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A Study of Writing Quality of Elementary Preservice Teachers: How Teacher Educator Instruction Impacts Writing Improvement in One Semester

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A STUDY OF WRITING QUALITY OF ELEMENTARY
PRESERVICE TEACHERS: HOW TEACHER EDUCATOR INSTRUCTION
IMPACTS WRITING IMPROVEMENT IN ONE SEMESTER

by

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ABSTRACT

This explanatory sequential mixed methods study was guided by two questions: (1) does the quality of preservice teachers' writing improve over the course of one semester and (2) in what ways do two teacher educators' writing instruction affect preservice teachers' quality of writing within the timeframe of a single methods course? The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to test for statistically significant differences in the writing quality of 48 preservice teachers. Participant writing samples were collected before and after taking a single writing methods course. The criteria used to measure the writing quality was the *6 + 1 Writing traits*: ideas, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. Semi-structured interview verbatim transcripts were collected using an online recording and transcription application. Additionally, observations of teaching and field notes were used. These data were collected to better understand which instructional strategies for teaching writing were used in an attempt to improve preservice teacher writing quality. Quantitative results showed a 1.46 increase between the pre sample mean (50.27) and the post sample mean (51.73). This was not considered a statistically significant difference as reported by the Wilcoxon signed-rank test ($z = 1.15$, $p = .252$). The qualitative analysis found the presence of six research-supported writing pedagogies: modeled writing, choice in writing topic, extensive opportunities to write, explicit instruction in the writing process, providing feedback, and engaging in genre specific writing strategies. Inductive codes such as experience, collaboration, and mentoring were also present and collapsed into themes. The results did not yield a statistically significant difference in the

quality of writing produced by the preservice teachers over the course of one semester. This study may help teacher educators and those responsible for teacher preparation program writing instruction to provide different ways to increase writing quality of preservice teachers. The findings may also guide future research on which teacher educator instructional strategies should focus for improving preservice teacher writing quality.

This is dedicated to my wonderfully encouraging husband, Jason Clark. Your constant support and confidence in my ability to succeed fueled the fire of this accomplishment. I heart you and I heart us.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Teacher educators (TEs) in teacher preparation programs (TPPs) are charged with the task of teaching future teachers to teach writing. In our society, the majority of writing instruction occurs in the public education system. Research indicates that teachers are the single most important factor in student learning (Badrasawi, Zubairi, & Idrus, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Rietdijk, Van Weijen, Janssen, Van den Bergh, & Rijlaarsdam, 2018). The focus on writing quality in education is of vital importance because the responsibility of teaching writing to society is expected to happen somewhere in the education process between K-12 student instruction and the education of teachers in TPPs (see Figure 1).
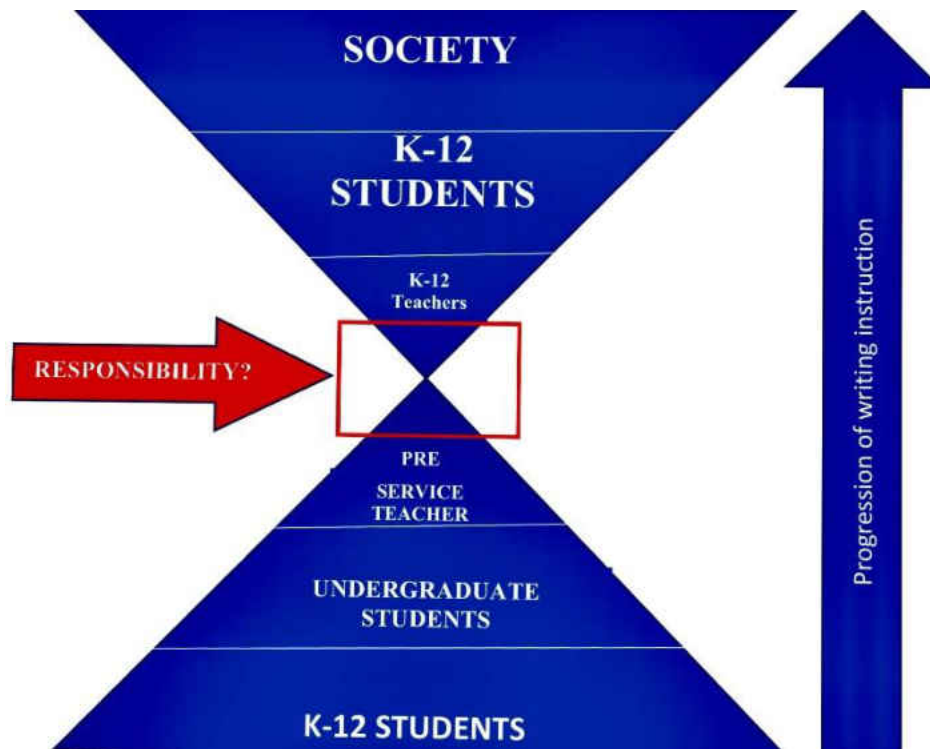
Figure 1

The potential impact of writing instruction provided by public education on society's writing quality.

Note. Most of writing instruction happens in the bottom of the figure and progresses up the chain of educational levels until 'the instructed' become 'the instructors' at the apex. Ultimately, this transfer impacts societal writing quality.

Significance of the Problem

Teacher Educators (TE)s must help preservice teachers (PSTs) feel confident about their writing ability and help improve the PSTs' abilities to demonstrate and produce quality writing. This task is quite difficult and complex to practice (Hayes, 2012). Myers et al. (2016) documented fundamental elements that can potentially complicate the job of TEs when educating preservice teachers concerning writing. They identified the following seven areas of concern: (a)

time, (b) responsibility, (c) extensive and intricate writing processes, (d) semantics, (e) efficacy, (f) modeling, and (g) competency.

Time

Research indicates that TEs (28%) rarely teach a stand-alone course on writing instruction (Myers et al., 2016). Without adequate time to spend on teaching writing methods, some TEs felt rushed in their instruction and included comments such as, "I know a great deal, but there is not time devoted here [to write]." (Myers et al., 2016, p. 319). Graham (2019) in his meta-analysis found an overarching theme that emerged from 28 studies revealing that writing instruction in most classrooms was not enough, evidenced by the majority of teachers who did not devote enough time to teaching writing.

Responsibility

TEs may have different ideas of who is responsible for teaching writing instruction within the TPP. They might assume or expect that sufficient writing instruction is provided in previous college composition courses or high school English instruction. In the Myers et al. (2016) study, 72% of the TEs surveyed indicated that writing instruction was embedded in reading courses, relieving any one specific TE of the task of writing instruction. However, writing needs to be treated as a respected content area just as reading and math have been emphasized in past eras of education (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012). The responsibility of teaching writing should not be limited to content-specialists or English teachers. At the very least, writing instruction should be a collective responsibility taught by all TEs for optimal writing improvement of PSTs.

Extensive and Intricate Writing Processes

TEs use numerous terms concerning writing including writing process, writing implementation, writing to learn, creative writing, writing methods, literacy methods, authentic writing experiences, writing pedagogy, and other phrases associated with writing instruction (Scales et al., 2019). Additionally, TEs are expected to have mastery of, define, teach, model, and assess these intricate writing processes in addition to addressing other requirements within the TPP methods courses. While specific education content areas and numerous professions each encompass specialized terminologies, the TPP and their TEs face a unique challenge. The processes involved to become a skilled writer and instructor of writing involves more than memorizing or correctly coining writing terms. Therefore, the development of effective TEs who can positively impact PSTs in one writing course or less becomes challenging. Since the time to teach writing is in such short supply, mastering and transferring the extensive set of strategies critical to the teaching of writing makes writing instruction more problematic than other content areas of education (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Graves, 2004).

Semantics

Words such as grammar, writing, and language have evolved over time to describe the different components of writing with no commonly agreed upon definitions for TEs to reference. For example, Lowth (1780) defined grammar as a way of rightly communicating what is meant. More recently the term grammar has been associated with students' memorization of grammar rules and dissection of sentences (Common Core State Standards, 2010; Gartland & Smolkin, 2016). Additionally, descriptive grammar refers to language actually used by speakers and

writers, while prescriptive grammar refers to how people should speak and write (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005). Halliday and Webster (2007) best summarized grammatical instruction by saying:

> For educational purposes, we need a grammar that is functional rather than formal, semantic rather than syntactic in focus, oriented toward discourse rather than towards sentences, and represents language as a flexible resource rather than a rigid set of rules. (p. 40)

Without a clear, united understanding of grammar's varying definition, information central to the comprehension and advancement of writing in methods courses may be inadequate, inaccurate, and hindered (Myers et al., 2016).

Efficacy

TEs' writing efficacy may impact their view of successful writing instruction. For example, a TE who does not believe she/he can successfully demonstrate writing conventions may opt to focus on lessons that would avoid writing conventions (Culham, 2003). The findings related to TEs' descriptions of success are important because research has shown that beliefs and conceptions about writing shape instructional decisions (Scales et al., 2019; Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012). Therefore, a lack of efficacy could reduce the amount of writing instruction that TEs present to PSTs in methods courses causing or perpetuating a cycle of low-quality writing (see Figure 2).

Modeling

TEs must be able to model writing and writing instruction. One TE shared that she was good at teaching her PSTs to write, but not at teaching her PSTs to teach their K-12 students to write

(Myers et al., 2016). Teachers modeling writing instruction for students is different but equally as important as modeling writing. Therefore, TEs must be able to successfully do both because differentiating between these processes will help PSTs understand and master the distinctions between writing and writing instruction when teaching future writers (Myers et al., 2016).

Competency

PSTs enter TPPs with varying levels of writing skills and writing efficacy. Research shows PSTs struggle with writing mechanics, dislike writing, consider themselves to be poor writers, are unsure how to teach writing effectively, and are hesitant about teaching these skills to their future students (Bintz, & Shake, 2005; Gallavan, Bowles, & Young, 2007 ; Zimmerman, Morgan, Kidder, & Brown, 2014). PSTs who need improvement in their writing abilities or feel apprehensive and inadequate when writing require extra instruction time from TEs. The variant skill levels of the PSTs entering writing methods courses add strain on the already taxed time of the TE, causing him/her to prioritize or eliminate other instructional tasks.

Figure 2 was created to show the extent to which writing quality migrates through the educational system and its perpetual impact on PSTs. These future teachers will pass this effect on to their K-12 students. The K-12 students then carry those writing skills and experiences into the demands of future school, employment, and family life (Bazerman, Applebee, Berninger, Brandt, Graham, Matsuda, and Schleppegrell, 2017; Cutler & Graham, 2008). Additionally, the K-12 students who choose to continue their education at colleges and universities reproduce the writing experiences they have had as students in K-12 education (Oleson & Hora, 2013). A small essential portion of those K-12 students continue on to postsecondary education to become TEs,

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perpetuating the writing quality they were taught. Therefore, the progression of writing quality

learned in educational writing experiences and carried into adulthood continues

(Konstantopoulos, 2014; Myers et al., 2016).
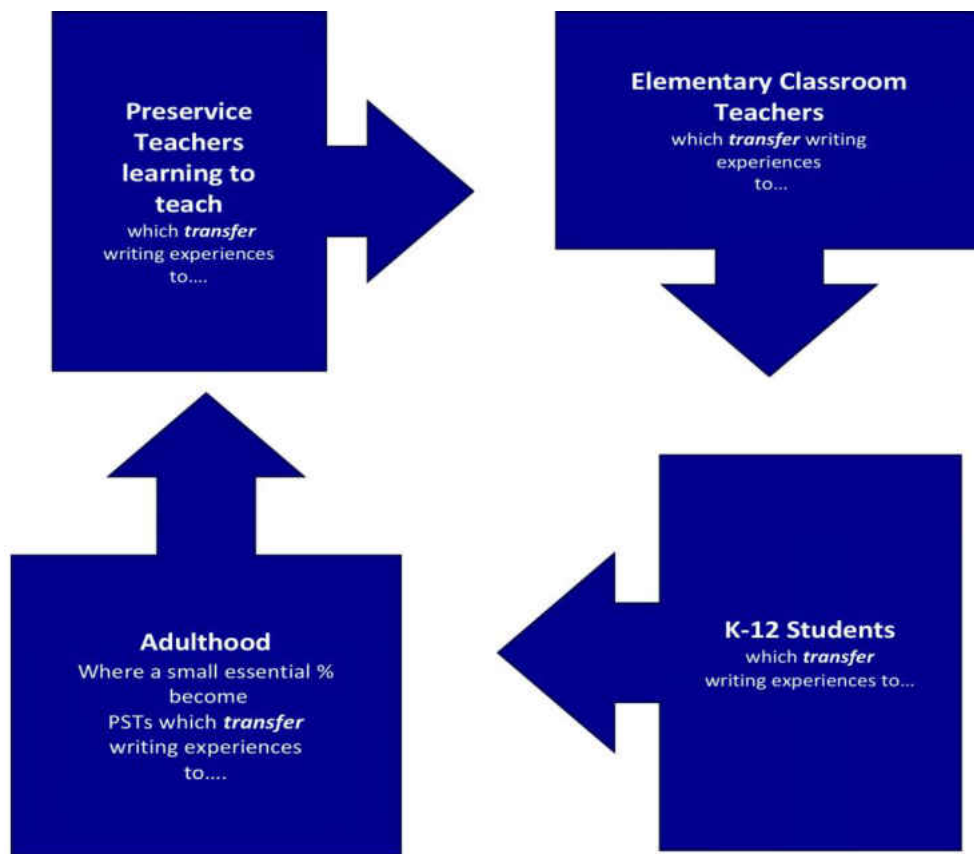
Figure 2

Cycle of Writing Quality Transfer in Education

Although the challenges documented by Myers et al. (2016) exist, TEs who instruct future K-12

teachers in literacy must find ways to overcome the challenges because many of the PSTs, after

graduating from the TPP, will be responsible for teaching writing to K-12 students. If TEs do not

find ways to better master the challenges, future K-12 students who are instructed by these PSTs, who themselves were subjects of insufficient writing preparation, might then evolve into college students and adults with less than acceptable writing skills. For example, PSTs who leave TPPs with insufficient knowledge of the writing process may transfer those deficiencies into future classroom instruction. The new teachers, apprehensive of either writing or writing instruction, may opt to reduce writing instruction that requires them to engage in writing process practice with students. This is important because as Calkins, Ehrenworth, and Lehman (2012) noted, inadequate writing instruction can impair the K-12 students who will eventually become adults populating society as less than adequate writers. Additionally, this can limit academic, occupational, and personal attainments (Graham, 2006). In present day culture, writing is crucial because it is a primary means: (a) consumers use to give feedback, (b) clients are expected to communicate clearly, (c) colleagues compose collaboratively, and (d) researchers share findings (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012).

Additionally, the K-12 students who decide to become PSTs may remain underdeveloped concerning their own writing abilities, making the job of the TE responsible for their writing improvement more difficult. The TEs will need to apply more expertise and time to remedy the PST's inadequate writing skills when instructional time is already taxed. This cycle, if left unchecked, perpetuates a spiral of writing quality that needs intervention and improvement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study addresses the overarching question: Does teaching a single language arts methods course (totally devoted to writing instruction) to a group of preservice elementary

education majors lead to improvements in PSTs' writing ability as measured by a *6+1 writing traits* (Culham, 2003) rubric (education northwest, 2018) assessment?

Research Questions

The research questions that will be answered in this study are:

1. Does the quality of PST's writing improve over the course of one semester?

2. In what ways does two TE's instruction attempt to affect PST's quality of writing within the timeframe of a single methods course?

Definitions

Teaching preparation program

PSTs' college of education program beyond their general education courses.

Teacher educator

Instructors who are charged with the responsibility of teaching students who have been accepted into a teacher preparation program.

Writing Methods Instructor

The definition of exemplary writing methods instructors was a TE who included all the effective writing instruction components in their writing methods courses. (Scales et al., 2019)

Preservice teacher or future teacher

These terms refer to a college student who has been admitted into a teacher preparation program.

New teacher

This term refers to a teacher who completed the teacher preparation program and successfully obtained employment in a K-12 school. It can also include teachers who have been teaching in a K-12 school for two years or less.

K-12 Students

This term refers to the students new teachers will be teaching.

Writing

The general process of communicating thoughts and language in written form using alphabetical symbols (not only, but inclusive of, the physical activity of scribing symbols for communication).

Writing process

This term refers to a series of actions such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing (Graves, 2004) needed to produce written text that is understandable to others.

Quality of writing

Quality of writing is defined as the execution of key qualities that produce quality writing as described by Culham's (2003) *6 + 1 Trait Writing*, to include ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation.

Ideas

This term refers to the main message in a piece of writing.

Organization

This refers to the internal structure of the writing piece or its pattern of logic.

Voice

Voice refers to the personal tone and flavor of the author's message.

Word Choice

This term refers to the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning.

Sentence Fluency

This phrase refers to the rhythm and flow of the language in a piece of writing.

Conventions

This term refers to the mechanical correctness that makes a writing piece readable and clear to others. Conventions include writing elements such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing (Culham, 2003).

Presentation

Presentation is how the writing actually looks on the page.

Writing knowledge

This term refers to the understanding of the writing process (see above) and what there is to know about the act of composing (Morgan & Pytash, 2014).

Modeled writing

 This term refers to when TEs write in front of, with, or where students witness her/his writing while the TEs simultaneously thinks aloud to model the mental process of writing.

Modeling writing instruction

This term refers to a TE demonstrating how to teach writing. This might include using elements such as classroom practices and strategies in conjunction with demonstrations, observations or activities (Morgan & Pytash, 2014).

Writing sample

A piece of academic writing used in a teacher preparation program to assess PSTs' writing levels at the beginning and end of a literacy methods course.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Related Research

In order to orient the researcher and better address the research questions, this literature review discusses ways in which some TEs have attempted to improve PSTs' writing quality in the context of a methods course or TPP. The writing strategies and writing processes reviewed will be used in three ways: (a) as a means by which to orient the researcher to the field of writing quality in methods courses, (b) as a frame with which to inform interview questions, and (c) as a lens with which to inform views of two University of Central Florida (UCF) TEs as they attempt to affect the writing quality of PSTs who are signed up to take the Fall 2019-2020 Language Arts course *Language Arts in the Elementary School*.

Researchers have examined how TEs teach writing and writing instruction to PSTs. However, little research has been conducted on TEs' writing instruction alone. Therefore, for the purposes of focusing on the writing quality of PSTs in this study, I reviewed the literature primarily through the lens of improving future teacher's writing quality rather than examining how PSTs are taught to teach writing. The literature indicates TEs have taught PSTs with the goal of improving their writing through the use of: (a) modeled writing (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Morgan & Pytash, 2014; Salem, 2013), (b) allowing for choice in topics (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Graves, 2004; Norman & Spencer, 2005; Scales et al., 2019), (c) providing extensive writing opportunities (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Graves, 2004; Morgan & Pytash, 2014; Scales et al., 2019), (d) engaging in explicit instruction on the writing process, (Batchelor, Morgan, Kidder-Brown, & Zimmerman, 2014; Bazerman et al., 2017; Berge, Skar, Matre, Solheim,

Evensen, Otnes, and Thygesen, 2019; Culham, 2003; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Duman & Gocen, 2015; Marulanda Ángel & Martínez García, 2017; Morgan & Pytash, 2014; Özenç, 2016; Salem, 2013; Scales et al., 2019), (e) providing feedback (Delante, 2017; Marulanda Ángel & Martínez García, 2017; Wilder & Mongillo, 2007), and (f) engaging the PSTs in genre-specific writing strategies (Bastian, 2010; Batchelor, Morgan, Kidder-Brown, and Zimmerman, 2014; Marulanda Ángel & Martínez García, 2017; Morgan & Pytash, 2014).

How TEs Improve PSTs Writing Quality

Morgan and Pytash (2014) conducted an exhaustive review of research on preparing PSTs to become teachers of writing. They looked at research conducted between 1990-2010, finding 31 studies which met an extensive criterion for research on PSTs' preparation to teach writing. The findings were then divided into subcategories. The category of most relevance to this study is the category: Influential experiences in methods courses. Within this category they found PSTs' self-reported learning about teaching and writing, when TEs taught them to read like writers, modeled writing, provided extensive writing opportunities, and engaged the PSTs in the writing of a genre specific book.

Two limitations were noted with the studies Morgan and Pytash (2014) reviewed:

1. While performance-based measures are considered objective, perception-based measures such as the PSTs' self-reported learning are considered subjective (Benbunan-Fich, 2010).

2. Learning was not measured to show any difference in PSTs writing knowledge or skill levels.

Batchelor, Morgan, Kidder-Brown, and Zimmerman (2014) studied 35 preservice teachers enrolled in an early childhood education writing methods course. They wanted to better understand how genre writing learning opportunities contributed to what PSTs learned about the writing process. The study measured the learning of the PSTs using pre and post self-reported data using open-ended questions about what the PSTs learned. PSTs reported that genre writing helped them deconstruct poetry, helped them live process writing instruction, and supported the PSTs' development of genre-specific [poetry] knowledge using mentor text.

Indeed, Bastian (2010) noted limitations in genre specific writing strategies. He argued that using familiar genre writing strategy focused PSTs on critical personal events, distracting them from concentrating on writing improvements. Bastian claimed asking PSTs to begin a composition course by analyzing and critiquing their self-interests using familiar genres required students to focus on themselves, disregarding or neglecting the improvement of their writing skills. For example, if a PST decided to use a narrative genre to write about their last vacation, the PST may get caught up in reliving their memories instead of focusing energy on improvement of their writing skills.

Marulanda Ángel and Martínez García (2017) examined the effect of a multifaceted academic writing module on PSTs' writing skills in an English teacher preparation program at a medium sized public university in Colombia. The study attempted to design an academic, genre-based curriculum that would provide writing tasks PSTs needed to improve their academic

writing skills. The study used four written samples from each of the16 PSTs that were analyzed

over two semester periods in 2016. Quantitative data were gathered using a rubric which

measured six writing skills. Of the five areas improved by the multifaceted academic writing

module, most significant to this current study is the effects of the "multifaceted academic writing

class on PSTs' academic competences" (Marulanda Ángel & Martínez García, 2017, p. 49). Of

the four components used to improve the PSTs' writing skills and academic discourse, the two

most significantly related to this study are the positive aspects of teacher feedback, and the

genre-based process approach to writing. Results showed that when it comes to writing,

corrective feedback can guide students to improve their final product. Additionally, the focus on

process (not product) approach helped PSTs understand the cyclical writing pedagogy that

involves drafting, reflection, revision, and additional research rather than the linear, one-

dimensional correction of the textual product and form.

Delante (2017), an English language advisor and English language TE at James Cook

University-Singapore, researched the impact his written feedback had on students' academic

writing skills in particular and on learning in general. He conducted a content analysis of his

written feedback on 80 student drafts and 44 feedback responses conducted via online mediums

such as Google docs or OneDrive between November 2015 and June 2016. The goal was to shed

light on the relevance of reflective practice in the field of teaching and learning by using written

feedback that focused on language issues and writing skills, not subject content. Delante's results

categorized the written feedback as one of two types: focus on Form or focus on Meaning.

Coding further classified the feedback into six feedback functions: instructive, suggestive,

probing, stating a personal opinion, corrective, and affirming/negating. Delante (2017) further claimed that feedback focused mostly on surface-level errors, although useful to achieve accuracy in writing in the long term, may not substantially improve the quality of writing. Additionally, feedback that goes beyond form/language errors can help students make significant improvements not only in their writing, but also in their attitude and motivation to succeed in their studies. Moreover, findings included two confounding factors, context and culture, that influence which type of feedback is more effective to a group of learners.

Duman and Gocen (2015) studied the effect of the digital storytelling method on PSTs' creative writing skills using experimental and control groups' pretest-posttest. Digital storytelling in this study was defined as a method of telling tales or relaying tales to the audience by the narrator through multimedia tools. The participants consisted of 76 PSTs from the Classroom Teacher Education Department of Mugla Sitki Kocman University in the 2013-2014 academic year. The PSTs were divided into an experimental group (38) and a control group (38). A pre and post Creative Writing Skills Rubric was administered to measure eight sub-dimensions of writing skills; (1) originality of the ideas, (2) fluency of the thoughts, (3) flexibility of the thoughts, (4) richness of vocabulary, (5) sentence structure, (6) organization, (7) genre and style, and (8) correct use of grammar. Each sub-dimension in the rubric was assigned a score ranging from 1 to 5. An independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference (p<.05) in favor of the experimental groups' posttest results. Additionally, it was asserted that the PSTs improved their creative writing confidence.

Özenç (2016) conducted a study to find out whether process-oriented writing exercises/activities had any effect on the achievement and attitude of PSTs as well as to illicit PSTs' opinions on process-oriented writing approach. A total of 70 PSTs participated, half (n=35) in an experimental group and half (n=35) in a control group over a period of 11 weeks. PSTs' achievements and attitudes were quantitatively and qualitatively collected in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any meaningful difference between the pre and post-test marks of experimental and control groups in terms of achievement?

2. Is there any meaningful difference between the attitude points achieved by experimental and control groups at pre and post-tests?

The experimental group was given a pre and post test using the Writing Skills Assessment Scale to assess differences in the PSTs' skill levels. The Written Expression Attitude Scale was also administered before and after the course to measure any differences in PSTs' attitudes before and after a process-oriented writing method was implemented. While the results of the data analysis are given in the above study, the Writing Skills Assessment Scale and the Written Expression Attitude Scale are not included in the study. Additionally, interviews of PSTs were conducted in the middle of the experimental groups' course. The control group was taught traditionally, with no use of process-oriented writing approach.

Results from the study showed a difference of .001 between the achievement marks of pre-test and post-tests of the experimental group (p<.001). This finding indicated process-oriented writing activities were highly influential on the achievement of PSTs. Additionally,

findings indicated a difference of 0.1 between the pre and post-test of the experimental group (p<.01), showing process-oriented writing activities were highly influential on the post-implementation attitudes of the PSTs. Furthermore, PSTs' answers to interview questions confirmed their positive shift in post implementation attitudes.

Salem (2013) investigated the effects of using a program based on the writing workshop approach to develop basic writing skills of 40 PSTs of English in the Hurgada faculty of Education. The study defined writer's workshop as a process-based approach for teaching writing in an environment that employs modeling and coaching by a TE who typically uses a mini-lesson at the beginning followed by stages of writing (to include planning, drafting, and editing compositions for publication), and rewriting after which students come to a sharing time to celebrate their work. The quasi-experimental design included a checklist of basic writing skills and pre-posttests of those basic writing skills. The test was divided into four parts as follows; (1) writing workshop and writing process, (2) Punctuation, (3) Spelling, and (4) Grammar. The experimental group students were taught writing using the writing workshop approach over an eight-week period, after the basic writing skills pretest was administered. Of the test's four parts, the most relevant to the current study is the writing workshop and writing process portion. Results showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the PSTs on the pre (M = 5.4875) and posttest (M = 20.6625) of the writing workshop and writing process test favoring the post testing, revealing that the PSTs benefited from the writing workshop program concerning the writing process component.

Wilder and Mongillo (2007) conducted an experimental exploration of special procedures used in a series of game-like online tasks designed to help preservice language arts teachers develop descriptive expository writing skills. The Wilder and Mongillo (2007) study used a four-element, four-score (0 to 3) rubric to evaluate the writing samples for the paper-based pre- and posttests descriptions. The four rubric elements included (1) salient features identified and described, (2) word choice, (3) conciseness, and (4), text structure. Results found the scores of two students in the experimental sections improved, however, when analyzed using Mann-Whitney U-tests, no significant differences ($p > 0.05$, two-tailed test) in either the experimental or control scores on any of the four elements were found.

Scales et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative multiple-case study investigating exemplary writing methods instructors' assignments from elementary level writing methods courses, where the focus of the course is on teaching candidates how to teach writing. The definition of exemplary writing methods instructors was a TE who included all the effective writing instruction components in their writing methods courses. The original 34 TEs, identified as meeting the aforementioned definition, were reduced to a final 8 by meeting the following criteria; a) teaching courses taken by undergraduate elementary teacher candidates; (b) teaching writing methods courses; (c) using exemplary writing instructional practices; and (d) conducting direct writing instruction with opportunities for field application. The research question of most interest to this study was: What do exemplary writing methods instructors (TEs) strive to teach candidates (PSTs) through their course assignments? Data sources including audio-recorded and transcribed individual interviews, syllabi, and writing methods instructors' course assignment

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directions were used to uncover the answers. Data were sorted and resorted until two predominant categories emerged; developing the self as writer and becoming a teacher of writing. Of the 22 assignments the 8 TEs assigned to PSTs, 11 were focused on developing the self as writer and 11 were focused on becoming a teacher of writing. During interviews, the TEs explained the importance of requiring assignments that develop PSTs as teachers of writing. They used assignments that assessed student writing, held writing conferences with students, contained elements of reflection, and tracked writing development. Additionally, every TE participant addressed how they model process writing for candidates and the importance of modeling and teaching the power of authentic writing for real purposes. For example, TEs purposefully used assignments where they read leads from 10 different children's books to explicitly teach how authors use leads before asking candidates to write their own leads.

The study above explored the writing assignments used by exemplary writing methods instructors that specifically focused on PSTs' selves as writers and focused on becoming a teacher of writing. However, there were no data measurements to confirm any shifts in PSTs' sense of selves as writers. While the above study does not measure changes in PST writing efficacy, it was relevant to explore the manner in which master educators attempted to increase PSTs' focus on becoming a teacher of writing because focusing them on becoming teachers of writing would then transfer into their future writing instruction as classroom teachers (Scales et al., 2019).

Summary

With such limited time for PST writing instruction in teacher preparation programs, it is important that TEs provide learning that is supported by research in effective teacher preparation. Therefore, this study intends to expand on the research of Scales et al., (2019) by conducting research on TEs attempts to impact PST writing quality and using pre and post measurements of PSTs' writing samples along with observations in a TE's classroom during instruction.

The review of literature above was used as a frame with which an interview protocol was constructed to best generate data concerning the TE's impact on writing quality. The literature review also served as a lens through which areas of interest were formulated to observe concerning the TE's writing pedagogy practices with PSTs enrolled in the UCF Fall 2019-2020 Language Arts course: Language Arts in the Elementary School. For example, if while observing the TE he/she employs feedback as a means of improving PST writing, the above literature can guide and help determine if the feedback focuses on form or meaning (Delante, 2017).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

While the literature reviewed above contains information on the historic uses of TEs' writing instruction in TPPs to affect PSTs' writing, many do not measure changes in the writing quality of the students. Rather, self-reported measures of student confidence in the area of writing and writing instruction are frequently used to describe students' writing abilities. While students reported enjoying writing instruction activities and also believed TEs' feedback helped them learn (Wilder & Mongillo, 2007), measurements were not used to confirm any change in learning.

Certainly, it is not only significant that TEs help PSTs feel confident about their writing ability, but equally or more importantly that the teacher educator help improve the PSTs ability to demonstrate and produce quality writing. Indeed, the more familiar and skilled prospective teachers become as writers, the more effectively they will incorporate writing into their classroom (Scales et al., 2019; Street, 2003). Therefore, the intent of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study (Creswell, 2018) was to discover how two teacher educators attempted to affect PSTs' quality of writing in one methods course by answering the following research questions:

1. Does the quality of PSTs' writing improve over the course of one semester?

2. In what ways does two TE's instruction attempt to affect PSTs' quality of writing within the timeframe of a single writing methods course?

Research Design

I used an explanatory sequential mixed methods study to collect qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously and analyzed each separately once approval was received to conduct research from the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix A). The integration of both qualitative and quantitative data provides a more comprehensive analysis of the research questions (Creswell, 2018)., Qualitative data of the TEs' writing instruction strategies were gathered using field notes created during observations (for an example of field notes see Appendix B) and verbatim transcripts (Appendix C) from the semi-structured interviews. Pre and post data of PSTs' writing quality were collected and measured quantitatively by two independent raters using a 6+1 Traits writing rubric (see Appendix D). The researcher's aim for combining both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2018) was to measure PSTs' writing quality over the course of one semester while simultaneously exploring the role of two writing instructors' attempts to improve PSTs' writing quality. Therefore, this study uses qualitative data aims to view TEs' writing instruction strategies as well as quantitative data to measure any change in PSTs' writing quality.

This chapter reports information on the context and participants found in this study. Additionally, data collection and analysis procedures used to answer each research question are explained.

Context

The study took place within the context of the University of Central Florida (UCF) in the College of Community Innovation and Education (CCIE). Within this college resides the School

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of Teacher Education, UCF's Elementary TPP. In this program, PSTs take a total of two Language Arts courses. In their first semester, PSTs enroll in the LAE 3414 Literature for Children. In the second semester, PSTs enroll in the LAE 4314 Language Arts in the Elementary School. According to the UCF Course Catalog (2018), the latter course is focused on, "Content, principles, materials, and techniques involved in teaching, speaking, listening, writing, and spelling in the elementary school; organizing for instruction" (p. 529). In practice, however, the second course is fully focused on writing. Therefore, within the elementary UCF TPP, instructors have two courses designated to the teaching of Language Arts, one of which has a full focus on writing instruction. It is within this one course, LAE 4314, that the instructors have the best chance to attempt to affect the quality of PSTs' writing quality. Therefore, because the TPP had only one course totally devoted to the teaching of writing, it was important to study what can be done within the course during this short timeframe to attempt to improve PSTs' production of quality writing.

Participants

Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013) was used to select TEs (n=2), hereafter referred to as Willow and Maureen, and student participants (n= 48) for this study. All of the student participants were either juniors or seniors previously admitted into the UCF TPP. All 62 PSTs participated in the first (pre) writing sample and 48 participated in the last (post) writing sample. Specifically, 2 students in Willow's course did not turn in a post writing sample, and 12 of the 33 students in Maureen's course did not turn in a post writing sample. For reliability purposes, only

the 48 students who participated in both the first (pre) and last (post) writing sample assignments were used for data analysis.

Teacher Educator Participants.

The sampling was purposeful in that Willow and Maureen were selected intentionally. A UCF assistant professor recommended these TEs as potential study participants because they are instructors who are known to place emphasis on the writing process and concentrate on attempting to improve the writing quality of their students. Additionally, I used the aforementioned literature review as a lens with which to focus on ways Willow and Maureen engaged in writing instruction.

I did not ask Willow and Maureen to self-report gender, ethnicity, or exact age as those attributes were not under study. However, in the interest of replication of this study for future research, it can be reported that both Willow and Maureen are Caucasian female members of the perennial, 'ageless generation', defined as women in their 40-60s who get involved, stay curious, mentor others, and are passionate, compassionate, creative, confident, collaborative, global-minded risk takers." (Kerr, 2017).

I contacted both Willow and Maureen via email before the fall semester began to describe the study and ask them to participate. Maureen agreed to participate in an email and suggested a meeting in person to discuss additional information of how we would proceed. Willow initially declined the invitation to participate because she was not assigned to teach the course in the fall. Soon after, Willow was notified by the university that the course was added to her list of classes

for fall 2019. Upon receiving the notice, Willow reached out to the researcher via email confirming her interest in participating in the study.

Willow.

I met with Willow on August 26 at UCF to gather information about Willow's background and teaching experience in an interview. In the semi-structured interview, Willow spoke of her experiences as an elementary classroom teacher, librarian, administrator, and more than six years of college level instruction (Willow Interview transcriptions, 2019). When asked about herself as a writer, she said she never considered herself a writer early in her career, " I was always a straight A student, and always able to write, but just not really passionate about it" (Willow Interview transcriptions, 2019, p.2).

Maureen.

I met with Maureen on August 29, 2019. In the semi-structured interview, Maureen described herself as a practitioner. Maureen revealed she was in her 21st year of teaching which included elementary classroom teacher, literacy coach, and over five years' experience teaching at the college level. When asked to tell about herself as a writer, Maureen said, "I like to write, not journaling, but I love email".

Preservice Teacher Participants.

Purposeful sampling (Clark & Creswell, 2015) was implemented to help generalize from this study's sample of PSTs to the general population of PSTs. The specific PST students who

signed up for Willow and Maureen's course in this study were not individually chosen. Rather, they were PST students who happened to sign up for Willow and Maureen's particular language arts courses involved in this study. The sampling was purposeful in that all the PSTs who enrolled in Willow and Maureen's 2019-2020 Language Arts methods course were actively recruited. In other words, the researcher purposefully chose Willow and Maureen but had no control over which PST students signed up to take their 2019-2020 course or which PSTs volunteered to participate in this study.

I did not ask PSTs to self-report age, gender, and ethnicity since those attributes were not under study. However, for future study replication purposes, the researcher reports the PSTs were mostly Caucasian females in their early-20's. There were a few non-traditional female students in the 30+ age range, as well as four male students in their 20's in Willow's class and two male students in their 20's in Maureen's class.

I attended the first class of both Willow and Maureen in person to discuss participation in the current research with the PSTs. Every PST was given an Explanation of Research form (see Appendix E) and briefed on the purpose and details of what would be required if they decided to participate. All 62 PSTs initially agreed to voluntarily become participants, although only 48 students turned in both the first (pre) and last (post) writing samples. Therefore, the final numeric representation for participants included in the data analysis are PSTs (n=48) and teacher educators (n=2).

Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative Data Collection

To answer research question one, (1) Does the quality of PSTs' writing improve over the course of one semester?, I created a writing prompt (see Figure 3) to collect writing samples from each PST participant (n=62) at the beginning (pre) and end (post) of both Willow and Maureen's courses. Two raters used the 6 +1 Writing Traits Rubric (Culham, 2003; Coe, , Hanita, Nishioka, & Smiley, , 2011; Education Northwest, 2018) to score seven specific writing traits for each PST writing sample collected. Inter-Rater reliability was calculated using the IBM SPSS program to run Spearman's rho correlation coefficients. The same IBM SPSS program was used to calculate and determine any statistically significant differences between pre and post writing sample quality using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Writing Prompt.

The researcher-created writing prompt was a series of four open-ended questions. The PSTs answered the following writing prompt both at the beginning (pre) and end (post) of the course. See Figure3 for details. To ensure the data from the writing prompt produced useful and measurable information, I chose to use expository genre. Therefore, the PSTs had the opportunity to demonstrate voice, word choice, sentence fluency, organization, and conventions when explaining, illustrating, and clarifying their answers. Additionally, it is possible to exhibit presentation depending on the projected audience of the writing sample.

In detail, answer the following:

1. How would you define writing?

2. Describe all the ways you currently use writing in your life?

3. What writing experiences have shaped you as a writer?

4. What is your opinion of your own writing skills?

Figure 3

Researcher-Created Writing Prompt

I decided to incorporate a variety of question styles to obtain rich, robust descriptive text rather than simple, memorized answers. For example, question one could be considered convergent or divergent (Intel Education Teaching Tools and Resources, 2020), since the answer is both definable by dictionary standards and subjective to each writer. Moreover, the divergent nature of question three allows the PSTs freedom to express opinions while recalling personal experiences. Question four is a combination of divergent and evaluative. For example, when asking the PSTs to give an opinion of their own writing skills, they also need to evaluate which personal experience details to support their answers with.

I piloted the original writing prompt (containing only questions one and two) at the Association of Teacher Educators Summer 2019 Conference in Vermont where I presented the current study in its infancy (Clark, 2019). Roundtable colleagues offered feedback and suggested formulating the questions in such a way that measurable writing traits would be present *and simultaneously,* qualitative information could be collected for possible future studies on PST's writing and personal writing perceptions. During this round of my research process and

question revisions, I added questions three and four. I edited the questions a final time and then tested the specific information generated. An informal pilot test was conducted via text and sent to four graduate peers in the Curriculum & Instruction program at UCF. The writing samples resulted in rich, descriptive text about writing and generated writing samples which contained all seven writing traits.

Writing Samples Collection Procedures.

The researcher, Willow, and Maureen collaborated via emails to coordinate the best way to present and collect the writing samples from the PSTs (Personal communications, email, 2019). After three collaborative emails, all agreed collecting the writing samples using the webcourse portal would be the most efficient and least time-consuming for the instructors and the PSTs. Additionally, all agreed collecting the writing samples using a Webcourse assignment could potentially eliminate any time constraints or classroom pressures face-to-face collections may have imposed. Online submission would also eliminate any handwriting discrepancies. Additionally, as part of the required university's financial aid mandatory assignment due the first week of class (University of Central Florida, 2019) Willow and Maureen each created a two part activity in Webcourses for the PSTs: (a) an activity unique to each instructor's class, and (b) inclusion of the researcher's writing prompt.

Willow and Maureen both gave the PSTs ample time, a minimum of 48 hours outside of class using the webcourse assignment, to complete the writing prompt activity and turn it in. The writing prompt was posted the first day of class and the PSTs' writing responses were due the

following Friday. The first writing samples were then compiled by Willow and Maureen and electronically sent to the researcher in a password protected zip file for data analysis.

After receiving the first writing samples (pre) of the PSTs who consented to participate (n=62), I assigned each PST a pseudonym to provide a level of confidentiality. The pseudonyms also allowed for pairing the pre and post data. I then created two identical Excel spreadsheets (see Appendix F), one for each rater to record the writing sample rubric score for each PST.

6+1 Writing Traits Rubric Instrument.

The 6+1 traits have been used successfully to measure the specific sections and proficiency levels of the seven traits of writing (Culham, 2003; Moskal & Leydens, 2000). Therefore, I decided to use the 6+1 Traits writing rubric because it contains common language for writing assessment applicable across many genres of writing (Culham, 2003). Additionally, it contains widely shared vocabulary educators use to describe quality of writing. Moreover, an assessment measure is said to have construct validity when the measure completely and exclusively measures the intended constructs (Moskal & Leydens, 2000). Since the purpose of the detailed rubric is to measure the writing performance of the 6+1 traits of writing and no other variables, the scale itself may be said to have construct validity. The fact that the rubric itself asks the rater to focus on different characteristics of writing one at a time further increases the construct validity of each rubric.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Raters

Two independent raters scored the PSTs writing samples. The researcher in this study is Rater 1. Among the qualifications deemed credible for Rater 1's capabilities to score writing samples for this study are a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of Arizona, a current Arizona state certification to teach K-8, a Master's degree in Adult Education & Professional Training, two-time participation in the Southern Arizona Writing Project (a division of the National Writing Project), over 15 years' experience as a classroom educator, and 57 units completed in the UCF CCIE Ed.D. program to date.

Rater 2, a highly qualified academic with a Ph.D. in Language, Reading and Culture from the University of Arizona, was selected to score the PSTs writing samples due to her extensive qualifications in literacy and writing instruction. Among her many distinguished titles are Language Arts Methods Course Assistant Professor and former Director of the Southern Arizona Writing Project at the University of Arizona.

In addition to professional qualifications, the two raters share a past academic connection. Rater 2 was Rater 1's College of Education instructor in Rater 1's teacher preparation program at the University of Arizona. Rater 2 was also the director of the Southern Arizona Writing Project during the time Rater 1 participated as a fellow. Therefore, while the previous connection between raters may raise concerns of bias for audiences of this study, the previous academic connection between raters provided a shared interpretation of the 6+1 writing traits. Both raters

learned, taught, and experienced the 6+1 writing traits in the same academic institution, therefore

sharing a uniform interpretation of the 6+1 writing trait language. Additionally, the raters'

academic familiarity should be viewed as an asset because the established professional

relationship allowed for healthy and rigorous discussion of discrepancies. For example, during a

calibration session, Rater 2 gave a presentation score of 2 while Rater 1 gave a score of 4. The

writing prompt being scored was a single-spaced paragraph with a bold type title at the top of the

writing sample (see Figure 4).

Initial Assignment

Writing is composing ideas onto a page through text or even drawings. It is the ability to express a sequence of events, reflect, paint a picture with words, choose a side, explain a topic, or show anything that can involve some thought, a pencil, and paper. Currently, I use writing while in school, planning a budget, writing emails, reading texts, journaling, making to do lists, texting, and in many other ways. This class has greatly shaped me as a writer and has allowed me to really dive into expressive writing as well as narrative and expository writing involving informational text. I found that spending time to journal this semester has also shaped me a lot as it has brought self-awareness and reflection to the forefront of my mind which has molded me as a person. I now believe that my writing has improved and that although I may not be the best writer, I am an improving writer who strives to get better daily.

Figure 4

First Writing Sample Scored by Raters

The only double-spacing was placed between the title and the paragraph. Rater 2 argued,

according to the rubric language in the '2 Emerging' column, third row down (see Figure 5),

"...few intentional margins of boundaries." were not used as only one paragraph was present.

However, Rater 1 argued using the language of the rubric in "4 Capable" column, third row down, white space *was* used to frame text with acceptable margins and the paragraph *was* indented. Additionally, Rater 1 argued that the rubric language did not require multiple indentions in order to be scored a 4. Additionally, Rater 1 pointed out that white space *was* used to frame text with acceptable margins. Rater 2 consented to change the presentation score to a 4 per the outlines of the rubric.

Figure 5

Page from the 6 + 1 Writing Traits Rubric Outlining the Criteria for Scoring Presentation

Rating Process

Raters who score open-ended writing samples need to have the following multiple rating elements to produce high-quality scoring (McClellan, 2010):

- Expertise in the content area

- Similar scores (within one number deviation) to the other raters

- A scoring rubric that clearly defines each distinct score level

- Understanding of the scoring rubric

- Consistent application of rubric language and definitions

Therefore, to help calibrate the consistent application of rubric language and definitions, the raters met in person on September 23, 2019 (Audit trail, 2019) after the writing samples were received. They chose the first writing sample (pre) on the list of alphabetized pseudonyms and independently scored each of the seven traits assigning each trait a proficiency score from 1-6 (lowest to highest, respectfully) using the 6+1 Writing Traits rubric. In other words, each rater gave the writing sample a separate proficiency score for ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. Table 1 contains the proficiency scores each rater assigned for the seven writing traits of the first (pre) writing sample graded:

Table 1

First Scores Assigned by Each Rater for Calibration of Scoring Agreement

	Ideas	Organization	Voice	Word choice	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Presentation
Rater 1	3	3	3	3	3	5	4
Rater 2	3	3	4	3	4	5	4

Next, the raters disclosed the proficiency scores to each other and used the language of the rubric to justify the scores they assigned (1-6) for each trait. Additionally, the raters used exact rubric language to discuss and clarify how they scored the writing trait proficiency. For example, when both raters gave Ideas a score of three, each rater took turns locating and reading aloud the exact language in the Ideas rubric seen in Figure 6 that constituted their own justification and evidence of a proficiency score of three.

KEY QUESTION

Does the writer engage the reader with fresh information or perspective on a focused topic?

| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Does not reflect a main idea or topic	Has a main idea that begins to emerge, but direction is unclear	States or implies a main idea but is unclear, unfocused, inaccurate, and/or underdeveloped	Communicates a generally clear, focused, and accurate main idea with acceptable development	Presents a clear, focused, and substantive main idea with convincing development	Establishes a clear, focused, and significant main idea, with original insights, that is fully developed
A. Main Idea	Does not have a main idea or topic	Focuses on a general topic but does not suggest a main idea	Suggests a main idea, but the direction of the piece is still unclear	Presents an adequately clear, focused main idea	Develops a clear, focused, and somewhat complex and/or original main idea	Conveys a clear, focused, complex, and original main idea that drives the piece
B. Details, evidence, and support	Does not support a main idea In arguments grade 7+, does not acknowledge a counterclaim	Attempts to support the main idea with some information and/or details, but these are unfocused, unclear, and/or unrelated In arguments grade 7+, may acknowledge but does not attempt to develop counterclaim	Provides incidental support of the main idea with information and/or details that lacks specificity, relevance, and/or accuracy In arguments grade 7+, may acknowledge but does not develop counterclaim adequately	Supports the main idea with generally accurate, specific, and relevant information and/or details In arguments grade 7+, develops and addresses counterclaim adequately	Supports the main idea fully, with specific, credible, relevant, information and/or vivid details In arguments grade 7+, fully develops and addresses counterclaim	Supports the main idea convincingly, with highly specific, credible information and/or striking details that go beyond the obvious In arguments grade 7+, thoroughly develops and addresses counterclaim in an original way

2

Figure 6

Ideas Rubric used by Raters for Evidence and Language of Proficiency Scores

Indeed, in the category of Voice, Rater 1 assigned a score of three while Rater 2 gave it a score of four. Rather than negotiate *only* each score that did not match, the raters used the language of the rubric to explain to each other their rationale for *every* given proficiency score. After the explanation, each rater was free to adjust the score or keep it according to their conviction. All seven writing trait scores represented in Table 1 were discussed in the same way during the scoring calibration session whether the raters had exact numerical agreement of scores or not. Therefore, this strategy was used to improve and calibrate the individual rater's scoring (McClellan, 2010). After extensive discussion of each traits definition using the key question at

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the top of each trait's rubric page and the definition of each level of proficiency contained therein, the raters went on to score the rest of the first (pre) writing samples independently. Moreover, the raters repeated the same calibration process twice more, once on October 1, 2019 and once on November 11, 2019 (Audit Trail, 2019) toward the end of the first (pre) writing sample scoring. A final meeting between the raters for the purpose of calibrating a post writing sample occurred on January 14, 2019.

Inter-rater reliability

After pre and post writing samples were scored, the totals of Rater 1's scores and Rater 2's scores were then calculated. These Raters' totals were used to determine inter rater reliability using the IBM SPSS software, version 25 to run the Spearman's correlation coefficient (StatisticSolutions, 2019a). Spearman's rho was used because the data were ordinal and non-parametric. I decided to further calculate inter rater reliability by individual writing trait category: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation, to discover if there were any significantly low values that could affect the validation of rater reliability.

I used the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, a statistical comparison of the average of two dependent samples (StatisticsSolutions, 2019b) to answer research question one: Does the quality of PST's writing improve over the course of one semester? The PSTs' pre and post writing samples were matched, and I ran a Wilcoxon signed-rank test using IBM's SPSS software, version 25. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was the appropriate test to use since the rubric scores were assigned numeric values, making the results ordinal level data.

Qualitative Data Collection

To answer the second question of this study, in what ways do two TEs attempt to affect PSTs' quality of writing within the timeframe of a single writing methods course, qualitative data were collected to explore the TEs' writing instruction strategies in person. Data included observation protocols and semi-structured interviews. These specific qualitative data were used to document how the instructors placed emphasis on the writing process and how they attempted to improve the writing quality of their students.

Observations of Teacher Educator Instruction

Willow. Willow and I scheduled observations in Willow's class beginning the first week of LAE 4314 Language Arts in the Elementary School and concluding the third week of the course. Willow's class met once a week face-to-face at UCF. The first observation was conducted on the first day of class after I discussed PST participation in the study with the PSTs. Indeed, the academic structure of the first day of a class is traditionally used to discuss class expectations, syllabi, and other introductory matters. However, I had plenty of time to conduct a 45-60-minute observation of regular instruction as Willow did conduct regular instruction during the three-hour class.

Upon entering Willow's classroom, I observed that tables were generously spread around the room in no particular pattern. PSTs entered and chose a seat of their liking. Willow began instruction on time, introduced herself, and briefly discussed the course title and general content. She then introduced the researcher to the PSTs and allowed the researcher to explain and clarify the study. Next, after finishing the presentation, I sat at the table at the far end of the classroom

between Willow's desk and the PSTs' tables to begin the first observation while Willow took control of the instruction.

  Maureen. The researcher and Maureen scheduled observations for the first day of class and the following two weeks of the course. The observations were set for once a week during Maureen's LAE 4314 Language Arts in the Elementary School. Maureen's class met once a week at UCF. I conducted the first observation on the first day of class.

 Maureen's classroom was slightly larger than Willow's room. Four narrow tables were arranged in one straight row extending the width of the room. Each table comfortably sat two people, the row accommodating eight students. The rows continued evenly spaced, to the back of the classroom. Five rows in all filled the room from front to back. Narrow aisles lined the outer sides of the rows which served as a walkway to gain easy access to each row. Additionally, various computer stations ran the length of the far wall from the instructor's desk to the back of the classroom where students could sit.

 I chose to sit in the front row to the far left of the instructor's desk. PSTs entered the room and chose a seat of their liking. Maureen announced class would start up to five minutes late to allow for PSTs to locate the classroom on the first day. Five minutes after class was scheduled to start, Maureen introduced herself, discussed the general outline of the course, and started an ice breaking activity. I participated in the icebreaker as to not disrupt the social environment Maureen was creating with the icebreaker activity. After the activity was complete, Maureen introduced the researcher who then proceeded to explain the study to the PSTs. After the explanation, I sat down and proceeded to observe the writing instruction.

Observation Tools

The Writing Instruction Observation Protocol (WIOP) (Kotula, Aguilar, & Tivnan, 2014) was used to focus the researcher on what strategies were used during writing instruction (see Appendix G). Quality of instruction was not addressed or measured since (1) the teacher educators' quality of instruction was not under study, (2) they were selected because they are known to instruct with attention to writing quality and, (3) they were recommended by faculty. The WIOP was originally intended to observe elementary instructors teaching writing. However, an observer could adjust the protocol foci for any level of pedagogical observations. For example, guided practice or modeling could be observed at all education levels and described accordingly. I chose the WIOP for three reasons. First, as seen in Figure 7, the WIOP provided the researcher with a place to quickly document when an instructor implemented/did not implement particular writing instruction strategies.

Writing Instruction Observation Protocol

Date _____ District _____ School _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____ Observer _____

Topic _____

Length of Lesson: ___ Minutes ___ New Lesson ___ Continued Lesson

All observation questions refer to the writing instruction

Introduction

Does the Teacher:

1. Explicitly state, verbally, the writing session's objective? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Explicitly explain how previous lessons relate to today's writing session? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Activate prior knowledge relevant to today's writing session? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Skills/Strategies Instruction/Practice

(___ minutes) ___N/A

Does the Teacher:

4. Provide direct skill/strategy instruction? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Provide indirect skill/strategy instruction? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Provide an example of writing related to the instruction and/or practice? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Model the process of using focus skills/strategies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Explain how or why skills/strategies/processes will help students as writers (the *why* of

   instruction)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Figure 7

First Page of the Writing Instruction Observation Protocol

Second, the WIOP helped the researcher stay focused on observing the six deductive codes found in the literature review: Modeled writing, allowing for choice in topic, extensive writing opportunities, explicit instruction in writing process, providing feedback, and engaging in genre specific writing strategies. Third, using the WIOP was an additional way for the researcher to keep notes during specific times in the observations. For example, when Willow introduced the lesson during the first observation, she explicitly stated the writing session objective, "Today we

are going to crazy write and build our writing community". I then wrote 'building a writing community' at the top of the observation protocol and wrote 'crazy writing' on the line titled 'Topic'. Willow went on to conduct a whole group activity in which all students orally contributed to building a story using the previous students' additions to the story. During the first 10 minutes of the activity, I checked the 'yes' box under the introduction section of the observation protocol that asked if the instructor 'explicitly states, verbally, the writing session's objective'.

In addition to using the WIOP, I took field notes. The field notes took the form of handwritten notes organized in a two-columned t-chart labeled descriptive and reflective (Appendix B). These field notes were used simultaneously with the WIOP and used to document descriptive and reflective notes. For example, during the first observation in Maureen's class, I used the two-columned chart to document noteworthy information including instructor quotes. When Maureen taught the intro icebreaker activity, she connected why the lesson was important to the PSTs' future classroom instruction. I used the descriptive column to quote Maureen, "Talking is a kickstarter to writing". Later, in the reflective column, I proceeded to write about how Maureen encouraged the PSTs to talk about the assignment before they started to write. In the same manner, after leaving the observation, I used the written notes in the descriptive column to write reflective memos while the information was fresh.

I used the data recorded in the field notes to write an analytic memo for deeper meaning connections to the codes discovered in observations (Saldana, 2015). Moreover, I documented

observed writing instruction using the WIOP and field notes simultaneously during all four observations.

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted as a secondary data source. The interviews took place separately at different times in the instructors' respective offices and were audio taped with permission. Transcription software was used to transcribe verbatim transcripts immediately following the interviews. I substituted pseudonyms for the teacher educators' names to provide a measure of confidentiality. The transcripts were moved to a password protected file and computer per the UCF IRB regulations. The data will be deleted after the IRB prescribed amount of time for storage has expired. Meta-data such as time, date, location, etc., were recorded in an analytic memo.

A semi-structured interview protocol was used to collect data from Willow and Maureen. Figure 7 shows the anticipated data to be collected in column one, questions in column two, and prompts to elicit more detailed information in column three. I used a semi-structured interview protocol model taken from a qualitative course in the UCF CCIE program (Boote, 2018). The interview began with an ice breaker to establish rapport and to encourage interviewee participation (Rubin & Rubin, 2016). The conversational partnership between the researcher and the interviewee was continued with prompts asking for clarification of each response as needed. I continued to manage the conversation with appropriate pauses and ample time given for the interviewee to think and reply. Member checking was employed at the end to clarify main points and offer the interviewee an opportunity to add information at the end of each interview

Data	Question	Prompts
Ice breaker	Tell me about yourself	Years teaching, education…
Personal experience with writing	Tell me about yourself as a writer	In what way do you participate in writing?
Experiences with writing preparation	Tell me about how you were prepared as a writing methods instructor?	Educated in writing?
Experiences using writing prep currently	Tell me about how writing methods instructor prep currently reflects in your own instruction?	What parts of your TPP do you use in your latest instruction?
Experiences as a writing educator in methods course	Tell me about your experiences as a writing methods instructor?	Are there any memorable events that stand out when thinking of teaching methods courses?
Information concerning preplanning for instruction	What information do you use to plan your writing course?	How do you determine what to teach?
Perception of PSTs' general writing skill abilities	How would you describe PSTs' quality of writing?	What do you think contributes to the variation in writing quality of the PSTs?
Strategies and preparation to impact PSTs' writing quality.	What do you do to improve pst writing?	

Figure 8

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol used by the Researcher

Researcher Reflexivity

A reflexive researcher is one who is aware of their own potential bias and subjectivity and is able to step back and take a critical look at his or her own role in the research process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Researcher reflexivity was attended to throughout the data collection process by the researcher in this study. For example, I observed one of the instructors giving students feedback such as, "good" or "nice" when listening to them answer questions about future classroom writing instruction. I prematurely judged the feedback as too general to be an effective teaching pedagogy. After further observation of the lesson, I recognized the bias was inappropriately placed on the instructor's feedback strategy. Additionally, I realized the personal bias was because of years instructing in early elementary

grades. I wrongly attributed generic feedback as inappropriate in the college level class, later realizing the feedback was not the main focus of the instructor's lesson. After adjusting the personal bias, I could see the value in using general feedback for the purpose of conserving time to engage the PSTs in a series of probing questions.

Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures

Round One of Analysis

In round one of analysis, I purposefully chose a list of codes *before* beginning data analysis (deductive) to harmonize with the study's conceptual framework and research goals (Saldana, 2015). The literature review was used as a lens with which to choose the six effective research-based writing strategies for deductively coding. The six were:

- Modeled writing
- Allowing for choice in topic
- Extensive writing opportunities
- Explicit instruction in writing process
- Providing feedback
- Engaging in genre specific writing strategies

Next, I created a color-coding system for each of the six research-based writing strategies. Each of the six codes were assigned a specific highlight color to quickly be identified.

Observations. I then read the WIOPs to become further familiar with the content. Next, I reread the WIOPs to specifically look for the six specific writing categories, highlighting them all according to the color-coding system. For example, when Willow or Maureen mentioned or used modeled writing in the WIOPs, I highlighted the words in the light blue color which represents the modeled writing category.

Round Two of Analysis

Next, magnitude coding (Saldana, 2015) was used to organize and record the frequency of each specific writing strategy. I created a chart to tally the frequency of the deductively coded categories (Saldana, 2015). For example, I counted nine light blue highlights present in Willow's observations/field notes. Nine was then written under Willow's observation column, across from the light blue, modeled writing row in Table 3. The total highlights of a specific writing strategy category were then entered in the totals columns.

Field notes. Next, I read the field notes to review the contents. Additionally, the field notes were reread and I deductively coded and highlighted the specific writing strategies with the same color-coding system used in the WIOPs. The writing strategy totals found in the field notes were combined with the WIOP totals as these data are both considered a part of the observations. For

example, I counted eight light blue highlights in Maureen's WIOPs and one in the observational field notes. Nine was then entered in the column designated for Maureen's total observations. The remaining writing strategy category totals were also counted and placed in the appropriate columns within the frequency chart.

Semi-structured interviews. Next, I read through the interview transcriptions to become familiar with the data. Additionally, I reread the interview transcripts to locate and color-code each writing strategy category occurrence. Each occurrence was highlighted using the same color-coding system as in the observations. The totals of each specific writing strategy occurrence were tallied and added to the appropriate column on the frequency chart.

Round Three of Analysis

Additionally, I remained open and looked within and between the data to discover other salient patterns such as those that were not a part of the six specific writing strategies. For example, when I reread Willow and Maureen's interview transcripts, the themes "experience, applied writing practice, and collaboration" repeatedly appeared. These inductively coded themes were documented and color-coded with different colors from those of the deductively coded writing strategies. The data-driven, inductive codes were then tallied and added to a separate frequency chart for further/separate analysis.

Round Four of Analysis

Next, I underlined/circled/ bolded any textual evidence or reference to the 6+1 Writing Traits: ideas, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation found in the observation and interview data.

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Synthesis of Qualitative and Quantitative

I began synthesizing the qualitative and quantitative data by ranking the data occurrences from most frequent to least frequent. Next, I compared qualitative data and quantitative data to begin synthesizing results and the discussion those results launch.

I assigned equal weight to the qualitative and quantitative data of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study (Creswell, 2018). Additionally, I interpreted results from all rounds of data analysis to measure any statistically statistical difference in PSTs' writing quality and to explore any prominent parallel themes found in Willow and Maureen's writing instruction. I then used the merged data to confirm any agreement/commonalities between observed writing instruction in Willow and Maureen's classroom and their self-reported writing pedagogues. Moreover, quantitative data was collected to measure any change in PSTs' writing quality after participating in a course taught by a writing methods instructor.

Limitations and Delimitations

Whereas this study provides opportunities for generalizations of PSTs' writing quality to the population of PSTs, they cannot be regarded as conclusive or exhaustive (Writing Across the Curriculum Clearinghouse, 2020) as the following differences may also present limitations.

Willow and Maureen incentivized PSTs' post writing sample participation differently. Maureen assigned a grade and offered ten points to the completion of the post writing sample assignment whereas Willow offered 50 points of extra credit for the post writing sample completion. This may have caused a discrepancy in how many PSTs participated in the post

writing samples. In future study replication, this limitation can be addressed by specifically outlining what, if any, incentives instructors can use to collect data.

Additionally, while the rubric used to measure writing sample quality was detailed and the inter-rater reliability was considerably strong, scoring writing is subjective. Moreover, although I created the writing prompt in such a manner that the PSTs' had an opportunity to demonstrate voice, word choice, sentence fluency, organization etc., a rubric of expectations was not provided. Additionally, the participants were not explicitly told or reminded that the pre and post writing samples would be measured for writing improvements using the 6+1 writing traits. This may have deprived the PSTs of motivation to put forth their best effort to demonstrate writing improvement.

However, while the small sample size (n=48) could be considered a limitation, readers may see potential for application to their own teaching contexts since participant attributes, such as age and gender, were comparable to that of the general preservice teacher population (mostly Caucasian females in their early-20s, a few non-traditional female students in the 30+ age range, as well as six male students in their 20s). Furthermore, this study's data set contained observational data in addition to interview transcripts and a quantitative element of writing quality measurement. The mixed method of this study ensures more robust results by adding triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to better understand if teaching a single language arts methods course (totally devoted to writing instruction to a group of preservice elementary education majors resulted in improvements in PSTs' writing ability as measured by a *6+1 writing traits* rubric (Culham, 2003; education northwest, 2018). I assigned equal weight to the qualitative and quantitative data of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study (Creswell, 2018). Findings include discussion of results from observation and interview data analysis to: (a) determine if there were statistically significant differences in PSTs' writing quality and (b) discover any prominent themes found in Willow and Maureen's instructional strategies for teaching writing. Inductive codes and themes which came to light while interviewing the TEs are also discussed concerning their individual background information as educators.

Quantitative Data Results

Writing Quality Change of Whole Writing Sample

I used IBM's SPSS Version 25 software to run the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to determine if there was a difference between the pre and post whole writing sample quality. The test revealed no statistically significant difference in the PSTs' first (pre) and last (post) writing quality, n = 48, z = 1.15, p = .252. (see Table 2). The test also revealed high standard deviations for the pre-test (SD = 9.33) and post-test (SD = 7.98).

Additionally, the test indicated an increase between the PSTs' whole writing samples pre-test mean (M = 50.27) to the PSTs' whole writing samples post-test mean (M = 51.73).

Table 2

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results of Whole Writing Sample Score

		Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Writing sample pre	48	50.27	9.33	20	64
Writing sample post	48	51.73	7.98	21	64

Writing Quality Change of Individual Writing Traits

I calculated the differences of the means of the seven individual pre and post writing trait categories (see Table 3 for detailed results). The mean of five of the seven writing trait categories showed an increase while the categories of voice and word choice showed a decrease. The largest change in individual writing trait scores from pre-test to post-test was in the category of voice with a decrease of 0.25. The writing trait category of presentation showed the largest positive change of +0.17.

Table 3

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Scores for Individual Writing Trait Categories

		Descriptive Statistics				
	n	*M*	Difference	*SD*	Min	Max

Ideas pre	48	3.48	.652	2	5
			+0.17			
Ideas post	48	3.65	.863	1	5
Organization pre	48	3.67	.630	2	5
			+0.04			
Organization post	48	3.71	.798	1	5
Voice pre	48	3.85	.714	2	5
			-0.25			
Voice post	48	3.60	.736	1	5
Word Choice pre	48	3.71	.651	2	5
			-0.13			
Word Choice post	48	3.58	.710	1	5
Sentence fluency pre	48	3.58	.647	2	4
			+0.10			
Sentence fluency post	48	3.69	.803	1	5
Conventions pre	48	3.71			
Conventions post	48	3.79	+0.08			
Presentation pre	48	3.77	.722	2	5
Presentation post	48	3.94	+0.17	.783	1	5

Qualitative Data Results

Teacher Educators' Instructional Strategies Used for Teaching Writing

Deductively Coded Writing Strategies

This study found that the two teacher educator participants discussed research-supported writing instruction strategies when talking about teaching PSTs in the semi-structured interviews (see Table 4).

Table 4

Total Count of Research-Supported Writing Strategies Mentioned in Teacher Educators' Interviews

	Willow	Maureen	Totals
	Interview	Interview	
Modeled writing	3	4	7
Allow for choice in topic	0	0	0
Providing extensive writing opportunities	3	2	5
Engaging in explicit instruction in the writing process	1	0	1
Providing Feedback	4	2	6
Engaging PSTs in genre specific writing strategies	4	1	5

This study found the two teacher educators used research-supported writing instruction strategies when they were observed teaching PSTs (see Table 5). While both discussed and

observed research-supported writing instructional strategies were present, the writing instruction strategies discussed and observed were considerably different. Additionally, although the TEs used research-supported writing strategies during observations, no statistically significant difference between the PSTs' quality of writing before and after taking the writing methods course was found.

Table 5

*Tallies of Specific Writing Strategies Found During Willow and Maureen's Class Instruction Time***.**

Writing Strategy	Willow	Maureen	Totals
	Observations	Observations	
Modeling writing	9	9	18
Allow for choice in topic	15	9	24
Providing extensive writing opportunities	19	27	46
Engaging in explicit instruction in the writing process	7	6	13
Providing Feedback	11	8	19
Engaging PSTs in genre specific writing strategies	4	11	15

Willow

Interview. To find out how Willow attempted to affect PSTs' quality of writing within the timeframe of a single writing methods course, I asked her to tell me about her experiences as a writing methods instructor in a semi-structured interview. She said she tried to step away from the norm of the methods course saying "I soundly and firmly believe in school-based teacher education. So not talking about teaching writing but teaching writing and learning through those experiences."

I also asked Willow to tell me how she would describe the PSTs' quality of writing when they start in her class. Willow replied, "that's a really good question because in order to be, um, an effective teacher of writing, you have to be a writer". She went on to say:

> And so, I still know that preservice teachers even at this level, still struggle with writing. They don't know, um, format. They have grammar and syntax difficulties. They still use the wrong, they're, there, and their, they don't know apostrophes. Like there's a lot of, um, a lot of things that you would assume at this level that they would already know.

Willow went on to explain some of the self-perceptions of the PSTs when they start her class, "So I think, I think that coming in, they might think that they're a good writer, but they're not always a good writer. And if I could just tweak a little something along the way, um, to make them a better writer or to help them to be a more effective writer for their future students then I've done a little bit of my job…"

To address the lack of writing skills she mentioned, Willow said she inserted mini lessons when needed, "And if I constantly see that they need more [writing instruction], then we build those into the lesson. So, if they need more *VOICE* in their writing, let's talk about *VOICE* and how to model a lesson on how they can do that for their students. And then hopefully they do that themselves".

Willow said she does writing [instruction] a little differently from other instructors by allowing her students to submit writing assignments, providing feedback, and then incentivizing students [through grades] to go back in and do it again "because that's where learning happens".

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Of the 6+1 Writing Traits used to assess the PSTs' writing samples, Willow made reference to three in her interview: conventions, voice, and ideas.

Observations. I observed several instructional strategies for teaching writing that demonstrated how Willow attempted to affect PSTs' writing quality during the 61 minutes I spent in her class. She provided extensive writing opportunities (19) as an instructional strategy for teaching writing during the two observations. For example, on August 26, 2019 during the 26 minutes when I observed an activity she called Crazy Writing, Willow used 10 minutes to explain the objective and model the activity. The PSTs then wrote alone, with a partner, and in a small group for the remaining 16 minutes. Willow encouraged extensive writing opportunities when she told the PSTs to write more than one sentence, write alone, collaborate writing with a partner, add an ending sentence to their writing, and asked if the class needed additional time to finish the writing. The PSTs were fully engaged and wrote for the 16 minutes of writing activity time. During the second observation, Willow provided an extensive writing opportunity during class instruction when she had the PSTs write for five uninterrupted minutes using the prompt, "My Best/Worst Birthday ever was…". After five minutes, Willow modeled how to create a learning environment by turning the writing prompts into a whole class conversation. Next, an instructor-led discussion followed where Willow asked the PSTs what their future students would need to know to write. Among the answers generated by the PSTs were punctuation, phonemes, sounds, and sentence structure.

I observed Willow allow choice in topic as an instructional strategy for teaching writing 15 times during the 61 minutes of observation time in her class. For example, Willow allowed

the PSTs to free-write and choose what topic to write about during the Crazy Writing activity in the first observation. She also allowed the PSTs choice in what to write when she provided the writing prompt, "My Best/Worst Birthday ever was…" during the second observation.

During the interview, Willow mentioned using modeling as an instructional strategy for teaching writing 3 times. During observations, I saw Willow refer to modeling 9 times, once modeling writing alongside the PSTs as they wrote in class. Notably, Willow did not mention allowing choice in topic during the interview, but used it 15 times as an instructional strategy in the observations (see Table 7). Also, during the observations, engaging in explicit instruction in the writing process (minilessons) was not seen, but Willow did mention it once in the interview.

Maureen

Interview. To find out how Maureen attempted to affect PSTs' quality of writing within the timeframe of a single writing methods course, I asked her to tell me about her experiences as a writing methods instructor. She said, "I tailor the instruction based on the community involvement that I can have". She went on to discuss the different teaching experiences she created according to what type of community involvement was available at the campus where she was teaching. For example, she spoke of partnering with a literacy coach and a principal at a local elementary school while teaching at a smaller UCF campus. Maureen spoke of teaching the PSTs to hold one-on-one writing conferences with fourth grade students, "So I teach my students how to effectively hold your writing conference, how to teach fourth graders how to self-assess

their own writing". Maureen went on to explain that teaching at UCF main campus is different because:

> they don't have that, those same relationships with schools over here. So, I taught my students [at UCF main campus] how to write a conference proposal and actually present a session based on a writing strategy they thought others would want to know. So, we did a mini conference within my class and then they pushed out for extra credit to actually present to their peers. So, each class is something different.

Maureen did emphasize that she always tries to stay true to using literature as the anchor for putting research into action in some way during the writing method course she teaches.

I asked Maureen what she does to improve the preservice teachers writing? Without hesitation, she listed a few writing improvement strategies such as, "giving PSTs feedback on assignments that they turn in if students have significant difficulty and encouraging students to use the writing center on campus to help with some of that". She also strongly emphasized setting the expectation in the beginning of class that, "they're going into this profession to be a teacher. And it's really hard when teachers put out parent letters and newsletters, and there are spelling and grammar errors". I also asked Maureen if she used any specific writing strategies to improve student writing. She mentioned feedback, resources, conversation, modeling, and giving the students plenty of examples.

Notably, Maureen mentioned that she used the 6+1 Writing Traits in her course instruction.

Observations. I observed Maureen use extensive writing opportunities as an instructional strategy for teaching writing 27 times in the 114 minutes of in class observations. For example, in the first 54 minutes of observation, Maureen spent the first 7 minutes introducing the activity, stating the objective, and modeling a class management strategy for beginning a writing activity. She then gave the PSTs 15 minutes to write. Maureen provided extensive opportunities to write when she had the PSTs: (a) practice writing, (b) write more than one sentence, (c) write alone and (d) with a partner. She also gave them time to (e) practice drafting, (f) write on a topic about themselves, and (g) participate in free writing. The remaining 33 minutes of the first observation, Maureen had the PSTs share what they wrote with the class and talked about how they would connect the writing exercise in the future with future students.

I observed 20 additional extensive opportunities to practice writing during the 60 minutes of the second observation when Maureen had writing stations set up at tables around the class. Each writing station had multiple opportunities for the PSTs to practice writing as they rotated around the stations and participated in writing activities their future students could someday undertake. Maureen modeled time management as she gave each writing station approximately 7 minutes to complete the writing practice/activity. After the entire class had a chance to experience each writing station, Maureen asked the PSTs to write a reflection on the writing station activity.

Inductively Coded Themes Common Between Teacher Educators

When I interviewed Willow and Maureen, I found three major themes: *experience as writer/practitioner, applied writing practice, and collaboration/mentoring with examples.* Table 6 shows the tallies of the three emergent themes (collapsed from inductive codes) which I found during the interview data analysis. The TEs used these themes frequently when discussing background information about their careers in education and their teaching strategies. These themes were important to explore since findings related to TEs' descriptions of success directly relate to their beliefs and conceptions about writing, and shape their instructional decisions (Scales et al., 2019; Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012).

Table 6

Inductively Coded Themes in Maureen and Willow's Interview Transcriptions

Themes	Willow	Maureen
Experience as writer/practitioner	3	7
Applied writing practice	1	1
Collaboration/Mentoring by example	3	2

When I asked Willow and Maureen to tell me about themselves, they both quickly and confidently referred to their identification as educators and practitioners. They also spoke of the importance of using personal experience to help teach. Maureen spoke of using personal experience when teaching when she said, "And so I've really tried to put that [differentiation] into the course as well through the lens of a personal experience". Similarly, Willow spoke of the

importance of experiences to becoming an effective writing instructor saying, "in order to be, um, an effective teacher of writing, you have to be a writer".

Concerning applied writing practice, Maureen discussed its importance when she said, "There is a connection with a school or with children where they're actually *applying* the research into practice with me, coaching them through it like during that class time. So, I feel like that's really important". Similarly, Willow referenced applied writing practice when she said she used feedback plus practice writing to help PSTs focus on learning to write.

Collaboration/mentoring by example was also a common theme found in both interviews. Willow mentioned a specific teacher educator three times who mentored her through her transition from graduate student to university instructor. Similarly, Maureen spoke of mentors who she credited with her successful transition to UCF Instructor, "So they [University faculty mentors] actually shared lots of their everything. They shared their Webcourses. Coaching and mentoring is, is huge and building relationships with people. So, I'm very aware of that and thankful for the help".

Summary

I found evidence of all six deductive instructional strategies for teaching writing during the observations of both Willow and Maureen's instruction. Of those six instructional strategies for teaching writing, five were found in the interview data. Table 7 shows the contrast in the number of times the instructional strategies for teaching writing were found in observations and interviews.

Table 7

Tallies Show Contrasting Occurrences of Instructional Strategies for Teaching Writing used by Willow and

Maureen Between Observations and Interviews

Deductively Coded Instructional Strategies for Teaching Writing	Totals In Observations	Totals In Interviews
Providing extensive writing opportunities	46	5
Allow for choice in topic	24	0
Providing feedback	19	6
Modeled writing	18	7
Engaging PSTs in genre-specific writing strategies	15	5
Engaging in explicit instruction in the writing process	13	1

I also discovered three inductively coded themes when analyzing the semi-structured interview

transcripts.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

In the final chapter of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study, I discuss the major findings that address the two questions which guided the research: (1) Does the quality of preservice teachers' writing improve over the course of one semester and (2) In what ways do two teacher educators' writing instruction attempts affect preservice teachers' quality of writing within the timeframe of a single methods course? Additionally, the themes frequently referenced by Maureen and Willow such as *experience as writer/practitioner, applied writing practice,* and *collaboration/ mentoring with examples* are discussed. I also address the limitations of the study, implications for writing instruction in teacher preparation programs, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

Quantitative Results: Writing Quality Change.

We know the teacher educators in this study, like the teacher educators in the literature reviewed in chapter two, faced considerable challenges (such as time, responsibility, efficacy, and competency of PSTs (Myers et al., 2016)),when attempting to increase the writing quality of the PSTs. However, while no statistically significant differences were found between PSTs' first (pre) and last (post) writing samples, writing quality measured as a whole did increase. Perhaps the extensive writing opportunities (Graham, 2019) accounted for the increase. However, to see a significant positive difference in PST writing quality, TEs might need support to implement additional instructional strategies for teaching writing. Perhaps as suggested by research, improving writing quality using instruction focused on the 6 + 1 Writing Traits (Culham, 2003) should be incorporated in writing methods instruction.

Furthermore, the test also revealed a high standard deviation (*SD*) for the pre-test (*SD* = 9.33) and post-test (*SD* = 7.98). The significance of this high standard deviation warrants a look at the variation in PSTs' writing quality scores as measured (at the beginning of the school year) in the first (pre) writing sample. Although PSTs in this study were all admitted to and in their second or third year of the TPP, their writing quality scores ranged from 1-5, never achieving an exceptional score of 6. Further investigation of TPP writing standards and requirements may shed light on possible reasons for the high standard deviation found in this study. Research is needed to explore the writing quality of PSTs as they enter TPPs, especially in the second and third year of the program.

Qualitative Results: Writing Instruction Challenges

I identified four main findings in this mixed method study that TEs used to address the writing quality of elementary preservice teachers: (a) Provided extensive writing opportunities, (b) Allowed for choice in topic, (c) Provided feedback, and (d) Modeled writing.

Providing Extensive Writing Opportunities to Practice Writing

In line with research, the TEs had limited instructional time (Myers et al., 2016) to teach writing. Despite the limitation, the TEs still found 46 opportunities in the course of four observations to have PSTs practice writing. However, the data showed despite the time TEs devoted to have PSTs practice writing, it did not impact the quality of PSTs' writing as measured by the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Since increased time alone did not impact PSTs' writing quality, perhaps as suggested by Marulanda Angel and Martinez Garcia (2017), the time spent

practicing writing could specifically focus on the writing process (rather than product) to be more effective at increasing writing quality in the limited time of the TEs course. Additionally, I would increase formative assessments to assess how writing practices may impact writing quality before the end of the course.

Feedback

The literature suggests that in addition to the extensive opportunities to practice writing, TEs can also use specific feedback to impact writing quality (Delante, 2017; Marulanda Angel & Martinez Garcia, 2017). In line with this research-supported strategy, both TEs indicated they used feedback to increase PSTs writing quality. Willow clearly advocated for use of feedback to increase writing quality when she: (a) allowed her students to submit writing assignments, (b) provided feedback on the assignment, and then (c) incentivized students [through grades] to go back in and revise their writing "because that's where learning happens". Similarly, Maureen referenced using feedback as a strategy for improving PSTs' writing quality when she said, "So I give feedback on assignments that they post if students have significant difficulty." Additionally, I noticed feedback during instructional time focused on the improvement of writing product such as when Maureen discussed how she encourages PSTs to obtain feedback using resources such as the UCF Writing Center, "I have encouraged students to use the writing center on campus to help with some of that. I really set the expectation in the beginning that, that they're going into this profession to be a teacher. And it's really hard when teachers put out parent letters and newsletters, and there are spelling and grammar errors. And so, that is an expectation.".

While the use of feedback for writing improvements is in line with research, in this study feedback used by the TEs did not increase the writing quality of the PSTs. While research suggests feedback focused on form rather than focused on meaning (Delante, 2017) can be useful to achieve accuracy in writing in the long term, perhaps feedback focused on the writing process rather than the product (Marulanda Angel & Martinez Garcia, 2017) may be more effective for increasing PSTs' writing quality (Delante, 2017; Marulanda Angel & Martinez Garcia, 2017) However, the quandary remains that to provide well-focused feedback requires time which is a rarity for TEs. As stated by Willow, "you lose a lot of instruction time, you lose a lot of time where students need feedback and there might just not be the time to give it to them".

Indeed, research tells us instructional time in TPPs is extremely taxed since TEs must have mastery of, define, teach, model, and assess these intricate writing processes (Scales et al., 2019) in addition to addressing other requirements within the TPP methods courses. Therefore, TEs may better impact the writing quality of PSTs by using research-supported feedback focused on the writing process (Delante, 2017; Marulanda Angel & Martinez Garcia, 2017) until noticeable improvement of PSTs' writing quality is achieved/confirmed by measurement.

Modeled Writing

In line with research, the TEs in this study were exemplary writing methods instructors who included effective writing instruction components such as modeled writing in their writing methods courses (Scales et al., 2019). Additionally, both TE participants used the terms 'model and modeling' during instructional observations and referenced modeling as a primary

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instructional strategy used for teaching writing. For example, Maureen said, "I try to model what

we would expect teachers to do with their students". Similarly, when asked what part of writing

methods preparation she uses in her current classroom instruction Maureen said, "So I actually

model what I do now from my two, from previous undergrad and graduate studies here. I just do

the same thing a little bit different". Additionally, Willow modeled writing during an observation

when she wrote alongside the PSTs in her class during the writing activity, *My Best/Worst*

Birthday Ever Was. Despite both TEs' attempts to use modeling as an instructional strategy for

teaching writing, in the context of this study it did not impact the PSTs' writing quality. Indeed,

research tells us modeling writing is different but equally as important as modeling writing

instruction for students (Myers et al., 2016). The former refers to when instructors write in front

of, with, or where students witness her/his writing while simultaneously thinking aloud to model

the mental process of writing. The latter refers to a demonstration of how to teach writing

(Morgan & Pytash, 2014). Delineating between modeled writing and modeled writing instruction

is imperative as each produces very different results. Without a clear, united understanding of

these numerous terms and definitions concerning writing (Myers et al., 2016; Scales et al., 2019),

information central to the comprehension and advancement of writing in methods courses may

be inadequate, inaccurate, and hindered. Therefore, TEs must be able to successfully differentiate

and implement both processes to help PSTs understand and master the distinctions between

writing and writing instruction when teaching future writers (Myers et al., 2016). Additionally,

since TEs are charged with the responsibility of knowing, using, defining, and teaching

numerous terms concerning writing (Scales et al., 2019), defining and distinguishing terms such

as modeled writing and modeled writing instruction are imperative along with the time required to teach both.

Allowing for Choice in Topic

The TEs also frequently used allowance of choice in topics when writing as an instructional strategy for teaching writing. This writing strategy, although used frequently, did not yield writing quality improvement. Perhaps, as supposed by Bastian (2010), using familiar narratives could prove more distracting than helpful to focus on the improvement of writing quality. Bastian suggests PSTs get caught up in reliving the event/memory if they can choose a personal experience to write about. Additionally, Bastian advocates for improving writing by:

> beginning with the unfamiliar in addition to beginning with the familiar may help students develop critical consciousness within both unfamiliar and familiar territory as well as develop more control and insight into their own and other writing practices. (p. 43).

Inductively Coded Strategies

I found data-driven codes and collapsed them into three themes: (a) *experience as writer/practitioner* (b) *applied writing practice* and (c) *collaboration/ mentoring with examples* to describe in what ways two TEs attempted to affect PSTs' quality of writing. Research suggests it is important to explore findings related to TEs' descriptions of personal teaching theories because they directly relate to their instructional decisions (Scales et al., 2019; Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012). Willow and Maureen used these themes frequently when I asked about their careers in education and their teaching strategies. The interviews show us Willow

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and Maureen believe experiences as writers and educators, applied writing practice, and mentoring with examples are important to instruction success. When I asked Willow about her experiences preparing to be a writing methods instructor, she spoke of modeling the experiences she had with a mentor saying:

> I co-taught this class, with Dr. [Anonymous] who was my chair. And so, I saw, I watched, she modeled, I did, I tried, she provided feedback. And so, I got to watch a couple of times before I had to take the reins myself. Um, so that I think that prepared me quite well (Willow, personal communication, 2019).

Similarly, Maureen credited her current teaching practices with experiences she models from her post-secondary education, "So I actually model what I do now from my two, from previous undergrad and graduate studies here. I just do the same thing a little bit different".

While research-supported instructional strategies used to teach writing in this study are present, experiences as writers applied with writing practice and demonstrated with examples did not yield a significant difference in PSTs writing quality. Additionally, research tells us TEs must be able to model writing and writing instruction (Myers et al., 2016). However, as defined in Chapter One of this study, modeling writing instruction and modeled writing experiences are different. Modeling writing instruction refers to a TE demonstrating how to teach writing (Morgan & Pytash, 2014) while modeled writing refers to when TEs write in front of, with, or where PSTs witness her/his writing while simultaneously thinking aloud to model the mental process of writing. In this study, modeled writing instruction was seen often. Perhaps, if time

allowed, instructors might increase PSTs' writing quality by additionally modeling the mental process of writing (Myers et al., 2016).

Limitations

Limitations in this study include incentives TEs used to collect PST post writing samples. One TE gave the PSTs in her class 50 points of extra credit for turning in the post writing sample. The other TE assigned a grade and gave the PSTs in her class 10 points to turn in the post writing sample. In future studies, I would advise prearranging the use of incentives or eliminating use of incentives all together.

I would also include the scoring rubric and attach it to the writing prompt since a rubric was not given to the PSTs. This would increase the PSTs opportunity to succeed at demonstrating their best writing abilities. Additionally, informing the PSTs that the post writing samples will measure their individual improvements as compared to the beginning of the class may incentivize the students to participate. An additional limitation to consider is that while the rubric used to measure writing sample quality was detailed, scoring writing is subjective.

Researcher bias is always a potential limitation in qualitative studies even if fully attended to by the researcher. Years of experience as a classroom instructor and educator added to the potential bias I may have had while researching familiar education processes. For this reason, I attended to researcher reflexivity throughout the data collection process. In future research I would recommend remaining aware of potential bias and subjectivity.

Implications for Practice

One implication from this study is that teaching for the purpose of improving writing

quality is a task quite difficult and complex to practice (Hayes, 2012). This practice is

additionally complicated because of the limited time dedicated to writing courses/instruction in

teacher preparation programs. Time devoted to improving preservice teachers' writing skills

needs a commonly supported and designated commitment from those who determine TPP

requirements.

A second implication from this study, closely connected to the first, is that no industry

standard exists for teaching PSTs how to teach writing (Scales et al., 2019). The TEs in this

study were given the choice of which components to include in the teaching of the writing

methods course. With limited time to instruct, they were forced to prioritize according to what

research supported and what they believed to be the most effective instructional strategies for

teaching writing.

Finally, if PSTs were required to enter a writing methods course where a prerequisite

level of writing quality was enforced in addition to passing the GKT writing sample standardized

test, TEs could then solely concentrate on teaching future teachers to teach writing.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study indicate several areas which merit further research to improve

the writing quality of future teachers educated by teacher preparation programs:

1. Further research is needed to explore the practices of teacher educators concerning the decisions made for what is taught in a writing methods course (in addition to the required elements of educational institutions).

2. Future studies should include observation of teacher educators to confirm the teaching pedagogies successfully used to improve preservice teacher writing quality. Observations need to be done in conjunction with quantitatively measured writing quality changes to remove the subjectivity of self-reported writing quality changes.

3. Further research of teacher preparation program entrance level requirements specifically concerning writing quality levels should be conducted with special attention to the enforcement of such entrance requirements.

4. Future studies need to include exploration of differences between required and implemented instructional strategies for teaching writing used by current writing methods instructors. These studies would also look for which successful models for improving preservice teacher writing quality were found, if any.

5. Future studies need to investigate the allocation of subjects required in a teacher preparation program. Those findings need to be further compared to what high priority needs future teachers have to successfully equipping future students to become proficient writers.

Conclusion

No epiphany is required to acknowledge that teacher education is riddled with issues in need of improvement. Of those most in need of attention are issues that affect basic development of society. Literacy, including reading and writing, is one of the far-reaching skills that can improve or decline the quality of our immediate day-to-day existence and our evolution as a species (Culham, 2003; Graves, 2004; Myers et al., 2016). While in past eras, subjects such as reading and grammar were priorities in education, the time to teach writing is in desperate shortage. As suggested by Brandt (2015), "the powers of writing have never been more valuable to more people in so many places, in so many ways, and at so many levels of public and private enterprise" (p.46).

The results of this study reveal teacher educators need support to accomplish the huge task of improving the writing quality of future teachers, and thus the writing instruction for their future students. The grave importance of this responsibility deserves immediate consideration and reform. Preservice teachers, if they remain in the profession, will inherit the responsibility to educate society and build communication skills, directly influencing our future. At the very least, teacher education should look to current research to explore how we can best focus future teacher education to produce long-lasting positive effects on PST writing quality. Time to teach writing needs to be a priority because the societal shift towards writing such as social media, global learning, and international commerce have evolved our need to write well. Research dedicated to the most efficient, successful route of imparting writing skills to our world can start with teacher educators who are responsible for teaching future teachers. Might we concentrate

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efforts to improve our support of their limited time by giving more time to teach? Might we also

support their efforts by researching the best ways to improve writing quality in education? The

overwhelming consensus should be a resounding YES, if we truly care to prepare generations to

succeed at managing the future of civilization.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351
IRB00001138
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

September 17, 2019

Dear Marci Clark:

On 9/17/2019, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study, Category 2
Title:	Writing Quality of Elementary Preservice Teachers: How Two Teacher Educators Impact Writing Quality In One Semester
Investigator:	Marci Clark
IRB ID:	STUDY00000853
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Racine Jacques, Ph.D.
Designated Reviewer

Page 1 of 1

APPENDIX B: FIELD NOTES

Dr. W.

Ob Notes   Ng class on Sept 2
             Aug 26, 2019

First day of class maintanance.

Attendance.

" Effective teachers of Elementary Writing "

Descriptive	Reflective
28 Students	
Intro-ed myself	Dr. W gave my intro
Elementary students	Connected To future classrooms
1:45 Before u form writing Relationships you must form Relationships	
What would you ask your teacher (as a student)?	If you were a fruit what would you be and why?

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE OF VERBATIM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Speaker 1 (11:01):

Uh, what do you do to improve the pre service teachers writing?

Speaker 2 (11:06):

So I give feedback, um, on assignments that they, they post if students have significant difficulty. Um, I have encouraged students to use the writing center on campus, um, to help with some of that. Um, I really set the expectation in the beginning that, that they're going into this profession to be a teacher. And it's really hard when teachers put out parent letters and newsletters and their spelling and GRAMMAR errors. And so that is an expectation. This is not allowed in the classroom. And so I set that up first. Um, but for some writing is a very five paragraph essay format and not all type of writing is that. And so it's hard to sometimes break habits, but we work on it.

Speaker 1 (11:50):

Um, what strategies do you use

Speaker 2 (11:55):

strategies to the last question, strategies for what strategies to improve their writing? You already said feedback. Resources, yeah, feedback and resources and just conversation and also MODELing. So I give a lot of uh, examples. So there's examples of the parent letter online, there's examples of the tech set, the ideas of what is expected. I tried to model what we would expect teachers to do with their students. I always try to do that to very clear rubrics. I use very clear rubrics within my courses. And so if they follow those and put that, that helps them a lot. A lot of students want the exact right way to do it and it frustrates them sometimes because they don't always give that to them because writing isn't a re writing isn't one set way. And so, um, I give them lots of different strategies throughout the semester and I have them pick the one that's the best fit for them. And especially in terms of writing their lesson plans, they have the what is required but not necessarily a template for those things. Writing is different. So, and then what theories inform your teaching?

Speaker 3 (13:05):

I think [inaudible]

Speaker 2 (13:08):

I use a lot of the writing workshop, um, background in theory, um, within Donald Graves. I appreciate his work **and I use, um, six traits and just a lot of just best practices in teaching,** um, writing and I use a lot of articles as well. So I'm constantly searching for what has worked and I bring that into the classroom as well. Verse two. Great. Anything else you can think of that you want to add into, uh, your experiences as a writing methods or pre service teachers or I think, I think I'm a constant learner and so I'm always growing all of those of every semester my class changes a little based on what I noticed about students in past semesters. And so I tried to always bring something new to the table based on what I've learned and yeah, and just MODEL that for students that I'm a constant learner too.

APPENDIX D: 6 + 1 WRITING TRAITS RUBRIC

6+1 Trait® Writing Rubrics
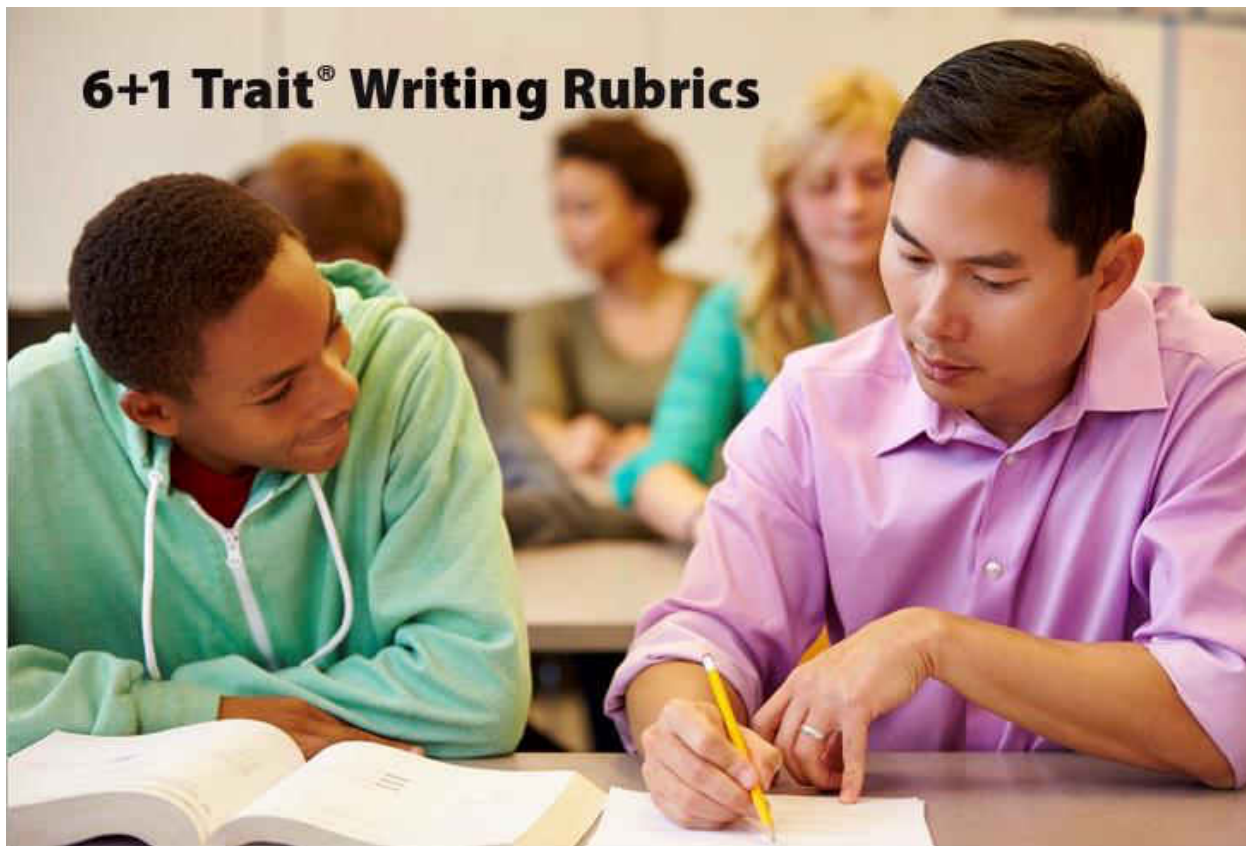
6+1 Trait® Writing
Model of Instruction & Assessment

education northwest
CREATING STRONG
SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

KEY QUESTION

Does the writer engage the reader with fresh information or perspective on a focused topic?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Does not reflect a main idea or topic	**Has a main idea that begins to emerge, but direction is unclear**	**States or implies a main idea but is unclear, unfocused, inaccurate, and/or underdeveloped**	**Communicates a generally clear, focused, and accurate main idea with acceptable development**	**Presents a clear, focused, and substantive main idea with convincing development**	**Establishes a clear, focused, and significant main idea, with original insights, that is fully developed**
A. Main idea	Does not have a main idea or topic	Focuses on a general topic but does not suggest a main idea	Suggests a main idea, but the direction of the piece is still unclear	Presents an adequately clear, focused main idea	Develops a clear, focused, and somewhat complex and/or original main idea	Conveys a clear, focused, complex, and original main idea that drives the piece
B. Details, evidence, and support	Does not support a main idea In arguments grade 7+, does not acknowledge a counterclaim	Attempts to support the main idea with some information and/or details, but these are unfocused, unclear, and/or unrelated In arguments grade 7+, may acknowledge but does not attempt to develop counterclaim	Provides incidental support of the main idea with information and/or details that lacks specificity, relevance, and/or accuracy In arguments grade 7+, may acknowledge but does not develop counterclaim adequately	Supports the main idea with generally accurate, specific, and relevant information and/or details In arguments grade 7+, develops and addresses counterclaim adequately	Supports the main idea fully, with specific, credible, relevant, information and/or vivid details In arguments grade 7+, fully develops and addresses counterclaim	Supports the main idea convincingly, with highly specific, credible information and/or striking details that go beyond the obvious In arguments grade 7+, thoroughly develops and addresses counterclaim in an original way

2

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KEY QUESTION

Does the writer engage the reader with fresh information or perspective on a focused topic?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
C. Reasoning/thinking	Does not show writer's thinking in developing or connecting ideas	Generalizes about ideas without analyzing or connecting them logically	Attempts to communicate relationships among ideas, but lacks clarity or logical connection	Helps the reader understand the writer's reasoning or perspective Connects ideas	Presents fresh reasoning or perspective using higher-order thinking and connects Clarifies ideas	Conveys unique, useful insights using higher-order thinking and convincing reasoning Connects and enhances ideas in original ways
B. Awareness/ engagement of reader	Does not appear to be written with reader in mind	Shares information without engaging reader in exploring ideas Does not address many important questions	Attempts to engage readers in exploring ideas Does not address important questions or concerns	Adequately engages readers in exploring ideas Adequately addresses reader's questions and/or concerns	Effectively engages readers in exploring ideas Fully addresses reader's knowledge, questions, and/or biases	Successfully engages readers in exploring ideas on multiple levels Fully addresses reader's knowledge, questions, and biases on multiple levels
E. Textual evidence from sources (optional)	Contains no textual evidence Lacks acknowledgment of sources and may include plagiarized support	Has very weakly integrated textual evidence Lacks acknowledgment of sources; may include some plagiarized support	Contains weakly integrated textual evidence Contains general acknowledgment of sources; may include some plagiarized support	Provides adequately integrated textual evidence Includes proper acknowledgment of sources	Includes well-integrated textual evidence Includes proper acknowledgment of sources	Incorporates very smoothly integrated textual evidence Includes proper acknowledgment of sources

3

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KEY QUESTION

Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make them easier to understand?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	No identifiable organization; writing lacks a sense of direction or seems random	Uses mostly ineffective organization with only a few sections that direct reader	Has emerging organization that is uneven, hampering ability to follow text	Includes basic organization that moves the reader through the text logically with minimal confusion	Reflects smooth, cohesive organization and varied techniques that build to create a unified whole	Develops seamless organization that enhances and showcases central ideas and their relationships
A. Lead and conclusion	Has no lead and no conclusion	Includes either a lead or a conclusion If lead is present, fails to establish purpose; If conclusion is present, fails to provide closure	Includes both a lead and a conclusion Lead fails to establish purpose, and/or conclusion fails to provide closure	Contains a lead that establishes purpose, though may be formulaic or obvious Contains a conclusion that provides closure, though may be formulaic or obvious	Features a lead that creates anticipation and establishes clear purpose Includes a conclusion that ties up loose ends, providing a satisfying sense of closure	Creates an inviting lead that establishes clear purpose, draws reader in, and creates a strong sense of anticipation Develops a satisfying conclusion that conveys a powerful and thoughtful sense of closure
B. Transitions	Has no use of transitions Does not use paragraphs	Rarely uses transitions Uses paragraph breaks sporadically.	Uses transitions that are repetitive, inconsistent, and/or fail to connect ideas Chunks ideas into paragraphs inconsistently	Includes transitions that connect ideas, though they may be formulaic or predictable Consistently separates ideas into distinct paragraphs	Features logical, varied transitions that connect and develop ideas Includes paragraphing that supports ideas	Features thoughtful, smooth, varied transitions that clearly connect ideas and enhance meaning Uses paragraphing that enhances ideas
C. Sequencing	Has no sequencing of ideas	Has very limited sequencing that fails to show how ideas fit together	Uses sequencing that fails to showcase ideas or becomes formulaic	Provides logical sequencing of ideas	Employs sequencing that builds connections to create a unified whole	Utilizes highly effective sequencing, making best choices for progression and enrichment of reader's understanding

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KEY QUESTION

Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make them easier to understand?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
D. Pacing	Has no evident pacing	Has consistently uneven pacing, slowing down or speeding up inappropriately or awkwardly	Appropriately controls pacing in some sections but not in others	Evenly controls pacing in most places	Exhibits well-controlled pacing throughout	Skillfully uses pacing to compel the reader through the text and enhance its impact
E. Purpose/text structure	Has no discernible text structure or purpose	Has loose text structure that leaves reader unclear or confused about purpose	Uses text structure inconsistently, affecting the reader's ability to identify purpose	Uses text structure consistently to reflect purpose, moving the reader through the text logically, with minimal confusion	Employs text structure that supports and clarifies purpose throughout	Utilizes text structure that enhances understanding of purpose and flows very smoothly
F. Title (optional)	Has no title	Has a title that does not link to main idea or is misleading	Uses a title that is formulaic, nondescript, or fails to link directly to main idea	Includes a title that connects adequately to main idea	Selects a title that reflects main idea in an unusual or interesting way	Draws the reader in with an original title that reflects main idea and captures deeper meaning

KEY QUESTION

Is the voice appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Shows indifference or distance	Makes ineffective attempts to connect with task and/or purpose and engage reader	Uses emerging voice that does not yet support task and/or purpose or engage audience	Employs voice that supports task and purpose and audience, engaging reader adequately	Strengthens writing with voice that fully addresses task, purpose, and audience	Uses voice uniquely, demonstrating powerful ownership of task, purpose, and audience
A. Tone	Has no evident tone. Uses inappropriate level of formality	Has a tone that does not support the purpose. Often uses inappropriate level of formality	Uses a flat, disinterested tone or one that does not always support the purpose. Sometimes uses inappropriate level of formality	Uses a tone that supports purpose and reflects audience. Nearly always uses appropriate level of formality	Uses a tone that is frequently appropriate for purpose and audience. Consistently uses appropriate level of formality	Employs a tone that is consistently appropriate for purpose and audience, clarifying and validating the message. Consistently uses appropriate level of formality
B. Engagement with reader	Makes no effort to engage or connect with reader	Uses a predictable or generic approach that fails to engage or connect with reader	Shows awareness of reader yet relies on safe generalities, failing to engage with reader	Interacts with reader successfully at times, sounding sincere, though not yet fully engaging with reader in a committed manner	Frequently interacts and engages with reader in an authentic, committed manner	Consistently interacts and engages with reader through original or unique choices that underscore commitment
C. Commitment	Demonstrates no commitment to topic	Shows minimal commitment to topic	Shows emerging commitment to topic	Shows commitment to topic, though may not be fully evident	Demonstrates clear commitment to topic	Establishes ownership of topic
D. Individual expression (if appropriate)	Reveals nothing specific about writer	Reveals little of the writer's personality	Offers glimpses of personality but shows minimal risk-taking	Expresses personality; may take risks in one or two places that surprise, delight, and/or move reader	Frequently demonstrates personality; takes multiple risks that strengthen the text and move reader	Reveals unique personality in a manner that enriches text; demonstrates risk-taking that makes it easy to "hear" writer

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KEY QUESTION

Does the language convey precise and compelling meaning and/or create a vivid picture for the reader?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Uses limited vocabulary	**Has flawed or simplistic vocabulary, resulting in impaired meaning**	**Has vocabulary that is usually understandable yet lacks energy or imagination and may be repetitive**	**Uses vocabulary that is functional and achieves purpose; may use imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate**	**Incorporates precise and creative vocabulary; uses imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate**	**Uses precise, powerful, accurate, and engaging vocabulary, including vivid imagery and/or figurative language where appropriate**
A. Word meaning	Consistently uses vocabulary that is incorrect in meaning	Uses flawed and/or simplistic vocabulary that impairs understanding	Uses vocabulary that is sometimes incorrect or limited, or uses inaccurate domain-specific vocabulary	Uses mostly correct, clear vocabulary, including domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate	Frequently uses precise vocabulary, including accurate domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate; vocabulary may be creative	Consistently features precise, creative, and powerful vocabulary, including exact domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate
B. Word quality	Uses vague or limited vocabulary	Uses confusing or misleading vocabulary	Uses very basic, functional words that convey limited meaning May include weak attempt at imagery or figurative language if appropriate	Chooses familiar vocabulary that communicates meaning Uses limited imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate	Often employs strong vocabulary that clearly conveys meaning Includes vivid imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate	Consistently employs striking, powerful vocabulary that enhances meaning and/or shows imagination Includes striking imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate
C. Word usage	Uses repetitive words and/or unsuitable language (e.g., slang, texting)	Uses vocabulary incorrectly or inappropriately, and/or reuses words rather than synonyms	Uses limited functional vocabulary and/or overuses descriptive or complex vocabulary	Uses appropriate vocabulary with minimal overuse; may attempt creative use of vocabulary	Employs creative or unique vocabulary appropriately	Consistently uses creative or unique vocabulary in novel ways
D. Grammar	Misuses parts of speech frequently, clouding meaning	Has limited variety in parts of speech; may use jargon or clichés that detract from meaning	Uses passive or boring verbs and/or overuses nouns and/or modifiers that limit meaning; may sound mechanical	Uses accurate and functional parts of speech that start to shape meaning, including some active verbs and specific nouns and modifiers	Chooses precise and varied parts of speech (e.g., active verbs, specific nouns and modifiers) to effectively communicate meaning	Chooses powerful parts of speech, including expressive, active verbs and polished nouns/modifiers, to best convey exact meaning

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KEY QUESTION

Does the writer control sentences so the text flows smoothly when read aloud?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	**2 Emerging**	**3 Developing**	**4 Capable**	**5 Experienced**	**6 Exceptional**
	Structures sentences incorrectly; reader must reread text several times to read aloud	**Structures many sentences incorrectly, causing reader to stumble; little variation in sentences**	**Has sentences that may be technically correct but not varied, sounding mechanical or creating sing-song pattern**	**Uses varied sentences that are usually technically correct and flow smoothly**	**Uses a variety of correctly structured sentences that are rhythmic and flowing**	**Uses well-built, strong, varied sentences that flow, with compelling rhythm and cadence**
A. Sentence structure	Has choppy sentence structure that is incomplete, run-on, or rambling	Uses sentence structure that is simplistic and/or rarely correct	Uses sentence structure that may be technically correct yet isn't smooth, or overuses excessively complicated sentences	Uses smooth, correct sentence structure that may be somewhat mechanical in places	Utilizes well-developed sentence structure throughout text	Controls strong sentence structure for maximum impact throughout text
B. Sentence sense and rhythm	Lacks sentence sense; choppy rhythm makes reading aloud without writer's help nearly impossible	Shows little evidence of sentence sense, requiring reader to reconstruct sentence flow to read text aloud	Uses inconsistent sentence sense, requiring reader to reread in order to read text aloud Dialogue and fragments, if used, may be ineffective or interrupt flow	Evidences correct sentence sense with rhythm and flow; reading aloud is smooth Dialogue and fragments, if used, are often effective	Conveys strong, rhythmic sentence sense, with enough variety to enhance flow; easy to read aloud Dialogue and fragments, if used, are consistently effective	Exhibits powerful, rhythmic sentence sense with cadence that enables expressive reading aloud If used, dialogue sounds natural and is effective, and fragments add style
C. Sentence variety	Lacks varied sentence beginnings or types	Uses simple, often monotonous sentences that repeat same beginnings and/or types	Uses some variety in sentence beginnings, yet some are routine or generic, and/or uses mostly simple and compound sentences	Varies sentence beginnings, yet some are routine or generic Includes multiple sentence types	Employs varied and interesting sentence beginnings Includes a variety of sentence types to create balance	Creates interest and energy with varied sentence beginnings Includes a variety of sentence types chosen to enhance flow

8

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KEY QUESTION

Does the writer control sentences so the text flows smoothly when read aloud?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
B. Connecting sentences	Has weak or no transitional words or phrases and/or has choppy, disconnected language and/or run-on sentence	Uses basic transitions that do little to lead reader through text; transitional words or phrases may be missing or randomly applied	Leads reader from sentence to sentence with few transitional words or phrases; some transitional words or phrases may be overused	Holds text together with varied transitional words or phrases	Moves reader easily through text, with thoughtful and varied transitional words or phrases	Engages reader throughout text with creative and varied transitional words or phrases that highlight relationships between sentences

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KEY QUESTION

How well does the text illustrate the writer's proficiency with grade-appropriate conventions?

(Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.)

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	**2 Emerging**	**3 Developing**	**4 Capable**	**5 Experienced**	**6 Exceptional**
	Has numerous and/or varied errors that make text unreadable or distracting; requires extensive editing	**Includes many errors that make text difficult to read; requires much editing**	**Shows inconsistency in use of correct conventions which impairs readability; requires moderate editing**	**Uses correct conventions with minor errors; requires minor editing**	**Demonstrates consistent use of correct conventions; requires very limited editing**	**Uses error-free, creative conventions; enhances readability; requires virtually no editing**
A. Spelling	Has frequent spelling errors, even with common words	Uses phonetic spelling, with many errors	Frequently spells simple words incorrectly, though reader can still understand the meaning	Uses correct spelling for most common grade-level words; may be inaccurate with more difficult words	Correctly spells common grade-level words and often more difficult words	Exhibits mostly correct spelling, including more difficult words
B. Punctuation	Does not use or misuses punctuation nearly all the time	Uses punctuation, but it is random and/or usually incorrect	Uses simple end punctuation that is usually correct, but internal punctuation (e.g., comma, apostrophe, semicolon) is often missing or incorrect	Uses correct end punctuation with only minor errors; uses most internal punctuation correctly	Correctly uses both end and internal punctuation	Employs correct end and internal punctuation; may use creative punctuation that enhances readability
C. Capitalization	Lacks capitalization, or uses it incorrectly	Uses capitalization randomly, with frequent errors	Has some correct capitalization, usually for sentence beginnings and proper nouns	Uses correct capitalization for most common grade-level text	Correctly uses capitalization	Employs consistently correct capitalization and possibly more sophisticated capitalization for effect
D. Grammar/usage	Has serious grammar/usage, errors, making text incomprehensible	Has numerous grammar/usage errors, making comprehension difficult	Has grammar/usage errors that may distract reader; may use conversational or texting language inappropriate to style	Employs proper grammar/usage with few grade-level errors; minor problems do not distort meaning or distract reader	Employs correct grammar/usage	Exhibits correct grammar/usage that contributes to clarity and style

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KEY QUESTION

How well does the text illustrate the writer's proficiency with grade-appropriate conventions?

(Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.)

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
E. Bibliography (optional)	Lacks citations or basic bibliographic information	Makes weak attempts to cite or include basic bibliographic information	Uses citations and/or basic bibliographic information inconsistently and/or incompletely	Uses citations and/or bibliographic information in correct format; may contain some errors	Uses citations and/or bibliographic information correctly, with few errors	Uses citations and/or bibliographic information without errors

KEY QUESTION

Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	**2 Emerging**	**3 Developing**	**4 Capable**	**5 Experienced**	**6 Exceptional**
	Uses presentation or formatting that makes text unreadable	**Uses presentation or formatting that makes text confusing**	**Has uneven presentation or formatting that sometimes makes text difficult to read or understand; text lacks a finished appearance**	**Uses presentation or formatting that supports understanding; text is finished and polished**	**Creates presentation or formatting that makes text easy to read with a pleasing appearance that enhances understanding**	**Has professional-looking presentation or formatting; makes choices to enhance importance**
A. Font style/size	Includes many font styles/sizes that make piece unreadable	Uses multiple font styles/sizes that impair reading or understanding	Has font styles/sizes that are inconsistent and/or poorly chosen in places, impairing reading or understanding	Uses font styles/sizes consistently so text is easy to read and understand	Has font styles/sizes that are consistent and appropriately chosen, supporting understanding and readability; some font styles may vary to highlight sections of the text	Intentionally selects font styles/sizes that enhance understanding and strengthen readability; some font styles may vary to highlight sections of the text
B. White space	Does not consider white space, or use is random and confusing, making it difficult to identify beginning and ending text	Shows emerging use of white space, but few intentional margins or boundaries; text placement may be arbitrary	Uses white space to frame and balance text but is inconsistent; may have margins, though some text may crowd edges

May use uneven indenting or blocking | Uses white space to frame text with acceptable margins

Consistently indents or blocks paragraphs | Features white space that helps reader focus on text; uses margins to frame piece and other white space to set off graphics and text features

Indents or blocks paragraphs | Uses white space to optimally frame and balance text with graphics and text features; may include creative use of space to highlight important details

Indents or blocks paragraphs |
| **C. Text features (optional)** | Has no text features (e.g., titles, bullets, page numbers, subheads) | Uses text features that lack purpose and are mostly inappropriate and/or ineffective | Uses text features that are frequently ineffective for organizing and/or clarifying text | Includes text features that adequately organize and clarify ideas | Incorporates text features that help to integrate ideas, articulate meaning, and support reading | Uses text features to extend meaning and/or develop more complete understanding |

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KEY QUESTION
Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
D. Visuals and graphics (optional)	Uses visuals/graphics that are incomprehensible and/or unrelated to text	Chooses visuals/graphics that are only topically related to text and/or do not enhance understanding	Uses visuals/graphics that support text in some instances	Includes visuals/graphics that support text	Features visuals/graphics that support and clarify text	Creates visuals/graphics that help enrich and extend meaning and are integrated
E. Handwriting (optional)	Forms handwritten letters inconsistently and/or incorrectly, making piece unreadable Lacks spacing of letters and words, or spacing is unbalanced	Uses irregular letter shape and/or form; letters and words are often unreadable Includes spacing that is often inconsistent, impairing readability	Uses handwriting that occasionally impairs readability Uses inconsistent spacing in places	Uses correct and readable handwriting Uses generally uniform spacing and lettering	Uses neat and readable handwriting Uses uniform spacing and lettering	Features handwriting that is pleasing to the eye Uses uniform spacing and lettering

6+1 Trait® Writing
Model of Instruction & Assessment

APPENDIX E: EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

Title of Project: Writing Quality of Elementary Preservice Teachers: How Two Teacher Educators Impact Writing Quality In One Semester

Principal Investigator: Marci Clark

Other Investigators: N/A

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Andrea Gelfuso

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

The purpose of this study is to explore writing instruction of teacher educators and any impact on preservice teacher writing.

Class writing assignments will be collected as writing samples. Your participation will require no additional time on your behalf other than the time you will already spend completing your class assignments.

You have been asked to participate in this study because you are enrolled in the LAE 4314 course and your instructor is participating in the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time without prejudice or penalty. Your decision to participate or not participate in this study will in no way affect your relationship with UCF, including continued enrollment, grades, employment or your relationship with the individuals who may have an interest in this study.

After writing samples are collected by the primary researcher, any identifiers will be replaced with an unidentifiable pseudonym or numerical representation. Only the primary researcher will have access to the identifiable writing samples prior to making the writing samples unidentifiable.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact Marci Clark, UCF *Graduate Student, Ed.D. Curriculum & Instruction Program, (321) 501-4410 or Dr. Andrea Gelfuso, Faculty Supervisor, Department of School of Teacher Education by email at Andrea.gelfuso@ucf.edu*

IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.

APPENDIX F: EXCEL RATER RECORDING SPREADSHEET SAMPLE

Excel Data Recording Spreadsheets

NAME	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	VOICE	WORD CHOICE	SENTENCE FLUENCY	CONVENTIONS	PRESENTATION
CAM	3	3	3	3	3	5	4
CAR	4	4	4	4	4	5	4
CLA	4	4	4	4	4	5	4
CLE	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
DAT	4	3	3	4	4	3	4
FEA	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
FIG	3	1	3	3	3	3	1
FOR	3	2	3	3	3	4	1
GAU	4	4	4	4	4	5	4
GON	3	3	3	2	2	3	3
GRA	3	3	4	4	3	3	4
HIR	2	2	3	4	3	3	2
KAN	1	1	1	2	1	3	1
LAW	4	5	5	5	4	4	4
MAE							
MOU	4	3	3	3	3	4	3
MUR	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
NIE	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
NIS	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
OLS	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
PET	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
RED	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

APPENDIX G: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL WIOP

Appendix

Writing Instruction Observation Protocol

Date _____ District _____ School _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____ Observer _____

Topic _____

Length of Lesson: ___ Minutes ___ New Lesson ___ Continued Lesson

All observation questions refer to the writing instruction

Introduction

Does the Teacher:

1. Explicitly state, verbally, the writing session's objective? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Explicitly explain how previous lessons relate to today's writing session? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Activate prior knowledge relevant to today's writing session? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Skills/Strategies Instruction/Practice

(___ minutes) __N/A

Does the Teacher:

4. Provide direct skill/strategy instruction? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Provide indirect skill/strategy instruction? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Provide an example of writing related to the instruction and/or practice? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Model the process of using focus skills/strategies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Explain how or why skills/strategies/processes will help students as writers (the *why* of

   instruction)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Ask open-ended and/or probing questions? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Engage the students in whole class discussion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Engage the students in small group discussion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Provide students with time, in class, to practice the focus skills/strategies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Adjust whole class and/or small group skill/strategy instruction and/or practice based on

    observations of perceived student needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

14. What are the students doing during skill/strategy instruction/practice?

    ____ writing single words or phrases

    ____ writing single sentences (not connected)

    ____ writing more than one sentence (connected text)

    ____ marking text

    ____ oral responses

15. As part of the skills/strategies instruction and/or practice, students are working:

    (Check all that apply)

    ___alone   ___with a partner   ___with a small group   ___with the class

    ___ on paper   ___ on computer   ___ other (explain):_____

16. What does the teacher do while students are working? (Check all that apply.)

    ___ circulates around the room

    ___ works with individuals

    ___ works with small groups

    ___ addresses whole class

    ___ other (explain): _____

24. What does the teacher do while students are composing?

___ circulates around the room   ___ works with individuals

___ works with small groups   ___ addresses the whole class

___ other (explain): _____

25. Does the teacher give students feedback on their writing?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes (check all that apply:

Format	**Types of Feedback**	
___ individually	___ comments ___ written ___ verbal	
___ small group	___ grades	
___ whole class	___ rubrics ___ other (explain):	

_____

26. Does the teacher have students share their writing?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes (check all that apply):

____with a partner

____with small group

____whole class

27. What genre of writing are students working on today?

___ imaginative/literary   type: _____

___ informational/expository   type: _____

Miscellaneous

28. Does the teacher provide closure to the lesson?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

29. Does the teacher assign homework that involves writing?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, the purpose of the homework is

___ to practice the focus of targeted instruction

___ to engage in other kinds of writing

30. What are other adults in the room besides the teacher doing during the lesson?

_____ _____

Title

_____ _____

Title

_____ _____

Title

Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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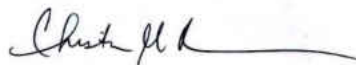
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Feel free to contact Eric Marshall with any questions or comments: emarshall@edc.org.

Sincerely,

Christine Filosa

Vice President and General Counsel, Office of Legal Affairs

APPENDIX H: PERMISSION TO USE EDUCATION NORTHWEST RUBRIC

Olga Vargas
To: Marci Clark
Tue 9/24/2019 12:45 PM

Hi Marci,

Thank you for your interest. Absolutely, you can use the rubric. Please make sure you give Education Northwest acknowledgement and credit.
Congratulations in your dissertation, I hope all goes well.

Regards,

Olga

Olga Vargas
Director of
Marketing and
Communications
Education
Northwest

503-275-9515 | 214-682-7566

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