and writers emerged as a theme in the data. They considered themselves writers and became teachers because they had an interest in and motivation to create students who can also write successfully. All of the participants expressed confidence in their own skills and abilities to write and, therefore, to be able to teach writing, even as they continued to grow and improve their craft. They demonstrated Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory in that by engaging in the task of writing themselves, they felt confident in themselves as writers. Additionally, the teachers did talk about loving their subject, loving reading, loving writing, and having early experiences in life that helped developed their own efficacy as readers and writers,

further showing that people having early, positive experiences does contribute to their self-efficacy in that area. Their own experience and confidence with writing contributed to their ability to be able to model writing for their students as well as give feedback to their students as a writer.

Reading and Modeling Improves Student Writing

While the CCSS may have separated reading and writing into two different standards and this study has looked at the teaching of writing, the research on effective writing instruction is clear: Reading and writing are symbiotic. Graham and Perin (2007), Murphy and Smith (2015), and Smith et al. (2013) agreed on the importance of an integrated approach to teaching reading and writing. The teachers in the study were clear on the fact that they did not, could not, teach writing in isolation and needed to ground students in text in order to effectively teach them how to write. According to Murphy and Smith (2015), the integration of reading, writing, speaking, and listening within the instructional sequence is a best practice in the teaching of writing. Deliberately planning for reading, writing, listening, and speaking within the context of writing instruction allows for students to be more effective writers. Murphy and Smith (2015) noted that starting with speaking and discussion allows student writers to develop ideas, while reading text often gives students something to write about. Lilly specifically noted, "I don't know how to differentiate reading instruction from writing instruction because that would be like telling somebody I'm going to teach you how to play an instrument but we're never going to listen to music. It just doesn't make sense to me." Lilly was not alone in her integration of discussion, reading, and writing. The teachers clearly understood the importance of reading instruction in writing instruction.

In their analysis of CCSS Writing, Mo et al. (2014) stated that teachers would need to use both published and teacher models in order to effectively teach students how to write. Their research further supported the reading and writing connection and the idea that writing cannot be taught in isolation. Gallagher (2011) supported the importance of teachers as models and of writing in front of students, "I don't tell [students] how to draft their papers; I show them how I draft my papers…your students need to stand next to you and see how you struggle with the process as well" (p. 15). Gallagher (2011) has also stated that despite the importance of modeling for students this is not a common practice amongst secondary teachers. Writing is difficult and complex and students need to see their teachers struggle through the difficulties of the process. When teachers are standing in front of students and showing themselves as writers, their own self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing improves, as will the efficacy of their students. All of the teachers in this study discussed modeling, using both texts as models and standing in front of their students writing. The results indicated that exemplary teachers not only understood the importance of models and modeling, but that their practice of using models and modeling is outside of the routine of the normal teacher and is part of what makes them exemplary.

Assessment Can Guide Instructional Choices

The teachers in the study referred to the test, knew what they were preparing students for, and created a curriculum that enabled students to attempt the AP exam with confidence. The teachers seemed to have an almost singular focus on preparing their students. The fear with allowing assessments to impact instruction is that those assessments do not assess the right materials, assessments will narrow curriculum, and

assessments remove the educator's professional judgment (Applebee, 2013). None of the teachers spoke of the AP exam in any of these terms, and in fact, acknowledged that they did teach to a test, but that it was the right test. Lisa stated, "I know that this class, the AP class, is basically teaching to a test, but they learn so many skills that [they] will take with them to college. That is really the teaching. [There] just happens to be a test at the end of the year."   In this way, the AP exam seems to serve as not a test, but a final product that helps the teachers to help build adolescent writers. Graham and Perin (2007) identified specific product goals, which they defined as the purpose and characteristics as the final product, as an important element of effective writing instruction. The teachers used the test as their end goal, the product, and plan their instruction from goal.

All the teachers but one were working toward a common goal (the AP test), but there was still a variety of ways the teachers met their end goal. This experienced group of teachers, who had been teaching this content and curriculum for more than ten years, was comfortable making adjustments in order to meet the needs of their students. While different teachers made different choices about how to arrange or organize their curriculum, as Meredith indicated, data and students and what teachers know about the trajectory of instruction in their classrooms inform those choices. The goal was the same, but they were all using their professional judgment to make choices about their students and their content, which disproved Applebee's (2013) fear that assessments take away teachers' professional judgment regarding student learning in the classroom.

Teaching Writing Means Prioritizing Writing

CCSS prioritized writing instruction (Applebee 2013; Conley 2014; Mo et al. 2014) and called for curricula that are driven by writing. Gallagher (2011) has stated that

in order to have a curriculum driven by writing, teachers must not try to fit writing in, but make writing the primary instructional focus in their classrooms.   The participants in the study demonstrated that they do not try to "fit writing in" to what they are teaching but that writing is what they are teaching, one of their primary concerns. One could argue that AP Language and Composition is a course that is centered on writing and that the participant group is, therefore, not a good example of teachers who are writing-centered; however, one teacher did not teach AP and five of the teachers taught another grade level or class in addition to the AP course. Some taught a lower grade, such as freshmen, while others taught some sort of remediation course (i.e., juniors and seniors who had not yet passed the high school proficiency exam). Regardless of the class or curriculum, the teachers discussed the importance of giving students voice, teaching them to communicate, and teaching them skills that would allow them to participate in their world.

The AP teachers specifically discussed using techniques, resources, and ideas from their AP classes in the other courses they taught. One participant stated that she taught her students who were struggling with the same curriculum that she taught her AP students because they deserved the opportunity to study high-level curriculum. This adoption of materials and modification for other students is supported by Gruver and Luloff (2008) who suggested that the best teachers will always try to teach beyond standards. The teachers discussed how teaching AP had informed their instruction in their other courses and how they modified assignments from their AP courses to use in other courses.   The research indicated that teachers needed to feel comfortable with their content knowledge in order to do this, which was obvious in discussions with the

teachers. When teachers talked about using ideas from AP in other classes, they discussed the importance of breaking tasks into smaller pieces and adding additional scaffolding, but also felt confident that with the appropriate instruction other types or levels of students would be capable of doing what their AP students were doing.

The Process is Complex

Graham and Perin (2007), Murphy and Smith (2015), and Smith et al. (2013) all identified a process approach as an important strategy to improve adolescent writing. While each researcher viewed process a bit differently, all advocated the idea that in order to improve, adolescent writers need to practice writing in small chunks, multiple times, and all believed that students do not have enough time to practice writing. Additionally, there are specific strategies that help students to become better writers, Shulman et al. (2002) suggested that the best teachers are those who understand the interplay of good instructional strategies and the role of standards and assessment in curriculum development.

Bage et al. (1999) identified two distinct types of planning: Comprehensive and incremental. Their conversations with and observations of teachers realized additional forms of instruction occurred in classrooms that are not described or explained in teacher plan books: predictive planning or responsive planning. Teachers in the Bage et al. (1999) study discussed writing the lesson plan in the prescribed format that would satisfy the inspector, but also described having their real lesson plans, the plans that truly worked for them, ready for when the inspector left. The Bage et al. (1999) research demonstrated the variability in planning and the modes of planning that cannot be accounted for on paper.

The teachers in this research study, even when pressed, had a hard time explaining the day-to-day planning that got them to the end goal. They knew where they were going and they knew what they were doing to get students to that goal, but it was difficult to get them to articulate what that looked like on a daily basis. At this point, they are experts in the content and curriculum. They knew how to get their students to the end result and could generally explain how they do that but felt stifled by new systems that are now asking them to articulate that on paper. Specifically, the group of teachers did not break down individual pieces of the writing process in their discussion and could not talk about writing strategies as a separate entity in the classroom. Lilly discussed the study of language being about communication, and Jason did not know his strategy was called modeling until someone told him.

While research points to clear strategies that are effective in improving adolescent writers and these are the types of items that are often looked for when teachers are asked to write down or explain or describe what is happening in their classrooms, it seemed the best, the exemplary teachers could not actually articulate their practice into a list of what exactly they do. Bage et al. (1999) suggested that most of what teachers write in lesson plan documents is a "[a] crude oversimplification[s]" (p. 67) of what actually happens in the classroom. The exemplary teachers in this study proved that while what happens in their classrooms is complex, creating something that explains what they do is nearly impossible.

Exemplary Writing Teachers Have Self-Efficacy and Create Student Self-Efficacy

This research study highlighted eight themes of exemplary writing teachers. Key to many of those themes is teacher self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) suggested that one of

the key components and greatest impacts on self-efficacy is performance accomplishment (Bandura, 1977). In order to improve self-efficacy through performance accomplishment, the individual has to be doing the task. Bandura (1977) also noted that later failures can be minimized by early successes and that even failures can improve an individual's self-efficacy. National Writing Project (2016) concurs with this and emphasizes that to be an effective writing teacher, teachers need to write. All of the teachers in the study were writers, had a love of writing, and engaged in the practice of writing for themselves and for their students. They were continually improving their self-efficacy as teachers of writing through their practice of being writers.

The second theme in the study, exemplary writing teachers are passionate and personal about their work, showed the lengths teachers are willing to go to help their students. The teachers reported working with students in after school sessions and looking at student writing for other classes in an effort to help them be their best. Teachers with high self-efficacy believe in their ability to help students be successful and know when other people cannot; therefore, they will do what is necessary to make sure that students can be successful. Goddard et al. (2000) suggested that when teachers have high self-efficacy they engage in additional behaviors of task analysis and teaching competence, at both the individual and school level. The Goddard et al. (2000) research explained the teachers in the study who are responding to writing that students are doing for other classes and who are going beyond the scope of their job to help students be successful. Additionally, teachers with high self-efficacy also have high curricular behavior and will use multiple resources to meet the instructional needs of students, which will help students to be successful and increase their self-efficacy.

Numerous researchers (Bandura, 1993; Goddard et al., 2000; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000) have shown there is a direct link between teacher self-efficacy and student efficacy. The practice of study participants using writing texts as models to show students what good writing looks like and showing students how to write by standing in front of them and engaging in the process helps teachers to simultaneously improve their own self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing, while also improving their students' efficacy as writers.

The teachers discussed that they had grown more comfortable writing in front of students and more confident in their own abilities the more they engaged in the practice of modeling for students. Their growing confidence as writers created a confidence in themselves as teachers of writing, which will help create students who are confident about themselves as writers.

Implications of the Research

"Indeed, young people who do not have the ability to transform thoughts, experiences, and ideas into written words are in danger of losing touch with the joy of inquiry, the sense of intellectual curiosity, and the inestimable satisfaction of acquiring wisdom that are the touchstones of humanity" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 1).

Teaching students how to write effectively is important. It is not just important for English teachers who work with students in an English classroom or college professors teaching soon-to-be English teachers. It is important for every person who is connected with students and the people who teach them, as well as school administrators. Despite the national adoption of CCSS in 2010 that prioritized writing, Troia and Olinghouse (2013) reported that the average time spent on writing instruction per

marking period is three hours. There are, however, exemplary writing teachers, and this study was an attempt give a voice to those teachers and allow them to describe their writing instruction.   From their descriptions, from learning about their instruction, and from learning what works and does not work for them in the classroom and in their school settings, there are many implications that should be considered because "improving the writing abilities of adolescents has social implications far beyond the classroom" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 28).

Exemplary Teachers and Targeted Models

In discussing what they were doing in the classroom, the teachers interviewed for the study had a difficult time explaining what it was they did, but they could serve as excellent models for teachers who are new, learning, or struggling. If there is an interest in creating teachers who are better able to be effective writing teachers, the same systems that work for creating student writers need to be employed for creating writing teachers. Bandura (1977) discussed that the two best ways to improve efficacy was by doing the work and watching someone do the work. Teachers who are learning to teach writing need to analyze and emulate teacher-models and practice difficult concepts in small chunks.

Most of the time, the current system does not allow for this kind of time to be spent in another teacher's classroom. When teachers struggle or students are doing practicum experiences, they do not spend enough time to really break pieces and parts of lessons into small chunks, analyze what the teacher is doing in each of those chunks, have guided practice with an expert, and then eventually try the piece on their own. A system needs to be created that allows for deeper analysis of exemplary teacher models,

and new or struggling teachers need to analyze parts and pieces of lessons to determine what is being done and how it is being done. This study of teacher models should be followed with guided, specific practice where new or struggling teachers practice a part of a lesson and then are given immediate feedback. One practice session should never be considered enough. Just like with student writers, teachers who are learning a new concept or skill should be released over time into larger lesson chunks until they can successfully plan and conduct entire units on their own.

Use Curriculum Models that Work

When asked to submit the name of the junior English teacher that had both a highly effective evaluation and was considered to be the most exemplary writing teacher in the department, six of seven school site administrators chose the AP Language and Composition teacher. This was not expected but should be noted. One outcome of this research is that AP Language and Composition has a model and framework that works for many: There is a clearly defined end goal that allows teachers and students the opportunity to know what they are working toward. Teachers have some flexibility in how to get there, so nobody feels too stifled by a scripted curriculum and because the test is at a very high-level, teachers must maintain rigor in their classrooms so that students can attempt the test with some success. There were teachers in the study who teach AP in closed enrollment schools, which means they have a very homogenous group, and teachers who teach in open enrollment schools, which means they have a wide range of abilities. Not a single teacher was worried about students not being able to do the work, no one talked of lowering the level of the class to meet the level of the students, and not a single one bemoaned having students who were not "typical" AP students. They talked

of different challenges and how they worked with different students to help them get there.

While I am not sure that "AP for all" schools are possible or probable, the idea that AP Language and Comp can and should inform thinking and how curriculum is structured is not necessarily new or unheard of. AP has conducted vertical alignment for many years. Backward planning courses from the AP Language and Composition class, which has been documented by teachers in the study, is closely connected to CCSS and is a writing-driven curriculum that could help to create better curriculum for other grades.

Class Size is a Real Consideration

Middle and high school English teachers can have 180-240 students. The teachers in the study discussed the amount of time and almost the labor of love that goes into creating student writers. Even when classroom structures are set up so that students respond to each other, rubrics are used, and technology is employed, writing-centered teachers spend an unbelievable amount of their own time responding to student work. While strategies can help students become better writers, it is still the teacher, giving targeted feedback that truly helps students grow.

High school teachers now have seven-period days and teach six of those, and often have classes of 35-40 students. When standards truly prioritize writing, the world demands students who can produce writing, and high school is the place where students decide the next steps of their lives, the sheer number of student writers teachers are trying to support seems unreasonable.

Classroom Instruction Needs to be Prioritized

The group of teachers interviewed were positive about their jobs, what they do, and even the challenges they face. It was refreshing to talk with a group of teachers who were so positive as they demonstrated the concept that teachers who are truly exemplary also will exhibit positive agency when faced with new challenges. In other words, they will also figure out how to make the best of even the not so good situations.

It was striking to listen to some of the best teachers in the district articulate quite clearly how they do not understand why they have to continually jump through "another hoop" to prove that they are worthy of their job, their paycheck, etc. They felt they had many outside measures, such as submitting their syllabus to AP, their AP scores, and the records of their class assignments, to prove and show how effective they were. Now they feel that there is time taken away from their real work to do something else to show someone else that they are good at what they do.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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Teachers are overwhelmed and overburdened with all the work they have to do in addition to actually planning curriculum, teaching students, and evaluating their students' work. Teaching writing is perhaps one of the most time-consuming and complex of subjects to teach. While some try to simplify it into terms and specific formats, truly being a teacher of writing is deeper and much more complex. It involves being a writer and understanding how to write from the perspective of a writer and then somehow translating that into something students can understand. It is exhausting and messy and difficult, but those who do it well are giving students a gift that can never be taken away. The gift of writing effectively is not only a student's key to a successful future, no matter

what his or her path may be, but the future of the U.S. Teaching students to write well is

not a choice or something that can be left to only those who are good at it; it is a

responsibility that must be embraced by every teacher.

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Appendix A

Writing Philosophy and Framework

Lesson Plan Template

Writing Philosophy

We strongly believe that
- Writing is a valuable process that clarifies thinking.
- Writing should be explicitly taught, not simply assigned.
- Students and teachers should be engaging in writing every day.
- Effective writing instruction comes from a teacher with well-planned lessons and multiple models of instruction.
- Writing instruction should follow a *writer's workshop* model with students actively engaged in every part of the writing process.
- Students should have the opportunity to write and be instructed in multiple genres (i.e., expository, argumentative, and narrative) each year.
- Teachers should instruct students in the most effectual ways to write for various intended audiences and specific purposes while teaching students how to navigate and adjust between informal and formal language as it fits the specified audience and purpose.
- Students should write and be instructed in writing across the disciplines.

A well-crafted writing lesson will align with the Common Core State Standards and will encompass the following elements:

Element #1: **Audience and purpose of a piece of writing must be determined and clearly communicated.** All audiences have expectations. Students should be able to imagine and address an audience beyond themselves and their teacher. Knowing and understanding audience and writing purpose will help students determine focus. The purpose for writing will also affect what information is presented.

Element #2: **Formal academic language has to be addressed and taught directly in the context of content area and audience.** In order to address audience and purpose in writing, students must be explicitly instructed in academic language and vocabulary appropriate to the task. Students require practice using formal and informal registers of written language as it relates to content, audience, and purpose.

Element #3: **Lessons are focused on a specific skill set and this is clearly communicated to students.** Before, during, and after the writing happens, students should meaningfully discuss the lesson's focus skill(s). The assessment for the writing should focus on this skill set, and students should receive specific feedback on this skill.

Element #4: **A teacher or student model is analyzed/discussed before students write. In addition, and when possible, a "mentor text" is analyzed using language of the lesson's focus skill.** Showing a finished or work-in-progress model of the writing before students write is just smart practice. Non-examples can also be effective teaching tools. A "Mentor Text" might be a published book, article, song, broadcast, etc.—anything that was crafted as a piece of writing before it was shared with its audience. Mentor texts are powerful examples of good writing and should be used in instruction whenever they are available.

Element #5: **Graphic organizers create a visual connection for students.** When a thoughtfully planned graphic organizer is used well during a lesson, better writing from more students is the result. Graphic organizers can be used during pre-writing to focus on the skill being taught. Graphic organizers can also be used as a revision tool to help students see if they are on the right track. In the later grades, teachers should encourage students to develop their own organizing strategies.

Element #6: **Student choice is encouraged.** Students are more invested in writing assignments where they have been allowed to make choices about content, process, and/or product.

Element #7: **Students talk about their writing throughout the writing process.** For improved student writing, encourage students to talk about their plan for writing before the act of writing occurs. Students should have structured opportunities to talk before, during, and after the drafting process.

Element #8: **Before turning in a final copy, students should participate in focused, teacher-directed revision activities.** Revision is one of the most important parts of the writing process, and it often is neglected in the rush to finish a writing assignment. Students should be explicitly taught specific revision strategies that go beyond simply editing and that are connected to the focus of the lesson. Multiple revisions of writing assignments are encouraged.

Lesson Plan Template
XXXX Writing Program

Teacher's name: [Click here and type your name]
Teacher's school: [Click here and type school]

When you have filled in this template's parts, save it to your own computer, then send it as an e-mail attachment to Kim Cuevas (kcuevas@XXXX.net) Please send any **graphic organizers**, **rubrics**, and **annotated samples** needed for the lesson as a separate attachment.

Writing Type/Genre: "[Click here and type the genre]"

Lesson Title: "[Click here and type your lesson title]"

Standards-based Outcomes:
"[Click here and type the CCSS your lesson addresses]"

Student Outcomes: "[Click here and type the SWBAT for your lesson]"

Audience and Purpose for Lesson: "[Click here and type audience/purpose]"

Pre-requisite Skills/Background Knowledge:
DisplayText cannot span more than one line!

Resources/Supplies Needed:
"[Click here and type resources/supplies needed for this lesson]"

Mentor Text(s): "[Click here and type mentor text]"

Brief Overview of Lesson:
"[Click here to type how a 3-5 sentence lesson summary]"

Steps in Implementation: "[Click here to type DETAILED lesson plan]"

Revision Strategy: "[Click here to type a detailed revision plan]"

Rubric: Create a rubric to evaluate this assignment. Rubric should include focus skill.

Student Samples: Please scan student samples (without names) to use as models as well as annotated samples that have been evaluated with your rubric.

Universal Access: "[Click here to type adaptations for ELL/Sped/etc]"

Connections/Extensions:
"[Click here to type any connections or extensions to other subject areas, texts. etc.]"

Additional Resources: "[Click here to type additional books, etc.]"

Credit: "[Click here to type any names you should make sure you mention]"

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Teacher Interview Questions – Interview 1

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we get started, I need to inform you that I will be recording our conversation today. Are you comfortable with me recording our conversation?

Begin recording

1. Describe how you became an English teacher. Describe when you first saw yourself as or realized that you were a teacher of writing.

2. Describe how you plan and prepare to teach a writing lesson to your students.

    a. What is your process? Where do you sit? What do you have in front of you?

    b. What resources do you consult?

3. Walk me through a day in your life as a junior English teacher focused on teaching writing.

    a. What does a typical class look like? Sound like?

    b. Who is in the room? What do are their needs?

    c. What do you think about? What are you trying to keep track of as you deliver the lesson?

4. Describe how you address assessment concerns in your instruction throughout the year.

    a. Do you prepare specifically for tests?

    b. Do you allow test preparation to occur during instruction?

5. Describe how Common Core State Standards impacted your writing instruction.

    a. Are you more focused on writing now?

    b. Do you do more or different types of writing than before?

    c. Do you think more about college-ready writing?

6. Describe what is it like to be a teacher of writing for you right now.

    a. What keeps you awake at night?

    b. What makes your job difficult?

    c. What are the joys?

Teacher Interview Questions – Interview 2

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we get started, I need to inform you that I will be recording our conversation today. Are you comfortable with me recording our conversation?

Begin recording

I will be giving you 30 minutes to review the transcript of our last conversation. Please feel free to highlight or make notes on anything you would like. We will be referring to this document during our conversation today.

1. Can you point me to something specifically in the transcript that really exemplifies your writing instruction or shows you at your best as a writing teacher?

    a. Can you explain why you picked that?

2. In looking at the example you provided, does that example best show you as a teacher of writing or would you like to describe another situation that would more thoroughly show or demonstrate you as a teacher of writing? Why is this a good example?

3. In looking at your description of daily life as a teacher in the classroom, does this describe what writing instruction normally looks like in your in your classroom? Would you like to add anything to this description?

4. In our original conversation, you noted that your teaching is/is not affected by concerns about assessments. Describe how school or classroom based assessments affect your classroom instruction.

5. As you think about everything that is required to be an exemplary teacher of writing, describe how you manage all the pieces each day?

6. Because the overall purpose of this study is to examine how 11th grade English

Language Arts teachers describe their writing instruction, I would like to try and dive

more deeply into your planning process. If you were really trying to explain or make

your planning explicit for a new teacher what would you tell them you do?

     a. How has your planning changed over time? What did you do when you first

started that you might not do now?

     b. How do you decide what is important? How do you decide what to leave out?