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Educators' Oral Histories of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Involvement

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by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. Your love and support have made all the difference in my life. To my parents, Clark and Josephine Hoffman, thank you for instilling in me the importance of education. I have done my best to honor you both. To my sister, Patti, I am grateful we have each other, now and always. To my brothers, Tommy and Frankie, I miss your presence in my life. To Barbara, I am thankful we remain close and connected after all these years. To my husband, Joe (who is my everything, my all-in-all, and my only one), I am blessed to have a marriage that is enduring and supportive. I look forward to our future together. To my daughter, Megan, you are poetry in motion. I am proud of the woman you have become. To my son, Justin, your strength and character are beyond measure. You and Xylene have given me more than I could ever ask for in this world, Kennedy, my beautiful granddaughter. I cannot express how amazed I am every time she smiles. Dream big dreams, my loves. I did, and it's been an amazing adventure!

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain participants' perceptions of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project (TBAWP) influence on professional learning over time. This study explored Writing Project impact on professional learning by accessing the oral histories of three educators who were involved in TBAWP between 1998 and 2004. The research question was:

- In what ways, if any, has long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of participating educators?

This qualitative study employed constructivism as the theoretical framework. Analysis of study data resulted in specific findings. Educators' stories revealed Writing Project participation significantly impacted their teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. The lasting impact of Writing Project involvement was seen in the ways in which educators infused the concept of community into their teaching practice, accepted leadership positions within the profession, and ultimately went on to conduct professional learning experiences for educators.

Data analysis generated a conceptual model that examines the lasting impact of educator professional learning. Implications of this finding are significant for longitudinal inquiry of educator professional learning and for impact studies of long-term Writing Project involvement. In addition to providing exemplars of educator stories of practice over time, the study contributed to development of a fuller understanding of effective professional development, educator professional learning, and the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Come to the edge.
We might fall.
Come to the edge.
It's too high!
COME TO THE EDGE!
And they came
And he pushed
And they flew.

(Logue, 1970, p. 65)

Introduction

Throughout an educator's career, professional development is an expected and often unpleasant mandate. More often than not, educators are required to participate in professional development "opportunities" that have little impact on the practitioner or their practice (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). These opportunities come in many forms- from prepackaged prescriptive approaches presented as a learning panacea to the one-shot workshop trainings offering flavor-of-the-month teaching techniques. According to Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond (2010), "Teachers are the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement, and how teachers are prepared and supported throughout their careers is vital to their success" (p. i). Educators are professionals who deserve learning opportunities that impact rather than impede teaching practice.

Researchers, scholars, and practitioners question the value of short-term, "one shot" workshops as a form of professional development (Borko, 2004; Gray, 2000; Wei, Andree, & Darling-Hammond, 2009). In addition, the *No Child Left Behind* act opposes short-term professional development activities lasting one day or less (USDOE, 2002a, Section 9101(34)). To this end, research over the past two decades has defined a new goal for educator professional development, one that rejects the ineffective "drive-by" models educators have come to know and resent (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Although new standards for effective professional development have been identified (Desimone, 2009; Wei et al., 2009), implementation is not successful.

When Inquiry Meets Irony: A Reflection

As with all systematic inquiry, understanding one's motivation for a particular focus is essential to locating the assumptions that underpin that research (Brookfield, 1995). As I reflected upon my decision to investigate the connection between educator learning and effective professional development, I recognized the place my own professional learning experiences have in this inquiry.

In the fall of 2005, I became employed as a secondary English teacher in a relatively large school district on the west coast of Florida. Throughout my time in the district, I participated in professional development activities and teacher workshops that usually came as mandates from school, district, or state initiatives. These experiences varied in most aspects except one. None treated me like a competent professional. Much of the professional development I experienced was conducted by "outside experts" who had no idea what I needed in order to advance my professional learning. I attended workshops that were relatively

meaningless and time consuming, then returned to my classroom to continue educating students. As I saw it, professional development was a "necessary evil" I had to endure in order to maintain my teaching certificate in the state of Florida. Many years passed before I learned there was another option for educators like myself who desired authentic professional learning experiences.

During my interview for doctoral studies in teacher education at the University of South Florida, I was invited to apply for a fellowship to attend the 2011 Tampa Bay Area Writing Project (TBAWP) Invitational Summer Institute. I accepted the invitation and was soon admitted to the five-week summer program. From the onset, I was welcomed into a diverse group of educators who taught in various grades and content areas. The common thread was our focus on writing. We developed relationships, built community, researched ideas, and wrote on topics important to us individually. Collegiality and collaboration were encouraged through cooperative learning and relationship building. I left the Invitational Summer Institute feeling as if I had joined a family. Unlike every other professional development experience I had to date, my time with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project was invaluable to me. The experience was transformative; I was changed as a learner and educator.

At the end of the summer, I joined TBAWP's Leadership Council as co-chair for the next year's Fall Conference. Throughout the year and during the actual event, I met many educators equally impacted by their Writing Project involvement. Time after time, I heard TBAWP members name this program as the most significant professional learning experience of their teaching careers. I soon came to realize I wasn't the only one who had been "transformed".

Because of my discussions with TBAWP members, my researcher interest was piqued. Such high ratings from program participants intrigued me, particularly those who had been with the project for several years. These educators were still "singing the praises" of their Writing

Project experience. Why had their enthusiasm lasted so long? What was it about their involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project that kept them interested and engaged? What was their story?

As a researcher interested in educator perspectives, I felt compelled to pursue this line of inquiry in my doctoral studies. Previous research during my Masters degree focused on educator perspectives, however that inquiry involved a job satisfaction survey of secondary school educators in Volusia County, Florida. Although I gleaned a considerable amount of information from the analysis of survey responses, due to the nature of the study's design I was unable to access specific details and individual nuances of the educators' experiences. Surveys, though informative, do not elicit rich, storied experiences, which is how I prefer to access educator perspectives as a qualitative researcher.

When I began this research in January of 2015, I was employed as a University Supervisor for pre-service educators. In this position, I interacted with classroom teachers, school administrators, and district level personnel who treated me at all times with professionalism and respect. Because of my positive experience with these educators, I decided to apply for an instructional position within the local school district. During my interview, the Assistant Principal of Curriculum commented on the strength of my curriculum vitae and expressed her high regard for the expertise I brought to the table. Without question, my professional experience was acknowledged, and I felt confident moving forward with the offer of employment she made to me that day.

As with all new hires to this particular district, I was required to participate in two weeks of district level professional development (Monday through Thursday of both weeks) prior to the start of school. The first week consisted of a New Teacher Orientation where educators new to

the district were placed in common classrooms for the week. In our room, there were two high schools represented. Throughout the week, the facilitators engaged our entire group (approximately 30 educators) in various learning strategies designed to model best teaching practices and build community. They demonstrated instructional methods intended to actively engage each participant in the learning process. This high level of involvement was evidenced in all we did. The result: inspired educators who couldn't wait to start the school year. We felt ready, willing, and able to get the job done!

As I drove to the new location for week two of district professional development, I felt encouraged and hopeful this *training* would be as effective as the previous week had been. I use the word *training* because it was part of the title (i.e., *Content Area Training*). Without belaboring the point, this moniker didn't sit well with me. I have never felt the need or desire to be *trained* in any capacity. Placing that aside, I anticipated the second phase of district professional development would be as productive as the first had been.

With an open mind, I entered the school's media center where nearly 200 language arts educators would spend the next four days together in *Content Area Training*. Among the crowd were several first-year teachers who had been my former students at the local university. While completing my doctoral coursework, I worked as a graduate teaching assistant for the English Education program where I had the opportunity to teach several education courses. Without question, I was delighted to see many had secured teaching positions. This unexpected reunion was just the inspiration I needed to start the second week of professional development. Oh, what a feeling!

Unfortunately, that feeling became painful… literally and figuratively. With the exception of a 60-minute lunch and two 10-minute breaks, my colleagues and I sat the entire day

listening to speakers talk at us about the curriculum we would be teaching. Day two was a carbon copy of day one. As I expected they might, many of my *former students-now teachers* expressed their dissatisfaction to me. Accurately, many saw a "disconnect" between what they experienced the week before and what they were experiencing currently.

Clearly, little attempt had been made to actively engage participants, build community, or utilize teaching strategies introduced the previous week. Their paramount question: *As new teachers, how could they be expected to incorporate the strategies introduced the week before with actual content if those delivering the professional development weren't doing it?* I knew this wasn't a rhetorical question posed by new educators. In essence, it was an early tipping point in the delicate balance between what they learned in the college of education and what took place in actual practice.

While at the morning break on the second day of training, I attempted to broach the issue with one of the facilitators about the physical discomfort many of us were feeling after sitting through two hours of PowerPoint presentations. The facilitator smiled at me, said the next phase would be different, and quickly walked away. Although her response didn't inspire confidence, I was hopeful the rest of the day would improve. Unfortunately, hope turned to helplessness. Other than getting up and leaving, there was nothing we could do but sit and listen to various presenters speak ad nauseam about the language arts curriculum. At one point, I looked across the room to see tired educators shifting uncomfortably on hard wooden chairs hoping for a reprieve from this painful experience. The lunch break, when it finally arrived, was a welcome relief to our stomachs, our backs, and most importantly, our minds.

During lunch, I sat in a cushioned chair by the front door of the media center working on my dissertation. Time, as one might imagine, is a precious commodity when pursuing a

doctorate and teaching full-time. As I reviewed an interview transcript, I was suddenly struck by the irony of my current situation. With a research focus on effective professional development, here I was along with my colleagues experiencing exactly what I had written about in my dissertation: inadequate and ineffective professional development. I found myself in a position in which I never expected to be, living my literature review. Now what?

Change from Inside the Profession

An insider's perspective is often the catalyst needed for change. This was the case with James Gray, a former secondary English educator and University of California, Berkeley intern supervisor. Gray (2000) had a different vision for staff development- one that addressed the lack of professionalism that many educators came to know in the early 1970's.

> I was aware that teachers, particularly secondary teachers, were increasingly cynical of most school staff development efforts- principals hiring some expert who would talk about particular problems facing the school, such as classroom management. These "workshops" were random and isolated and- a major sore point- always mandated. Teachers would reluctantly attend the meetings, usually sitting in the back of the room, sometimes hoping for the best but almost always expecting the worst. The value of many of these meetings was equivalent to the cowboy singers and sleight-of-hand magicians some districts once hired for school assemblies. There simply were no regular and well-planned staff development programs that were focused on teaching and the content of teaching. (p. 48-49)

As a result of the growing need for professional development alternatives, Gray and several of his colleagues began the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP) in 1974 at the University

of California, Berkeley. Within two years, the program expanded to 14 network sites in six states and was renamed the National Writing Project (NWP), an organization that builds on the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of teaching professionals.

Since program inception in 1974, the NWP has worked to meet the professional learning needs of elementary, secondary, and university educators across the nation. Considering the lasting nature of the NWP, it becomes possible to discuss organizational legacy in terms of contributions that extend beyond the immediacy of reform initiatives and accountability mandates to the long-term broader implications of educator learning (Friedrich, Swain, LeMahieu, Fessehaie, & Mieles, 2007). The National Writing Project has "created its legacy within the context of thirty years of educational reform movements that shared overarching national educational policy frameworks ranging from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to No Child Left Behind legislation" (p. 1). Active for over four decades, the NWP maintains a continued focus on educator professional learning.

Referring to the NWP's enduring influence, Whitney and Friedrich (2013) view legacy as "what lasts in the work of individual participants which, when taken in the aggregate, transcends individuals to characterize the network over time" (p. 3). The major work of the NWP is witnessed through network sites located on university campuses across the nation. These sites work to meet the professional learning needs of local educators. Alignment with NWP beliefs and assumptions is especially important at the local level if fidelity is to be maintained across programs (Friedrich et al., 2007). With this in mind, network sites must be equally concerned with project impact over time. To that end, consideration should be given to how involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project (TBAWP) has contributed to professional learning in a broad sense. Although current research exists on educator change during and after summer

institute attendance (Stokes, Hirabayashi, Murray, & Senauke, 2011; Stokes & St. John, 2008; Whitney, 2008), little is known about the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement on educator professional learning.

Purpose of the Study

The Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, a network site of the National Writing Project, was established in 1998 and since that time the organization has served over 300 educators through its summer institute program (Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, 2012). The purpose of this study was to describe and explain participants' perceptions of Writing Project involvement and professional learning over time. Janesick suggests, "Now is a good time to document stories of educators who have stories to tell" (2010, p. 28). With this in mind, accessing the experiences of educators who attended Invitational Summer Institutes between 1998 and 2004 provides insight into the long-term impact of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement on the professional learning of participating educators. There is no better opportunity than the present to access educator's stories so we can better inform education policymakers and those responsible for professional learning initiatives.

Inquiry Focus and Research Question

In this inquiry, I proposed a shift in focus from evaluating professional development programs to exploring educator professional learning. Specifically, I conducted this research to ascertain whether Writing Project involvement had a lasting impact on educators who joined the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project at least ten years ago. The study was designed to incorporate emerging themes, issues, and questions.

The following research question guided this undertaking:

- In what ways, if any, has long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of participating educators?

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism, which recognizes the importance of individual meaning making, is the theoretical framework that guided this inquiry and the interpretive stance from which I drew. My views have been influenced by the writings of Piaget (1954), Vygotsky (1986), and Dewey (1938). The application of constructivist theory to teacher learning and professional development has been explored on both the theoretical and practical levels (Dobozy, 2012; Keeney, 1994; Louden & Wallace, 1990; Postholm, 2012; Warford, 2011; Webster-Wright, 2009).

From the constructivist perspective, meaning making is the central focus of pedagogic practice; it is learning (Crotty, 1998). Within this framework, the learner is perceived as active in the learning process, and knowledge is perceived as the construction of meaning and understanding within social interaction (Paul, 2005). Because I believe the origin of meaning making resides within the individual, engaging a constructivist framework allowed me to explore how educators make meaning of professional learning experiences.

A constructivist perspective rejects the idea "knowledge is independent of the view of an observer, and replaces it with the proposition that knowledge is a construction of an individual's subjective reality" (Keiny, 1994, p. 157). Crotty (1998) acknowledges "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality, is contingent upon human practices constructed in and out of

interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). As an interpretive stance, constructivism attends to the "meaning-making activities of active and temporal data. Meaning making thus engages two dimensions of individual social life: actual events and concrete situations, and the particular and individual mental stances which impute meaning to those events and situations" (Paul, 2005, p. 60).

Within any research paradigm, ontological and epistemological assumptions should be identified when considering knowledge construction (Crotty, 1998). For the purposes of inquiry, ontology offers a definition of what will be considered real; it is the nature of reality. Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and what is to be known (Paul, 2005). As Crotty (1998) suggests, "It would appear useful then, to reserve the term constructivism for epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on the meaning-making activity of the individual mind" (p. 58). In this light, constructivism focuses on the unique experience of human beings and suggests that each way of making sense of the world is as valid as any other.

Constructivists understand that it is not the measurable physical or temporal reality that shapes social life, but rather the meanings imbued within it (Paul, 2005). Meaning is constructed and emerges when human beings engage with the world. From the constructivist perspective, knowledge derived by conventional, rational, or experimental methods is not the only knowledge worth having; there are other forms of knowledge that provide insight into how people construct realities (Paul, 2005).

Within education, there is a need to understand professional learning from the perspective of educators themselves and through a consideration of the professional practice in which they

think, act, and learn (Webster-Wright, 2010). This inquiry challenges the traditional conceptualization of professional development research and offers a basis for evaluation of professional learning in ways centered on the learners themselves. Constructivism, the theoretical framework used in this study, conceptualizes professional learning as something that is personally constructed and embedded within the lived experience of being a practicing educator. Guba and Lincoln (1994) address the goals of constructivist research.

> The aim of inquiry is understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus, but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve. The criterion for progress is that over time, everyone formulates more informed and sophisticated constructions…" (p. 113)

Research Design

Regarding the context and design of the current study, this inquiry engaged an oral history methodology in order to story the lived experience of research participants in a meaningful way. Oral history is a research technique that involves the "collection of stories and reminiscences of a person or persons who have first hand knowledge of any number of experiences" (Janesick, 2010, p. 2). I chose this method because it affords me the opportunity to use shared oral story to capture the nuances of educators' lived experiences.

The world is full of stories and everyone has a story to tell, especially those who educate our nation's youth. I concur with Featherstone (1989) who called for this form of research nearly three decades ago.

> The telling of stories can be a profound form of scholarship moving serious study close to the frontiers of art in the capacity to express complex truths and moral context in intelligible ways… We need more teachers' stories, and we need to cast more teacher education in the form of stories. (p. 377)

Those in the teaching profession have important experiences to share. Unfortunately, there are many who find little value in this profession, much less the stories generated from educator lived experience. Education has long been seen as a pseudo-profession with George Bernard Shaw's infamous words leading the way, "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches" (1903, line 36). Without question, Shaw's aphorism is a misrepresentation of the teaching profession. If we are to understand those who teach, their voices must be heard and their stories told. By accessing the oral histories of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project members, I chose to honor the expertise of educators by placing their stories at the center of this research.

Significance of the Study

The current inquiry extended the National Writing Project's Legacy Study launched in 2004 that examined the professional learning experiences and contributions of Teacher Consultants (TC's) who participated during the early years of the Writing Project (Friedrich et al., 2007). This investigation explored Writing Project impact on professional learning by accessing the oral histories of educators involved in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project over time. The goal was to ascertain the extent to which participants view Writing Project involvement as influential in shaping their teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. The study addressed professional learning across an educator's career, which can be examined only with the benefit of time and through focus solely on the practitioner. It is through

a deeper understanding of educator lived experience that the legacy of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project as it relates to professional learning can be established and documented.

Limitations

With respect to the limits of this research, I make no claim the perspectives shared by the three women educators in this study are representative of all Writing Project participants, nor do I claim study findings can be generalized to a larger population. While I do not consider generalizability a construct relevant to qualitative inquiry, it is addressed here to clarify concepts used in determining the study's rigor.

> No theory, no matter how it is derived, will be applicable to all situations in all contexts. For practitioners who are concerned with individuals, not aggregates, qualitative research is particularly useful because it can suggest possibilities and does not purport to dictate action. (Johnson, 1997, p. 204)

Johnson affirms Wolcott's (1994) position that researchers can be lured into generalizability, which attends to "facts capable of verification rather than stories that can convey meaning" (Johnson, 1997, p. 203). As a constructivist, qualitative researcher engaging an oral history methodology, the numbers that come from surveys with large sample sizes do not concern me. Rather, my focus is on the nuances that exist within individual stories.

In contrast to the validity construct of generalizability that underpins quantitative research, constructivists within the qualitative paradigm believe in "pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended, and contextualized (e.g., sensitive to place and situation) perspectives toward reality. The validity procedures reflected in this thinking present criteria with labels distinct from quantitative approaches, such as trustworthiness (i.e., credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability)" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125). A procedure for establishing credibility in a qualitative study is to describe the participants, setting, and themes in rich, thick detail. According to Denzin (1989), "thick descriptions are deep, dense, detailed accounts… Thin descriptions, by contrast, lack detail, and simply report facts" (p. 83). Creswell and Miller (2000) address the concept of verisimilitude as it relates to establishing credibility through thick, rich descriptions.

> The purpose of a thick description is that it creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study. Thus, credibility is established through the lens of readers who read a narrative account and are transported into a setting or situation. To use this procedure for establishing credibility, researchers employ a constructivist perspective to contextualize the people or sites studied. The process of writing using thick description is to provide as much detail as possible. It may involve describing a small slice of interaction, experience, or action; locating individuals in specific situations; bringing a relationship or an interaction alive between two or more persons; or providing a detailed rendering of how people feel. (p. 127-128)

Through vivid details, the researcher helps readers see the account is credible. Thick, rich description also enables readers to determine the applicability of the study's findings to other settings. By providing thick, rich description of experiences, events, and feelings shared by each participant in this study, my goal was to create a sense of verisimilitude with the reader.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this inquiry, specific terms were used to relate educator perceptions of learning experiences. These definitions were intended to elucidate the research focus and provide a clearer understanding of language used to communicate ideas. Although the definitions are constructs considered relevant to this inquiry, some language may carry further connotations for the reader. The following key terms were used:

- *Experience*: The knowledge, meaning, or practice derived from participation in an event, activity, or undertaking.
- *Legacy*: A contribution to future generations that involves the process of leaving something behind. Legacy helps to shape the manner in which we are remembered and is a "mechanism for transmitting a resilient and enduring image of what we stood for" (Hunter & Rowles, 2005, p. 328).
- *Meaning*: The significance or quality one assigns to an experience.
- *Professional Development*: A "comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement" (Learning Forward, 2014, p. 1).
- *Professional Learning*: Knowledge gained for individual learning, personal growth, and/or career advancement.

Conclusion and Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter began with a rationale for the research under investigation and a statement of the problem. I discussed my connection to the topic, clarified the inquiry focus, presented the research question, and addressed the significance and limitations of this study. Regarding my

theoretical framework, I positioned constructivism as the inquiry stance underpinning this research. In an effort to clarify terminology used in this study, I defined several terms salient to understanding the perspectives presented here.

In Chapter Two, I provide a critical assessment of the current and seminal literature surrounding this inquiry. In addition to identifying gaps in the literature warranting further study, the goal of Chapter Two is to engage in a critical dialogue surrounding effective professional development, educator professional learning, and long-term Writing Project involvement. This inquiry sought to contribute in a meaningful way to the discourse and research in these areas.

The focus of Chapter Three is study design and methodology related to oral history research. In this chapter, I describe the pilot study that launched this investigation and address the methodology used to answer the research question. I discuss participant recruitment through snowball sampling, a technique that elicits study participants who may not otherwise be known to the researcher. To provide an additional element of transparency within the study, I delineate my role as the researcher and make known my connection to the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. I also discuss data collection, member checks, and a peer review conducted in order to maintain data integrity. In addition, I detail the process by which data were analyzed and interpreted.

Chapter Four is the presentation of data. In this chapter, I provide a storied account of each participant's Writing Project experience highlighting impact on teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. My analysis of the research data is culled from interview transcripts, supporting documents, and the researcher's reflective journal. This analysis is represented through themes found within and across participants' oral histories.

The fifth and final chapter is a discussion of identified themes that resulted from analysis of the research findings. I begin by providing a brief summary of the study's purpose, research question, literature review, and methodology. I continue discussion of the data in terms of themes found within and across participants' oral histories that resulted from consideration of the ways in which study findings informed new insights regarding educator professional learning and Writing Project involvement over time. As a result of the knowledge gleaned from conducting this investigation, I propose a conceptual model for evaluating the lasting impact of professional learning experiences via educator perspectives. With respect to the 2004 National Writing Project Legacy Study, I advance that inquiry by addressing the concept of legacy and the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. In addition, I discuss the implications of this inquiry, explain the significance of this study, and make recommendations for future research. To conclude the dissertation, I summarize the last chapter, explain the impact of this study on the researcher, and share a final personal reflection with the reader.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> "Professional learning cannot be mandated, coerced and controlled by others, but it can be effectively supported, assisted and guided."
>
> (Webster-Wright, 2010, p. vi)

Overview and Background

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain participants' perceptions of Writing Project involvement and professional learning over time. The goal was to determine if Writing Project participation had a long-term impact on educators, particularly for those who have been with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project at least ten years. This inquiry explored the extent to which participants viewed their Writing Project involvement as an authentic and lasting professional learning experience. The following research question guided this undertaking:

- In what ways, if any, has long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of participating educators?

In the first chapter of this dissertation, the research focus for the current inquiry was established. Chapter Two is a review of literature and begins with a discussion of international and national policy guiding educator professional development. Scholarship on effective professional development is addressed, in addition to empirical studies linking educator

professional development to student achievement. The review also explores scholarship on educator professional learning and National Writing Project research with specific attention to effectiveness studies that concern impact over time. To situate the current inquiry within a local context, focus is narrowed from the National Writing Project to a specific site within this network, the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. To conclude Chapter Two, the research question guiding the study is revisited.

The review of literature in Chapter Two emphasizes primary (original) sources (Galvan, 2013) to include empirical research in academic journals, theoretical articles, literature review articles, government documents, reports on professional practices and standards, and anecdotal reports. The purpose of this review is to identify gaps in the literature that warrant further study and to communicate the current dialogue surrounding professional development policy, effective professional development, educator professional learning, and the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement. This study seeks to contribute in a meaningful way to the discourse and research in these areas.

The review is framed around the assumption that knowledge of the professional development landscape is integral to understanding Writing Project influence on professional learning. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the literature review.

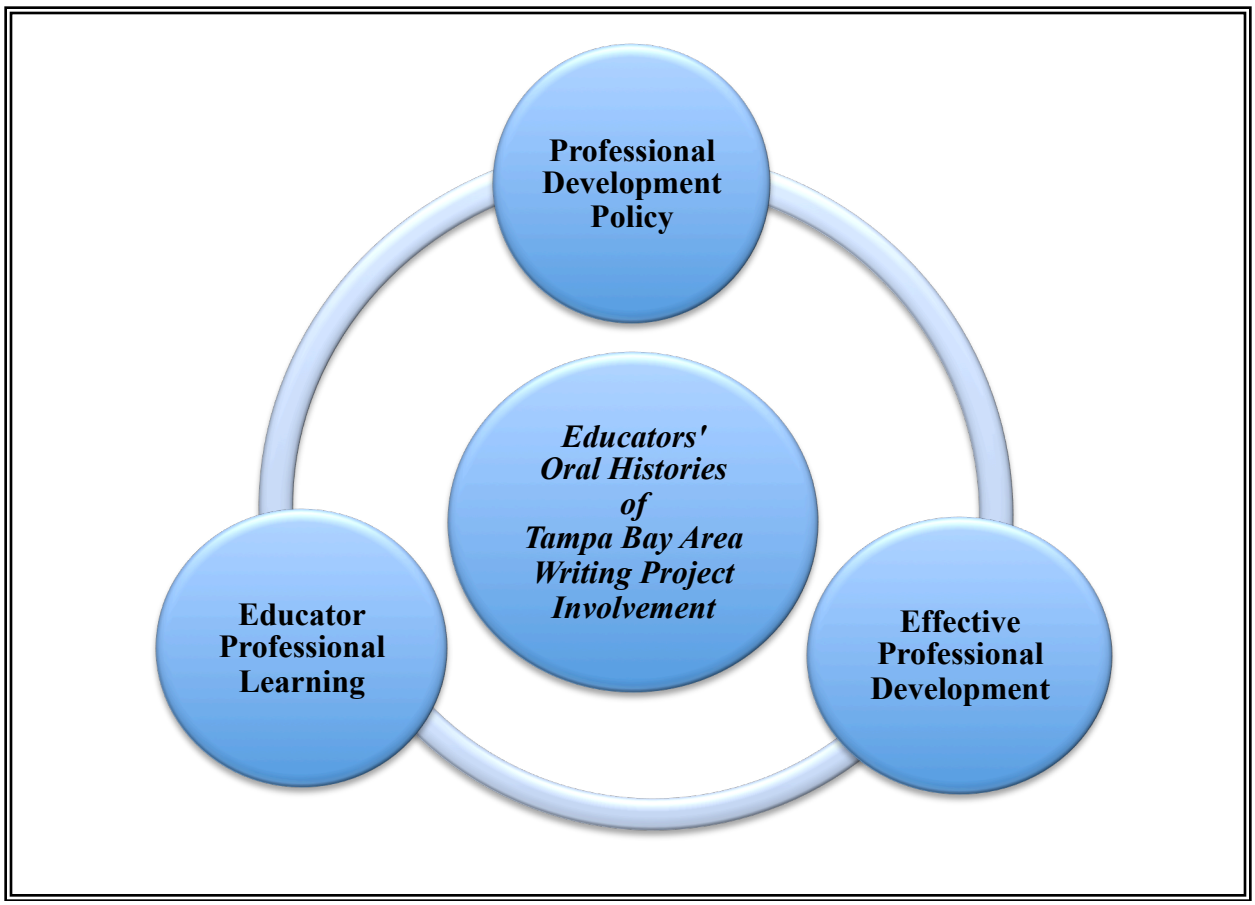

Figure 1. Visual Schema for the Review of Literature

Professional Development Policy

International Recommendations Guiding the Teaching Profession

Educators around the world face multiple challenges in their professional work, including globalization, economic shortfalls, technology needs, student diversity, knowledge acquisition, and lifelong learning (UNESCO & ILO, 2010). Governments must consider these issues when formulating national policies for education and the teaching profession. Two organizations have worked for decades to monitor global conditions affecting international education. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are committed to advocating for educator rights.

As a result of growing problems within the global education landscape, the ILO and UNESCO appointed an independent committee of experts to meet every three years to monitor the application of two international standards specific to the teaching profession, the *1966 Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers* and the *1997 Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel* (ILO, 2012). The ILO-UNESCO Joint Committee reviews major trends in global research relating to the recommendations, which essentially serve as a worldwide charter of rights for the teaching profession. In their 2011 summary report, the committee made recommendations to improve the teaching profession which included three areas of focus: the social status of educators, the de-professionalization of the teaching profession, and the lack of meaningful learning opportunities for educators. The committee also noted, "Profound changes that are occurring in our societies require that teachers be capable to develop continuously through training and lifelong professional development" (ILO, 2012, p. 8). The Joint Committee recommendations are intended to guide policy-makers in member nations.

In addition to the ILO and UNESCO, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) works to promote policies that will improve the social, economic, and educational well being of people across the globe. In 2011, the United States Department of Education, the OECD, and Education International sponsored the first *International Summit on the Teaching Profession* to help governments address key education issues and develop sound policies meant to improve the quality of teaching and learning worldwide (OECD, 2011). The OECD prepared a background report for the summit that examined how educators are supported through in-service. Within that document, the OECD presented data from the 2008 *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS) of approximately 90,00 educators in 23 countries.

TALIS questioned educators about their professional development activities. Results from the survey were based on self-reports of respondent's perceptions of work-related activities. TALIS data indicate that across all countries approximately 90% of educators participated in some form of professional development during the 18 months preceding the survey (OECD, 2011). There was, however, significant variation in the occurrences and duration of educator participation in professional development within and among nations.

According to study findings, "Fifty-five percent of the teachers surveyed reported that they wanted more professional development than they received during the 18-month survey period. The extent of unsatisfied demand is sizeable in every country, ranging from 31% to over 80%" (OECD, 2011, p. 21). In addition, the data indicate relatively few educators participate in the types of professional development they believe has the greatest impact on their teaching practice (i.e., joining a professional network or engaging in individual and collaborative research). On the other hand, professional development activities educators consider less effective (e.g., one-off events) show relatively high attendance rates among respondents.

The United States Responds: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Within the United States, a focus on educator professional development is seen in federal legislation governing major education initiatives. In January of 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), which reauthorized and amended the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*. The purpose of NCLB is evidenced in the first line of the legislation, "To close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind" (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2002a, p. 1). The NCLB act represents revised federal efforts to support elementary and secondary education

in the United States through accountability provisions, scientifically based research, increased parental options, and expanded local control and flexibility (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2004). As evidenced in the legislation, NCLB is clearly focused on accountability and the use of funds to support educational practices based on scientific research.

Title I, Part A provides funding to districts and schools with high poverty rates to help ensure disadvantaged children meet state academic standards. States receiving Title I funds must adopt plans that include annual measurable objectives to ensure "all teachers of core academic subjects are highly qualified, which means that they have state certification (which may be alternative state certification), hold a bachelor's degree, and have demonstrated subject area competency" (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2002b, p. 19). When enacting their in-service plans, school districts must use at least 5% of Title I funds for professional development to help educators meet the "highly qualified" status. If a school is identified as needing improvement, 10% of Title I funds must be used for professional development.

In addition to Title I funding, NCLB provides grants to states and school districts, under Title II, Part A, which authorizes use of funds for the recruitment, retention, and professional development of highly qualified educators. Title II of NCLB provides funding to states and school districts for professional development activities in order to meet the goal of having a "highly qualified teacher" in every classroom (USDOE, 2002a). Since the enactment of NCLB in 2002, Title II has directed nearly $3 billion annually to states and school districts to improve educator qualifications and quality. In 2012, the Department of Education reported findings from a federal survey of 800 school districts across the nation. Results indicate that Title IIA spending for professional development increased from 27% in 2002-03 to 44% in 2011-12 (USDOE, 2012).

The NCLB's definition of professional development includes activities that are "high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the educator's performance in the classroom; and are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences..." (USDOE, 2002a, Section 9101(34)) (See Appendix A for the entire definition). Professional development that reflects the principles in NCLB's definition is considered to be high quality and instrumental in assisting educators in becoming highly qualified.

As a result of the NCLB legislation, Learning Forward (formerly the National Staff Development Council) and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) undertook a multi-year research initiative, *The Status of Professional Development in the United States*, to track states' progress in professional development policy implementation. Conducted over three phases, the study is the most comprehensive research to date of educator professional learning experiences in the United States.

In Phase I of the inquiry (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Richardson, Andree, & Orphanos, 2009), the study team conducted a review of research on effective professional development and evaluated how educators' professional learning opportunities in the U.S. measured up against those in high-achieving nations. The review included quasi-experimental studies linking educator professional development to student achievement measures, as well as studies that used qualitative methods to assess the impact of professional development on educator learning. The research team found, "While teachers typically need substantial professional development in a given area (close to 50 hours) to improve their skills and their students' learning, most professional development opportunities in the U.S. are much shorter" (p. 5). Although the data indicate American educators participate in workshops and short-term professional development

at levels similar to educators in other countries, the U.S. is far behind in providing opportunities to engage in extended learning experiences.

According to study findings, over 90% of educators in the U.S. participated in professional development that consisted primarily of short-term conferences or workshops. Educators also report much of the professional development they do receive "is not useful" (Wei et al., 2009, p. 5). As evidenced in this study, opportunities for sustained, collegial professional development that produce changes in teaching practice and student learning are considerably limited in the U.S. than in most high-achieving nations.

Based on data collected from three administrations of the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (2000, 2004, 2008), Phase II research examined nationwide trends in learning opportunities for educators (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010). The study compared data from each of the three surveys and provided a state-by-state analysis of professional development efforts over the last decade. Data analysis showed significant increases in the percentage of educators who received short-term professional development across key areas and decreases in those reporting longer-term professional development. According to study findings, U.S. trends are "going in the wrong direction. The data reveal there has been a dramatic shift in the last decade away from professional development of a modest duration of 9-16 hours to professional development of 8 hours or shorter in length" (p. 2). Responses also reveal, while there has been clear progress in some areas (e.g. increased access to induction and mentoring for beginning teachers), most educators have limited opportunities for sustained and ongoing professional development.

During Phase III of the inquiry (Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010), the research team conducted case studies of four states (Colorado, Missouri, New Jersey, and Vermont) to get a closer look at the policy decisions that support professional development.

These states were considered to be professionally active, scoring above the national average in student performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP) and showing evidence of high rates of professional development participation in the 2008 *National Schools and Staffing Survey*. Data consisted of stakeholder interviews, observations, and document analysis of professional development policies, statutes, and agency guidelines.

Regarding measures of program effectiveness, "Although there are pockets of promising practices across the country, the quality of much professional development across states is far from meeting research-based definitions of effective professional development" (Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 1). The researchers also noted,

> While we cannot claim a causal link between the robustness of the policy frameworks in the four states studied in this report and increases in student achievement, education leaders and policymakers can draw from these experiences some valuable insight into policy levers that may be effective in their states. (p. vi)

This inquiry suggests a number of elements may be important to state success in developing effective professional learning opportunities for educators.

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education contracted with independent research firms to conduct an evaluation of states' progress toward implementation of the NCLB act (Birman et al., 2009). The evaluation consisted of two longitudinal studies, the *Study of State Implementation of Accountability and Teacher Quality Under No Child Left Behind* (SSI-NCLB) and the *National Longitudinal Study of No Child Left Behind* (NLS-NCLB). Based on data collected during the 2004-05 and 2006-07 school years, the goal was to investigate state and district progress made toward implementation of NCLB provisions. The SSI-NCLB study team interviewed state education agency staff and analyzed data from state reports. The NLS-NCLB study team

surveyed administrators, classroom educators, and Title I paraprofessionals in a national sample of 300 districts, over 1,400 schools, and approximately 7,300 educators.

Regarding NCLB's focus on highly qualified educators, the study team determined a vast majority of educators (94%) met state requirements to be considered highly qualified under NCLB in 2006-07. However, other provisions of NCLB appear to be meeting with as much less success (Birman et al., 2009). Despite NCLB's focus on professional development that is sustained, intensive, and content-focused, few educators report taking part in professional development over an extended period of time. According to the survey data, 72% of elementary educators and 73% of secondary English educators reported participation in at least one hour of professional development during the 2005-06 school year that was in-depth and content-focused. Yet, only 14% of elementary educators and 16% of secondary English educators participated in content-focused and in-depth study for more than 24 hours during the same period.

Although NCLB defines the types of activities that support effective professional development, the definition leaves considerable room for interpretation (Birman et al., 2009). After completing their analysis, the research team made the following conclusion regarding states' compliance with NCLB's professional development legislation.

> If the definition is interpreted to include activities with at least some focus on content, at least one characteristic of active learning or coherence, and at least one experience that is longer than a one-day workshop, then most teachers were receiving professional development consistent with the law's specifications. On the other hand, if professional development means participating in multiple sustained, active, coherent learning experiences that extensively focus on content, then most teachers were not receiving the type of professional development promoted by the law. (p. 115)

As evidenced in the study team's report, there is considerable progress to be made before educators in the U.S. are provided with consistent and effective professional development.

Florida Responds to NCLB: The School Community Professional Development Act

Because this study took place in Florida, the state's response to the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* provides important context for localizing inquiry focus. As a result of the NCLB law mandating state education accountability, the 2002 Legislature enacted Florida Statute 1012.98, *The School and Community Professional Development Act*, which established funding requirements for staff development. Since then, the Legislature has provided budget authority for educator professional development provisions from Title II, Part A grants, which amounted to "$134.6 million for the 2007-2008 fiscal year" (Florida House of Representatives, 2008, p. 12). In order to monitor district progress, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) developed a system for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development initiatives. The legal requirements for professional development in Florida's schools are outlined in the *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol*, which was developed by the FLDOE in 2001 (Florida House of Representatives [FLHOR], 2008).

Florida law requires educators to complete in-service professional development as a condition of renewing their teaching certificates. In order to maintain certification, an educator must earn at least six college credits or 120 in-service points (or a combination of both) every five years (Florida Department of Education [FLDOE], 2010). According to the legislation, the purpose of the state's professional development system is to "increase student achievement, enhance classroom instructional strategies that promote rigor and relevance throughout the curriculum, and prepare students for continuing education and the workforce" (Florida Senate,

2014, Section 1012.98(1)). Florida's Protocol System contains an overall philosophy and approach to professional learning that has as its core purpose improving student achievement.

The Protocol System requires each school district to evaluate professional development systems "based on analyses of student achievement data" (FLDOE, 2010, p. 4). Professional learning in the state should be based on "documented scientific research and include evidence of the positive impact on increasing student achievement" (p. 6). When determining effectiveness of professional learning efforts, the Protocol suggests that randomized or comparison groups should be used in research designs. In addition, each school principal must establish and maintain an *Individual Professional Development Plan* (IPDP) for each educator assigned to the school. The IPDP (also known as an "Ippy Dippy") must be "related to specific performance data for the students to whom the teacher is assigned" (p. 5). To determine the effectiveness of professional learning activities, evaluation methods must directly link the educator's professional development with the achievement levels of the students they teach.

In 2001, the Florida Legislature established the *Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement* (CEPRI) to serve as a citizen board for independent policy research and analysis (Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement [CEPRI], 2005). To address accountability efforts, the 2004 Legislature directed CEPRI to evaluate the degree to which school districts' in-service education programs have resulted in improved student performance. The inquiry focused on two areas: state spending on in-service education and the return on investment in professional development initiatives. Data consisted of an extensive review of research on effective professional development and interviews with state agency staff, district personnel, and university administrators. The CEPRI staff also met with FLDOE personnel and

legislative staff to determine the scope of financial resources allocated to in-service education and how these funds were used by school districts.

The analysis of data found a considerable reduction in district funding since the enactment of NCLB in 2002. Regarding expenditures on in-service activities in Florida, CEPRI discovered an alarming trend. With the onset of the NCLB act, the Legislature appropriated $36 million per year for professional development that was allocated across all 67 school districts on a per-FTE basis. However, that "amount has been reduced by 50% to $18 million for the 2005-06 school year" (CEPRI, 2005, p. 1). The researchers also determined the return on Florida's investment for in-service education could not be estimated "because the information available on expenditures, specific training activities, and teacher participation in such activities is incomplete, and because there is no systematic way to link teacher education to student performance" (p. 2). The reduction in legislative funding and issues with data measures represent considerable challenges for evaluating professional development effectiveness in the state of Florida.

Effective Professional Development

Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

In order to address the challenges of educating the next generation of learners, educators around the world need to be highly skilled practitioners who develop their own professional knowledge (OECD, 2011). Effective professional development is needed to advance the skills and knowledge educators must possess to adapt to the constantly changing demands of educating today's youth. From an international perspective, effective professional development should include activities that support and enhance educator professional learning. According to the

OECD (2011), "Effective professional development needs to be on-going, include training, practice and feedback, and provide adequate time and follow-up support" (p. 19). In addition, when considering professional development alternatives, policy makers and administrators must ensure learning opportunities match educator needs.

Education policy in the United States reflects a similar focus on the critical features of effective professional development. Although the term "effectiveness" is not used in NCLB's definition of professional development, the legislation addresses specific criteria for educator learning opportunities. The NCLB act describes high-quality professional development as activities that are "sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom" (USDOE, 2002a, Section 9101(34)(v)(I)). This section of NCLB's definition addresses effectiveness of professional development on an educator's practice, with specific attention to the features that must be included in district-sponsored activities.

A review of extant literature reflects a growing body of inquiry on the core features and characteristics associated with effective professional development (Blank, 2013; Desimone, 2009; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Guskey, 2009; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007). Research in this area is further bolstered by the work of the U.S. Department of Education's *Council of Chief State School Officers* (CCSSO). A meta-analysis conducted by the Council examined the effects of educator professional development in mathematics and science on gains in student achievement (Blank & de las Alas, 2009). The purpose of the two-year project funded by the *National Science Foundation* was to identify research that shows evidence of program effects and then to document the common elements of the professional development activities.

The 16 studies identified through the meta-analysis provide important findings about the design and implementation of professional development that claims a significant impact on educator learning. Analysis of the data revealed, "Teacher professional learning that includes content focus, longer duration, multiple activities, hands-on teacher learning, specific learning goals, and collective teacher participation has a significantly better chance to improve teacher skills and knowledge and, subsequently, to raise student achievement" (Blank & de las Alas, 2009, p. 53). In addition, data indicate the most effective professional development programs show a consistent pattern in how activities are planned, organized, and delivered. As evidenced in this meta-analysis, both content and process are important to educator professional learning.

Scholarship in educator learning has been further advanced by the work of Desimone (2009, 2011) who conducted a comprehensive literature review on effective professional development. Desimone found a substantial empirical research base exists to support the identification of a core set of features that lead to increased educator learning. Desimone concluded, "There is a research consensus on the main features of professional development that have been associated with changes in knowledge, practice, and, to a lesser extent, student achievement" (2009, p. 183). The five core features provide the basis of a conceptual framework and a foundation for assessing professional development effectiveness. Professional development activities should include the following characteristics: (a) *content-focused*, (b) *active learning*, (c) *coherence*, (d) *duration*, and (e) *collective participation*.

Although the core features listed above should be included in educator learning activities, their presence alone is not the sole indicator of impact (Desimone, 2009). Measures of effectiveness must be used to determine if the professional development had an impact on educator learning, classroom instruction, or teaching performance. To that end, Desimone

(2009) proposed a conceptual framework for empirical studies of professional development effectiveness.

> Despite the evidence supporting the five core features, there is no core set of characteristics that researchers regularly measure in empirical studies of professional development. Sharing a conceptual framework that defines important features of teacher learning experiences has the potential to move the field forward in terms of building a consistent knowledge base. (p. 184)

As reflected in Figure 2, Desimone's (2009) core conceptual framework for evaluating professional development effectiveness includes the following steps:

1. Educators experience professional development.
2. The professional development increases educators' knowledge and skills and/or changes their attitudes and beliefs.
3. Educators use their new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs to improve instruction, their approach to pedagogy, or both.
4. Instructional changes promote increased student learning.

Desimone's (2009) framework conceptualizes a non-recursive, interactive relationship between the five core features of effective professional development, increased teacher learning and/or change in attitudes and beliefs, and change in classroom instruction that ultimately lead to improved student achievement.

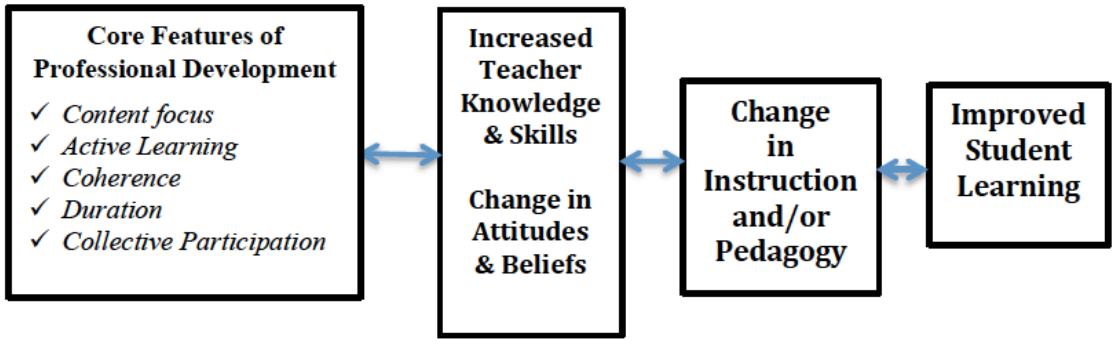

Figure 2. Core Conceptual Framework for Studying the Effects of Professional Development (Adapted from Desimone, 2009)

Evaluating Professional Development Effectiveness

From an international perspective, professional development should be focused on educator learning and evaluations of effectiveness should access educator perspectives (OECD, 2012). Regarding the impact of educator learning initiatives, there were no recommendations made by the ILO, UNESCO, or the OECD to measure effectiveness of professional development activities using student achievement data. However, the U.S. education policy links professional development effectiveness to student learning outcomes (USDOE, 2002a).

According to the NCLB act, professional development activities should be evaluated for "impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement" (USDOE, 2002a, Section 9101(34)(xii)). Measures of effectiveness, as per the NCLB legislation, directly link educator professional development to student achievement outcomes. Also important to note in NCLB's definition of professional development is the reference to making "a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom" (USDOE, 2002a, Section 9101(34)(v)). In this case, professional development must be evaluated based on educator perceptions of long-term impact. Student achievement data are not measures of educator learning or changes in practice over time.

When evaluating professional development programs funded under the NCLB legislation, effectiveness should be assessed using "scientifically based research evaluations" (USDOE, 2002a, Section 5411(d)). According to NCLB, scientifically based research involves the application of rigorous, systematic, objective procedures, employs empirical methods, and is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs (Section 9101(37)) (See Appendix B for the complete definition of scientifically based research). Clearly, within the NCLB legislation there is a specific focus on accountability measures that employ experimental procedures and quantitative methods to evaluate program impact.

Professional Development: Impact on Student Learning

Federal legislation guides the evaluation system for education initiatives across the nation. State funding is outlined in the NCLB act, which requires evaluation of professional development systems for "impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement" (USDOE, 2002a, Section 9101(34)(xii)). To provide focus, NCLB explicates accountability measures for evaluation of professional development impact on student achievement using scientifically based research strategies.

Several recent large-scale studies examined the impact of educator professional development on student achievement. One of the most significant contributions to the professional development effectiveness literature is the research review conducted by Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007), scholars from the *American Institutes for Research.* Their meta-analysis of over 1,300 studies and reports addressed the effect of educator professional development on student achievement. The study team conducted a detailed search of research literature in seven electronic databases (ERIC, PsycINFO, ProQuest, EBSCO's

Professional Development Collection, Dissertation Abstracts, Sociological Collection, and Campbell Collaboration). After eliminating duplicates and including additional studies suggested by the research team, the search on professional development and student achievement (with a focus on math, science or language arts) yielded 1,343 studies for the prescreening process.

The protocol for study review included three main steps. In the first stage, the reviewers eliminated studies that did not meet the study criteria bringing the total to 132 studies. Next, studies were examined for rigorous design. Most failed at this stage to meet inclusion criterion, and only 27 went on for study consideration. In the final stage, reviewers examined evidence of causal validity in each study and determined nine studies met the criteria based on rigorous evidence standards of the DOE's *What Works Clearinghouse*. According to Yoon et al. (2007), this exceptionally low number (less than 1%) attests to "the paucity of rigorous studies that directly assess the effect of in-service teacher professional development on student achievement in mathematics, science, and reading and English/language arts" (p. iii). The study team concluded there was limited data to support claims of causality made in the majority of experimental studies reviewed.

Regarding studies that did not meet evidence standards, "despite focusing on teacher professional development and including a student achievement measure, a frequent problem was study design, particularly for quasi-experimental designs with problems in baseline equivalence between treatment and comparison groups" (Yoon et al., 2007, p. 6). Considering NCLB's focus on experimental studies to measure impact, these findings bring into question the research linking educator professional development to student achievement. Demonstrating that professional development translates into student learning gains poses significant challenges for

researchers. In order to substantiate the empirical link between educator professional development and student achievement, researchers must present evidence that is high quality and proves what it claims to prove (Yoon et al., 2007).

Further contribution to inquiry on effective professional development is seen in a national study of educator professional development programs in mathematics and science conducted by the *Council of Chief State School Officers* (CCSSO). This extensive study was designed to review the quality of 25 professional development programs for mathematics and science educators in 14 states and to analyze the data from evaluation studies (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008). Funded through a grant from the *National Science Foundation*, the purpose of the study was to provide a cross-state analysis of the quality of educator professional development programs. Data included program documents from proposals, designs, and initial reports. The review process was conducted using a rubric rating each of the 25 programs. The goal of the CCSSO's analysis was to identify research findings based on measurable effects of educator professional development on student achievement.

Because a major focus of the NCLB legislation emphasizes scientifically based research and evaluation, states and school districts are asked to base their program designs for professional development on empirical evidence. According to the CCSSO, "Central to efforts to improve the quality of professional development is research-based evidence of effective programs and analysis of the characteristics of programs that make them effective" (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008, p. 3). The CCSSO investigated evaluation methods for professional development activities that employ experimental designs and randomized comparison trials that measure the outcomes of professional development.

The analysis of data found evidence that experimental study designs "present obstacles to evaluation" (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008, p. 27). Utilizing a comparison group requires significant cooperation from district and school administrators. In most cases, "advance permission is needed from teachers to collect data on instructional practices that can be compared between treatment and control groups or to link measures of teacher knowledge to subsequent measures of practices or student achievement" (p. 27). These findings lend caution to studies that include experimental measures with control groups, as they do not elicit convenient or timely evaluations of professional development effectiveness.

In addition to problems with study design, data analysis elicited causality concerns. Of the 25 programs studied, less than one-third (7) reported measurable effects of educator professional development on student achievement. The CCSSO identified issues with the type of data reported in the evaluation studies, "A majority of programs used student achievement data to evaluate effects of professional development… however, in many cases the link could not be made between teachers that received professional development and the students that they subsequently taught" (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008, p. 26). The CCSSO determined a potential disadvantage to using achievement tests is "the comprehensive nature of the assessments- with the primary purpose of accountability at the school level. The assessment may not be sensitive to the content area(s) or pedagogical knowledge emphasized in the teacher professional development" (p. 13). To further confound the analysis, student achievement scores alone make it difficult to determine the effects of professional development from other variables that could produce change in student achievement.

Although student achievement data and experimental designs provide questionable or difficult to obtain results in professional development studies, "the issue of program quality or

fidelity of implementation still is important for evaluation" (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008, p. 27). According to the CCSSO, future effectiveness studies should address "measurement of change in teaching practices in the classroom" (p. 27). To this end, states and districts must "develop evaluations that are more robust, include validated measures and instruments, and track the effects of professional development efforts with teachers over time" (p. 3). The CCSSO recommendation provides support for research that focuses on the long-term impact of professional development on educator learning.

After examining professional development initiatives that focus on literacy achievement, Garet and his colleagues (2008) reached a similar conclusion in their study. The research team examined data on 270 educators from 90 elementary schools in four states during the 2005-06 school year. The U.S. Department of Education commissioned the *Early Reading PD Interventions Study* to address the impact of two professional development interventions on student's reading achievement scores. The purpose of the inquiry was to describe implementation of reading interventions and examine impact on student reading achievement at the end of the first and second years of the study. The analysis of impact was based on achievement tests administered in the study schools, which primarily measured 2nd grade student's reading comprehension.

Three main findings were produced from study results (Garet et al., 2008). First, although positive impacts were reported on educator's knowledge of reading instruction, neither intervention resulted in significantly higher student test scores by the end of the first year. Second, the added effect of coaching on educator practices in reading instruction in the first year of implementation was not statistically significant. Third, no statistically significant impact was found on educator performance or in student achievement the year following the intervention.

Regarding the lack of impact the two professional development interventions had on measures of student learning, the authors of the study suggest, "Perhaps the specific knowledge and practices that were promoted by the PD, or our measures of them, are not good predictors of student achievement" (Garet et al., 2008, p. 61). In essence, one concept may not lead to another. The research team determined that student achievement data is a difficult and somewhat tenuous way to measure educator professional development experiences.

Despite NCLB's penchant for experimental designs to assess effective professional development, limited evidence exists that educator's participation will directly impact student achievement (Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008). In their review of effectiveness studies, the research team discovered significant methodological issues within inquiry designs. Researchers studying the effects of professional development "have made claims of causality using several designs- the most persuasive of which have been experimental and quasi-experimental designs" (p. 471). Studies should include "measurement of anticipated mediating factors, such as implementation levels achieved and proximal outcomes (e.g., teacher knowledge and practice), in addition to distal outcomes (student achievement)" (p. 475). Without consideration of potential mediators, claims of causality in experimental designs fall short of the methodological rigor expected in empirical studies of professional development and student achievement.

Another area of concern reported in this research was the cost of measuring student achievement using well-aligned measures. "We would argue that it is best to initially study the effect of a PD intervention on teacher knowledge only" (Wayne et al., 2008, p. 476). The research team concluded, by eliminating the cost of measuring student achievement and using

educators as the unit of assignment, professional development effectiveness can be measured at much less expense and with increased methodological rigor.

In their analysis of the impact of educator professional development on student achievement, the *National Mathematics Advisory Panel* (2008) found the majority of studies in their review lacked the methodological rigor to establish causality. In all, the Panel examined research publications, policy reports, and survey data from 743 algebra educators. During their review, the Panel identified several studies that were intended to be empirical but used questionable research designs. In their conclusions about the impact of professional development in mathematics on educator knowledge and student achievement, the authors noted, "Despite widespread beliefs about the qualities that make teacher education effective, the Panel did not find strong evidence for the impact of any specific form of, or approach to, teacher education on either teachers' knowledge or students' learning" (p. 40). Deficiencies in research methodology impeded the Panel's ability to establish a causal link between professional development and student learning outcomes.

In a recent review of professional development effectiveness studies, Guskey (2009) examined research challenging professional development's impact on student achievement. The inquiry found, "sound, trustworthy, and scientifically valid evidence on the professional development characteristics that help improve student learning, remains scarce" (p. 226). In addition, isolating the effects of a particular strategy, innovation, or professional development activity is extremely challenging, irrespective of the research design. Guskey's analysis supports previous findings (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008; National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008; Wayne et al., 2008; Yoon et al., 2007) regarding the limitations in research purporting a causal link between educator professional development and student learning outcomes. As

evidenced in these studies, significant problems exist with measures of professional development impact that center research on student achievement data.

The connection between educator professional development and student achievement may seem intuitive (Yoon et al., 2007), however current research suggests otherwise. Studies linking effective professional development to student achievement elicit major concerns with experimental designs. In addition, measures of impact are often unreliable and causality is difficult to establish. The scholarship advanced by Desimone (2011) provides direction for further research. When examining professional development effectiveness, Desimone moves away from a focus on student achievement to position educators at the center of impact inquiry.

> Because professional development is a complex array of interrelated learning opportunities, it's challenging to distinguish teachers' learning activities from one another and to describe trends, associations, or effects of professional learning on knowledge, instruction, and student achievement. One solution is to focus on the features of professional development activities that lead to teacher learning. (p. 69)

Hamilton (2013) proposed a similar alternative for evaluating professional development effectiveness, one that explores educators' views regarding the efficacy of a learning experience. Hamilton's research examined a model of embedded professional development in which educators in a secondary school observed the work of their peers. Study data included surveys and interviews intended to explore educator's perceptions of professional development experiences. According to Hamilton (2013), "Ascertaining K–12 teachers' experiences with particular types of professional development is important, as they are the ones who actually experience it" (p. 59). By accessing educator perspectives regarding the impact of professional development, a re-positioning occurred which placed educators at the center of the research.

In order to understand what works in professional development and why, Hamilton (2013) believes inquiries should "focus on teachers' lived experiences, an element absent from many studies" (p. 47). Although empirical research on professional development is necessary, Hamilton argues, "it is vital that we include teachers' narratives, in which they share their ideas and experiences" (p. 59). This view is in opposition to NCLB's penchant for scientifically based experimental designs that measure lasting impact.

Professional Development: Impact on Educator Learning

Based on the NCLB definition of professional development, activities should be "high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom" (USDOE, 2002a, Section 9101(34)(v)(I)). Within the definition is the phrase "lasting impact" which promotes inquiry that examines impact over time, long-term impact, or longitudinal studies of educator perceptions of professional development effectiveness. A review of research since the enactment of the NCLB legislation found only one study (Linn, Gill, Sherman, Vaughn, & Mason, 2010) employing scientifically based quantitative methods that addressed impact over a significant period of time (five years or more). The remaining studies discussed in this review examine professional development impact over a much shorter duration.

Recent inquiry by Linn and colleagues (2010) explored the impact of professional development provided over a five-year period at four separate campuses in a large urban school district. The study investigated whether educators at each school used new knowledge gained through professional development offered over the past five years. Data analysis showed consistent results across the four participating schools. According to the participant responses,

the study team found limited evidence educators implemented professional development initiatives or shared ideas learned in the activities. The team concluded, "When professional development is only offered outside school, presented as demonstrations, training workshops and lectures, it lacks the ability to make a lasting impact on actual classroom instruction" (p. 681). As evidenced in the survey results, the professional development within each school was largely inadequate due to the lack of effective offerings.

Haviland, Turley, and Shin (2011) investigated the sustained impact of a professional development workshop series held over four months on faculty members' attitudes, confidence, and understanding in program assessment. The study employed a hierarchical linear model to examine changes in faculty learning over time. Data consisted of participant responses from pre- and post-workshop surveys and a follow-up survey administered one year after the workshops. Analysis of survey responses found, "A total of 36 (67%) participants completed the pre-workshop survey, and 24 (44%) completed the post-workshop survey. Further, 22 (41%) participants responded to the follow-up survey one year later" (p. 76). Although survey responses declined over course of the study, faculty who did respond to all three surveys (n = 15) indicate understanding of program assessment increased over time.

Boyle, Lamprianou, and Boyle (2005) reported on the second year of an ongoing longitudinal study that examined the influence of professional development on teaching strategies. Data analysis indicated survey returns for year two of the study dropped significantly (58.9% for the first year compared to 31.1% for the second year). The researchers determined, "The longitudinal aspect of the study was weakened by the large attrition rate in the 2nd year" (p. 14). Similar to Haviland, Turley, and Shin's (2011) findings, a major limitation of this study was the steep decline in survey returns, which produced challenges for researchers exploring the

lasting impact of professional development. Attrition in longitudinal research is a major issue "when loss of participants compromises the chances of detecting the effects being studied. Attrition is particularly problematic, because it can result in biased estimation of treatment effects and potentially compromise the internal validity of study estimates" (Kubitskey, Vath, Johnson, Fishman, Konstantopoulos, & Park, 2012, p. 418). When using survey methods to explore impact over time, the issue of attrition is of paramount importance to obtaining valid study results.

Although the studies discussed in this section purport inquiry into professional development impact over time, none explored educator learning for an extended period. The study by Linn et al. (2010) spanned five years, which proved to be the longest time frame found in quantitative research that addressed the long-term impact of professional development on educator learning. The survey research conducted by Haviland, Turley, and Shin (2011) and Boyle, Lamprianou, and Boyle (2005) addressed impact the year following professional development, which offers a much shorter duration of change over time. In addition, both studies experienced validity concerns due to respondent attrition. This gap in the research employing experimental or survey designs warrants attention and provides impetus for qualitative inquiry into the lasting impact of professional development on educator learning.

Educator Professional Learning

From Professional Development to Professional Learning

Inquiry into educator professional learning is by no means a simplistic endeavor, however the research advanced by Borko (2004) provides guidance in 'mapping the terrain' of research on professional development. When studying educator professional development,

Borko (2004) calls for research that is situated so the full complexity of the learning experience can be considered. According to Borko, "Studies that focus on either the individual or the group as the unit of analysis can provide valuable insights about teacher learning" (2004, p. 8). To understand professional learning, researchers must study it within multiple contexts, considering the individual educator and the social systems in which she or he operates. Borko suggests further inquiry is needed, such as longitudinal research, to document effective professional development programs and their impact on educator learning.

In addition to Borko's (2004) research, the scholarship of Webster-Wright (2009, 2010) has contributed significantly to the professional development literature that conceptualizes educator professional learning. According to Webster-Wright (2009), professional development has been part of a discourse that views the educator as a professional who is deficient in some way and in need of developing through "knowledge" delivered by an outside expert. Implicit in this transmission model of teaching and learning is an "objectivist epistemology where knowledge is viewed as a commodity akin to information that can be produced, managed, or transferred" (p. 715). Webster-Wright's work offers a conceptual framework for scholarly inquiry into educator learning.

Webster-Wright (2009) suggests a re-conceptualization of educator professional development by placing attention on professional learning. "Reframing this conceptualization of PD requires moving from a focus on "development" to "learning" and from an atomistic perspective to a holistic approach" (p. 713). Atomistic approaches can be problematic when studying professional learning because the focus is on factors that attempt to compartmentalize. A holistic approach to research stresses that experience should be considered in its entirety.

Webster-Wright (2009) suggests moving away from an atomistic perspective to consider professional learning as a holistic experience. "There is a need for more research beyond the "development of professionals" that investigates the "experience of PL" as constructed and embedded within authentic professional practice" (p. 713). Within this framework, the educator is seen as one who is capable of self-directed learning, a concept implicit in authentic professional learning. The change in language use is more than semantics; it's a paradigm shift in thinking that rejects the objectivist epistemology underpinning much of the current research in educator learning (Webster-Wright, 2010). Webster-Wright's work provides further support for inquiry focusing on educator lived experience and the impact of professional development on professional learning.

Scholarship in the field of educator professional learning is further bolstered by the work of Easton (2008), who believes educators should participate in professional development activities that begin with assessments of their own learning needs. To assess the impact of these experiences, effectiveness should be evaluated based on how educators change the way they work as a result of their professional learning. Easton's emphasis is on intentionality and what individuals see as important for personal growth and knowledge generation. Easton views educator professional learning as a self-directed activity rather than one aimed at achieving what others wish to be achieved. According to Easton (2008),

> It is clearer today than ever that educators need to learn, and that's why *professional learning* has replaced *professional development*. Developing is not enough. Educators must be knowledgeable and wise. They must know enough in order to change. They must change in order to get different results. They must become learners, and they must be *self*-developing. (p. 756)

The National Writing Project: Teachers at the Center

In fall of 1972, James Gray and a small group of colleagues from the University of California, Berkeley came together with the purpose of creating a staff development project structured in a way that would allow educators to share with colleagues the theories and strategies of their best teaching practices. In *Memoirs of the Early Years of the National Writing Project*, Gray (2000) discusses the positioning of educators within reform initiatives.

> I knew that the knowledge successful teachers had gained through their experience and practice in the classroom was not tapped, sought after, shared, or for the most part, even known about. I knew also that if there was ever going to be reform in American education, it was going to take place in the nation's classrooms. And because teachers- and no one else- were in those classrooms, I knew that for reform to succeed, teachers had to be at the center. (p. 50)

From the onset, Gray insisted educators were the key players in school reform and the true experts on what occurs in the nation's classrooms. His belief in a teacher-centered learning model translated into concrete actions, and as a result, the first Writing Project summer institute was established in 1974 to provide a high-quality professional learning alternative that focused on the teaching of writing (Gray, 2000).

Through their continued Invitational Summer Institutes, Writing Project sites develop a leadership cadre of local educators called "Teacher Consultants" (TC's). These TC's are the core of the network. In addition to summer institutes, network sites offer in-service programs for local schools and higher education institutions. According to Gray (2000), the National Writing Project adopted a different take on in-service, providing extended professional development rather than single workshops. If educators are to change "as a result of these staff development

programs, they need time to try out in their classrooms what the workshop is offering. They need to be to able to report back on their successes and failures" (p. 103). To that end, National Writing Project sites offer 5-10 three-hour workshops to schools desiring professional development in the area of writing.

The National Writing Project believes "access to high-quality educational experiences is a basic right of all learners and a cornerstone of equity" (National Writing Project, 2014, p. 1). Writing Project sites share a common program model based on the concept of *teachers teaching teachers*. NWP's program model includes:

- Developing a cadre of educators who have participated in summer institutes
- Delivering customized in-service programs for local schools
- Providing continued learning and research opportunities for educators
- Conducting educational programs for youth, parents, and the community

NWP focuses on the teaching of writing at all grade levels and disciplines by offering high-quality professional development programs for educators. In addition, NWP works in partnership with institutions, organizations, and community agencies to develop and sustain leadership for educational improvement. The National Writing Project is a working infrastructure (St. John & Stokes, 2011), representing "the only professional development project that serves teachers at a national scale" (p. 24). The project has witnessed substantial growth, with more than 200 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. (See Figure 3 for the National Writing Project network sites.)

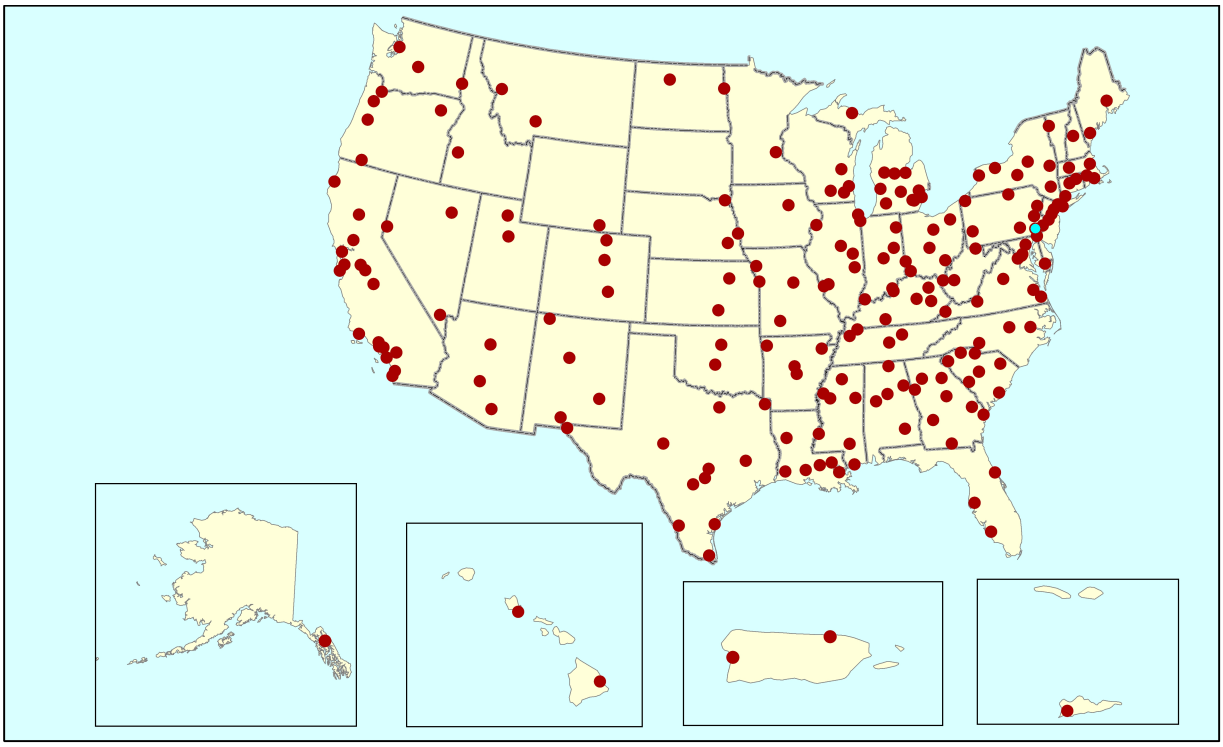

Figure 3. National Writing Project Network Sites
(*Reprinted from St. John & Stokes, 2011, p. 25*)

Regarding the scope of the National Writing Project, data gathered since 1974 indicates this organization has a significant reach (St. John & Stokes, 2014). According to program evaluations, over 80,000 educators have participated in Invitational Summer Institutes since NWP first began. Data also shows 3,000 institute participants return to their classrooms to teach approximately 120,000 students annually. Cumulatively, over 1.6 million students have been instructed by Writing Project educators since program inception.

The scale of aggregate program hours is extensive producing over 1.9 million hours in summer institutes, in-service activities, continuity programs, and community education initiatives since 1994 (St. John & Stokes, 2014). Based on a comprehensive analysis of National Writing Project annual reports, as the scale of the program increases the quality remains consistently high. For the past 14 years of data collection on Invitational Summer Institutes,

"ratings have stayed in the high 90th percentiles on satisfaction surveys" (p. 8). Clearly, the NWP's reach is evidenced in the scope and scale of program initiatives.

NCLB and the National Writing Project

In order to meet the accountability requirements for student achievement and educator quality set forth in the NCLB act, the legislation provides funding to high quality programs that show evidence of effective practices (USDOE, 2002a). Within Title II, Section 2151 is a description of "national activities of demonstrated effectiveness", which specifically names the National Writing Project as an *Innovation For Teacher Quality* (see Appendix C for Title II, Subpart 2, Sections 2331 and 2332). The National Writing Project is the only professional development organization mentioned in the NCLB legislation.

According to the NCLB act, the purpose of grant funding to the organization is to support and promote the expansion of the National Writing Project's network so that educators across the nation will have access to a Writing Project site (USDOE, 2002a). With regard to financial provisions,

> The Secretary is authorized to award a grant to the National Writing Project, a nonprofit educational organization that has as its primary purpose the improvement of the quality of student writing and learning (hereafter in this section referred to as the 'grantee') to improve the teaching of writing and the use of writing as a part of the learning process in our Nation's classrooms. (USDOE, 2002a, Section 2332(a))

For fiscal year 2002 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years, NCLB authorized appropriations of $15 million to carry out the work of the organization. During the remainder of the Bush administration, the federal government continued grant funding for the National

Writing Project based on the NCLB legislation (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2010). According to the 2011 budget summary, federal funding for the National Writing Project reached $25.6 million, representing a significant increase in financial provisions since the inception of NCLB.

In 2011, government funding for the National Writing Project and five other literacy programs was terminated by the Obama administration. The elimination of $413.3 million in grant funds was part of a consolidation of programs under President Obama's ESEA reauthorization proposal to reduce the federal budget by $4 billion (USDOE, 2010). However, analysts have called "consolidation" a misleading interpretation. "The president essentially has proposed replacing all four of the discrete literacy programs that were cut- plus a few other programs- with a larger, competitive fund called Effective Teaching and Learning: Literacy" (Robelen, 2011, p. 3). According to the 2011 Budget proposal, under the Obama plan *Effective Teaching and Learning: Literacy* would receive $450 million in funding.

However, government reports indicate President Obama's budget was not approved in 2011 (or the next three years), and as a result, the literacy fund received nothing. In addition, a review of the 2015 Budget Proposal found the line item for *Effective Teaching and Learning: Literacy* reduced from $450 million in 2011 to $183.7 million for fiscal year 2015 (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2014). With the reduction in proposed funding to *Effective Teaching and Learning: Literacy* and the absence of budget approval, the National Writing Project's potential for financial support from the federal government remains tenuous.

Writing Project Effectiveness: Impact on Educator Learning

According to NCLB's definition of professional development, activities should have a "lasting impact" on educator practices (USDOE, 2002a, Section 9101(34)(v)(I)). In order to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of Writing Project involvement, the NWP has sponsored research that focuses on impact over time (Friedrich et al., 2007; Shanton, McKinney, Meyer, & Friedrich, 2009; Whitney & Friedrich, 2013). In addition, the following studies by independent research firms were conducted to examine Writing Project effectiveness (Stokes et al., 2008; Stokes, Hirabayashi, Murray, & Senauke, 2011). Longitudinal inquiry by Inverness Research examined educators' assessments of the quality of National Writing Project summer institutes and the lasting benefits for professional growth (Stokes et al., 2008). Study findings are from Writing Project annual surveys of seven summer institute cohorts from 2000-2006, a total of 22,287 participants. Educators who attended NWP institutes were surveyed twice: once at the end of the summer institute and again eight months later. The analysis takes a long-term perspective, inquiring whether summer institute quality varies for cohorts or remains consistent over time.

Over the seven years reported in the study, a large majority of educators found the summer institutes to be beneficial in multiple ways. According to institute participants, "experience in the NWP has expanded their repertoires of classroom practice, enhanced their professional knowledge, and strengthened their ability to serve their students" (Stokes et al., 2008, p. iv). Annual surveys conducted over several years demonstrate the enduring quality of Writing Project summer institutes. Reports from follow-up surveys are portrayed in Figure 4, which represents overall benefits to educator knowledge and practice between 2000 and 2006.

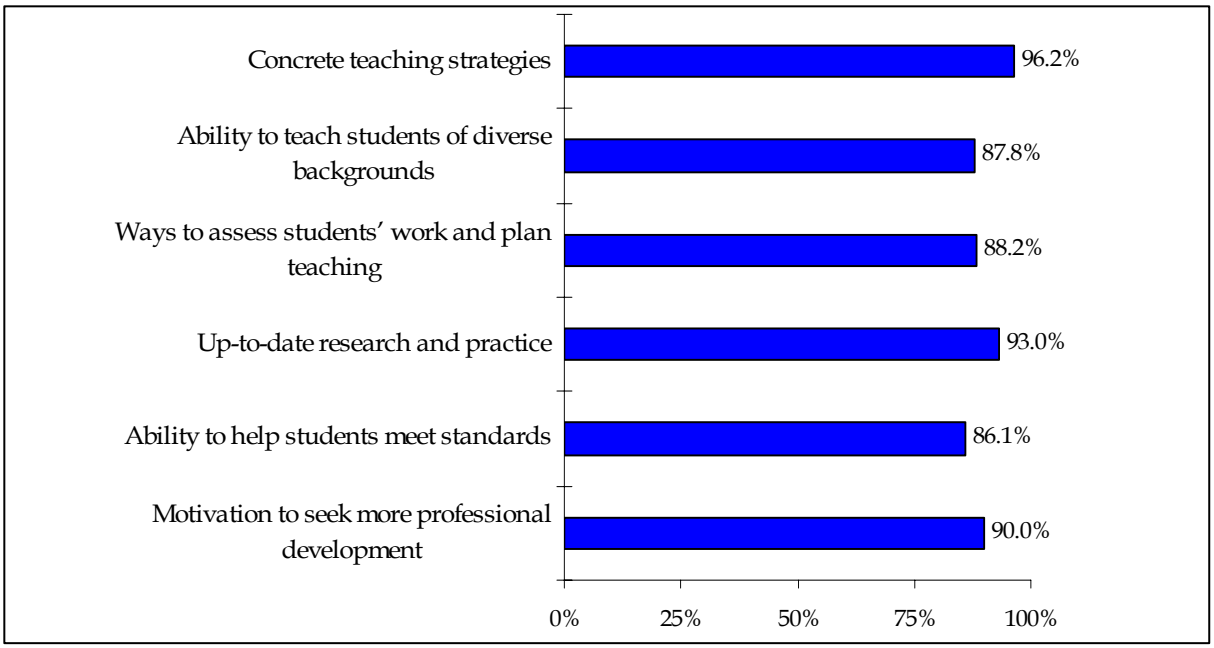

Figure 4. Seven-Year Overall Assessment of Benefits to Teachers
(*Reprinted from Stokes et al., 2008, p. v*)

In their continued evaluation of summer institute effectiveness, Inverness Research examined participant perspectives in their 2009 summer institute survey and the 2010 follow-up survey (Stokes, Hirabayashi, Murray, & Senauke, 2011). The inquiry addressed educators' assessments of the 2009 NWP summer institutes and the perceived impact on teaching practices the subsequent school year. The 3,000 participants in the study represent over 2,500 schools in 1,300 school districts, as well as over 120 colleges and universities.

The survey questioned whether educators' high expectations for positive impact at the end of the institute would persist into the school year. According to participant responses, 97% gained teaching strategies during the summer institute they expected to use in their classrooms. On the follow-up survey in spring of 2010, 87% reported actual use of the strategies (Stokes, Hirabayashi, Murray, & Senauke, 2011). Analysis of survey responses indicated promising trends with regard to Writing Project impact.

> The quality of NWP institutes is high, with 96% saying that NWP institutes are better than other professional development, that the institutes contribute to or reinforce their understanding of how to teach writing effectively, that they are able to use and apply what they learned at the institute to their own classrooms and students, and that their experience translates into improved writing skills for their students. (p. ii)

This inquiry reflects educator perspectives on the enduring quality of NWP summer institutes and the impact of those programs on teaching practices the subsequent school year.

Although the studies conducted by Inverness Research take a longitudinal perspective of summer institute quality, they do not address the long-term impact of Writing Project involvement on participants' careers or professional learning. The research reported by Stokes et al. (2008) covers seven years. However, follow-up surveys were administered just eight months after summer institute attendance, which is not a significant amount of time when looking at long-term impact. The study conducted by Stokes, Hirabayashi, Murray, and Senauke (2011) surveys participants at the end of the 2009 summer institute and again the following spring. This study represents participant perspectives generated less than a year after attending a summer institute, a relatively short period of time when examining impact over time.

In 2004, the National Writing Project launched the Legacy Study, a mixed-methods, three-phase inquiry into the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement (Friedrich et al., 2007). Phase I of the study involved a professional history survey of Teacher Consultants (N = 1,848) who attended Invitational Summer Institutes between 1974 and 1994. Phase II was nested within the larger Legacy Study and comprised semi-structured telephone interviews conducted over three months during the spring of 2006 with a randomly selected subsample of survey respondents (n = 110) stratified by seven career paths (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013). Phase III,

conducted in 2008, involved case studies (n = 10) of a purposive subsample of individuals from the same career pathways (Shanton, McKinney, Meyer, & Friedrich, 2009).

The first phase of the Legacy Study began with a census survey of Teacher Consultants (TC's) who had participated in a Writing Project summer institute prior to 1995. Regarding the study time frame, Friedrich et al. (2007) note that a period of ten years after an individual's participation in a summer institute represents "sufficient time to ascertain how the Writing Project may have influenced teacher-consultants' careers, as well as to gauge these teacher-consultants' contributions more broadly" (p. 6). Researchers investigated whether Writing Project involvement encouraged TC's to remain in education and to take on leadership roles.

Analysis of the last positions held in respondents' career histories revealed that 72% were teaching at the time of the survey or that teaching was their final position prior to retirement (Friedrich et al., 2007). An additional 13% held positions in school districts, but not in classrooms. Another 14% were employed in the field of education but outside a school district. The data also indicated less than 1% no longer work in education. Survey responses represent TC's who participated in summer institutes, on average, 20 years prior to the study.

Respondents also rated the extent to which Writing Project involvement influenced each position held over the course of their careers (Friedrich et al., 2007). Data analysis found Writing Project involvement greatly effected participants. Specifically, after attending a Writing Project summer institute, 88.3% reported their Writing Project experience informed and influenced their work. In addition, 87.8% felt they applied the knowledge and skills gained from Writing Project participation. On the whole, a large majority of TC's (90.2%) reported that Writing Project attitudes and values influenced their work. Not only do these data suggest significant Writing Project influence, they also imply long-term impact.

Phase II of the Legacy Study sought to understand qualitatively Writing Project influence on the careers of participating educators (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013). To prepare for the second phase, survey respondents were offered the opportunity to participate in telephone interviews regarding their career trajectories and the role, if any, NWP played. According to survey findings, 58% (1,085) agreed to participate in the follow-up interviews.

Overall, interviewees reported that summer institute participation and continued involvement in local Writing Project activities impacted their personal writing, teaching practice, engagement in education, and leadership development. Phase II interview data substantiated the high levels of Writing Project influence reported by survey respondents. Whitney and Friedrich (2013) concluded,

> A legacy like that of the NWP flows from long-term involvement in a network in which ideas about writing and teaching are not only presented but modeled, challenged, inquired into, and revised in a collaborative manner over a long-term period. (p. 31)

Phase III of the Legacy Study took place in 2007 and involved case studies of 10 summer institute participants who pursued various careers in the field of education. By examining participants from the original survey, the Legacy Study advanced from a broadly focused research perspective to a more detailed and nuanced analysis of Writing Project impact.

Shanton, McKinney, Meyer, and Friedrich (2009) reported on key issues of literacy leadership identified in three individuals who attended National Writing Project summer institutes between 1974 and 1994.

> In these cases, followers gained access to effective literacy practices through carefully scaffolded experiences and interactions that involved authentic and deliberate reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Leaders' deep knowledge and strategic actions, which

they indicated were nurtured by their participation in NWP as well as other communities of practice, created effective literacy practices and also inspired new learning. (p. 308)

Clearly, the three phases of the Legacy Study contribute significantly to the research literature informing Writing Project impact over time. The study examined Writing Project influence on participants of summer institutes during the first 20 years of NWP's existence. Although the inquiry offers important insight into the long-term influence of Writing Project involvement, a review of literature found nothing that extended or continued the Legacy Study at individual network sites since study initiation in 2004. This absence of research warrants consideration and provides impetus for future inquiry into Writing Project impact.

A review of recent Writing Project dissertations found impact studies focused on teacher transformation (Caswell, 2007; Whitney, 2006) and feelings of teacher efficacy in writing (Dillard, 2004) during Invitational Summer Institutes. In addition, inquiry has examined influence on student writing performance (Roberts, 2002), educator attitudes and classroom instruction (Clark, 2011; Holmes, 2009; Kemp, 2013; Obery, 2012), changes in instructional decision-making (Roberts, 2009), and increased ability to address high-stakes testing and mandated reform efforts (Durr, 2007; Truesdell, 2005) following summer institute participation. Although these dissertations illustrate a current research focus on Writing Project effectiveness and educator lived experience, none examined impact on professional learning over time. This gap in the literature provides further support for qualitative inquiry focusing on the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement.

Impact at the Local Level: The Tampa Bay Area Writing Project

The NWP Legacy Study (Friedrich et al., 2007) provides a considerable knowledge base for capturing the long-term impact of Writing Project participation. Although researchers continue to examine participants from the original study (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2007; Shanton, McKinney, Meyer, & Friedrich, 2009; Whitney & Friedrich, 2013), a review if extant research elicited nothing that extends or continues NWP's legacy research at an individual network site. For this reason, inquiry focusing on the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement at the local level will add significantly to the research literature.

The current study examined whether Writing Project involvement had a lasting impact on educator professional learning. The following research question guided this undertaking:

- In what ways, if any, has long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of participating educators?

Chapter Summary

To establish a context for this study, Chapter Two began with a review of international and national policy guiding educator professional development. Scholarship on effective professional development was addressed, in addition to empirical studies linking educator professional development to student achievement. The review also explored scholarship on educator professional learning and National Writing Project research, with specific attention to effectiveness studies that address impact over time. In order to situate this inquiry within a local context, focus was narrowed to the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, a local site within NWP's

network. To conclude the review of literature, the research question guiding this study was revisited.

The focus of the next chapter is study design and methodology. In Chapter Three, I describe the pilot study conducted that launched this investigation. Next, I discuss methodology used to answer the research question, outline procedures for participant selection, and explain the process for data collection. To provide an additional element of transparency within the study, I delineate my role as the researcher, describe member checks conducted to maintain data integrity, and discuss the use of a peer reviewer. To conclude the chapter, I detail the process by which study data were analyzed and interpreted.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH DESIGN

> "What I believe we need in educational research are multiple perspectives. Each template or lens one engages to see can make vivid what other lenses obscure. Unlike our brethren at the national level who believe that randomized experimental field trials are the only way to go, I believe there are many roads to multiple Romes. Put another way, I don't think there is one destination that several roads will lead you to, but there are, rather, multiple destinations which require multiple roads."
>
> (Eisner, 2013, p. 22)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain educators' perceptions of Writing Project influence on professional learning over time. The goal was to learn if participation in the Invitational Summer Institute had a long-term impact on the professional lives of educators who joined the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project between 1998 and 2004. This inquiry explored the extent to which participants viewed their Writing Project involvement as an authentic professional learning experience. The following research question guided this undertaking:

- In what ways, if any, has long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of participating educators?

In this chapter, I describe in full detail the research techniques employed in this study. I discuss methodology governing my choice and use of oral history, as well as participant

selection and interview procedures. In addition, I describe procedures used for data collection and analysis, research trustworthiness, the role of the researcher, and ethical considerations. To conclude Chapter Three, I discuss a pilot study conducted during the spring of 2013, which launched the current investigation.

Study Design

Regarding the context and design of this study, I employed an oral history methodology in order to story the lived experience of participants in a meaningful way. Oral history is a research technique that involves the "collection of stories and reminiscences of a person or persons who have first hand knowledge of any number of experiences" (Janesick, 2010, p. 2). Oral history is accomplished through interviewing in order to access lived experience. Interviewing is a valuable tool that helps the researcher make connections and build rapport with participants that other forms of inquiry do not allow.

Analysis was focused on participants' descriptions of Writing Project involvement and professional learning over time. Conceptually, these two areas provided a preliminary understanding of the long-term influence of Writing Project involvement on the professional learning of educators. Oral history interviews were guided by a common set of foci:

- Current and previous work in education
- Invitational Summer Institute experience
- Writing Project influence on professional practice
- Writing Project influence on career growth
- Writing Project influence on professional learning

Oral History: A Methodology of Strength

For the purpose of this research, I engaged an oral history methodology to access participant's stories of Writing Project involvement over time. According to Thompson (2000), "Reality is complex and many-sided; and it is a primary merit of oral history that, to a much greater extent than most sources, it allows the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated" (p. 6). I chose oral history as a methodology in order to position educators' stories at the center of this research.

Researchers and oral historians across the globe have documented educator stories. Milewski (2012) explored educators' experiences of school inspection and inspectors during the 1930's by drawing on the oral history accounts of women and men who taught elementary school in various regions of Canada. Kang (2007) conducted oral history interviews of retired Japanese American teachers in the Pacific Northwest who taught public school between 1950 and 2000. Rogers (2008) accessed oral history narratives to examine the expectations and beliefs that brought young people to teaching in the 1960s through the National Teacher Corps. In Australia, Theobald, Cobb-Moore, and Irvine (2013) investigated key changes in early childhood education and care (ECEC) by gathering oral histories of staff, parents, and children associated with *The Gowrie Qld* between 1972 and 2012. In South Africa, Weider (2003) conducted an extensive oral history project with 40 educators who taught elementary school while fighting against apartheid.

In another study of educators facing apartheid, Paige, Chartres, and Kenyon (2008) used an oral history methodology to gather stories that focused on the science and mathematics practices of eight teachers who typified the hundreds who participated in a four-year professional development project in Cape Town, South Africa.

> Through these teachers' oral histories you can glimpse the harshness and inequity of growing up and being educated during the apartheid regime in the 1970s and 1980s. In a sense, in the act of telling their stories, the teachers have reflected on critical moments and given meaning to events that shaped their lives as teachers. The act of narration is a very powerful tool for realizing the positive impact their classroom practice has had on so many lives. The stories have been vehicles for bringing out aspects of the teachers' experiential knowledge and have provided opportunity for them to talk about and relive and revalue concrete and specific events in their personal professional development. It is these significant events, and the value of the process of re-articulating (or re-realizing) them, that have made the stories so important. (p. 527)

As Thomas (1995) notes and I agree, there is much to be learned by speaking with educators and "listening attentively to what they have to say about their classroom practices, their experiences of schools, of the formal and informal relationships within them, and their insights into pupils as learners (p. 5). Oral history is a methodology of strength- it ensures the voices of educators are heard and their stories are told.

Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling was used to intentionally select only those who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. TBAWP members who met the following criteria were selected for potential inclusion in the study:

1. The individual must have graduated from a TBAWP Invitational Summer Institute between the years 1998 and 2004.
2. The individual is currently employed in the field of education.

3. The individual is willing to participate in this study.
4. The person must live within the state of Florida.

In order to obtain participants for this study, I employed snowball sampling, a technique involving the identification of an initial participant (also known as the "informant") who provided the names of potential participants who fit the criteria for study inclusion (Noy, 2008).

> Unlike the bulk of sampling procedures and designs, in snowball sampling the researcher relinquishes a considerable amount of control over the sampling phase to the informants. To be sure, the researcher can direct the informants as to the identities and numbers of referents to whom they refer, and she or he may later decide who and how many of the potential informants will be contacted and to what degree they will contribute to the research. (p. 332)

My initial goal was to obtain four study participants: an elementary classroom educator, a secondary classroom educator, a district level educator, and a university educator. However, due to time constraints and the inability of my initial participant (informant) to secure a fourth candidate, I limited the snowball sample to the three educators who worked in one of the following three career strands: classroom educator, district level educator, and university educator.

Three women educators participated in this study. When this inquiry began, the first participant was employed as a language arts supervisor for a large school district in south Florida. The second participant worked as a teacher educator at a private university in central Florida, and the third participant worked as a secondary language arts educator in a public high school near the west coast of Florida. After receiving an initial commitment to participate, I

secured each person's informed consent (See Appendix D, Informed Consent Form) during the first interview session.

Interviews

To inform this study, I conducted two semi-structured responsive interviews of each participant. Using the responsive interviewing model developed by Rubin and Rubin (2012), my goal was to develop a "conversational partnership" with interviewees, a concept that respects the participant's experience and perspectives and emphasizes interviewing as a collaborative process. As a conversational partner, the interviewee should be viewed as one who possesses distinct knowledge, perspective, and experience that is not interchangeable with any other person.

Responsive interviewing emphasizes flexibility of design, particularly with the protocol as the need to change questions may arise in response to what is learned during the conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The responsive interviewing model assumes what individuals experience is valid for them and by sharing these experiences a researcher can enter into the world of study participants. The researcher's role is to gather descriptions, interpretations, and narratives from each conversational partner and put them together in a logical way that "re-creates a culture or describes a process or set of events in a way that participants would recognize as real" (p. 7). I utilized responsive interviewing to build an open relationship with my conversational partners so each person felt accepted, understood, and trusted as a reliable source of information for this study.

For the purposes of this inquiry, I interviewed each participant twice. I conducted the interviews over a two-month period beginning March 2015. The interviews were held during the

day at locations chosen by each participant. Each interview lasted between 67 and 77 minutes. I digitally recorded all interviews on a 16 GB iPhone 5™. In addition, I used GarageBand™ (an audio recording program on my laptop computer) as a back-up recording method.

Preparation is essential for effective interviewing (Janesick, 2016). Although my goal was to conduct a conversational interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) with each participant, I understood the importance of having a plan to maintain focus during our discussion. The interview protocol provided that focus. The protocol used in this study (See Appendix E, Interview Protocol) is a modified version of the interview guide from the original NWP Legacy Study (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013).

During the interviews, I used *notes to myself* to assist with recollections. *Notes to myself* are field notes made in the sidebar of interview notes that typically include body language and facial expressions not captured on the interview audio recording. If journaling was not possible immediately after conducting an interview, I recorded field notes on my iPhone. I found the field notes and *notes to myself* helpful memory prompts when reviewing the transcripts during data analysis.

Following the first round of interviews, I transcribed the audio recordings using Express Scribe™ software. An excerpt of a transcribed interview can be found in Appendix J. I chose to have the second round of participant interviews professionally transcribed due to time constraints. When I received the second round of transcripts, I listened to the audio recording while reading the corresponding transcript in order to review each one for accuracy. If I found a mistake or misrepresentation of words spoken in the interview, I edited the transcripts to reflect the correct language. Once the transcripts were re-checked for accuracy, I conducted member checks by asking each participant to review at least 10 pages of the first interview transcript.

Based on participant feedback and preliminary analysis of interviews, I modified the transcript and continued on to data analysis.

In addition to the transcribed interviews, I collected participant artifacts, such as their curriculum vitae, to gain background information that was not covered during our recorded conversations. I referred to these artifacts to refresh my memory and to clarify dates and periods of employment. One participant chose to share her journal from the 2002 Invitational Summer Institute with me, as well as several writing samples and a published journal article. These documents provided another layer of insight into Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impact.

Researcher Reflective Journal

In addition to participant interviews and artifacts, I maintained a researcher reflective journal as a tool for documentation and analysis. The researcher reflective journal offered an additional data set to describe and explain the exact role of the researcher (Janesick, 2016). As the researcher and main instrument of the research, throughout the study, I kept a journal of my thoughts, feelings, and observations. I recorded field notes and personal thoughts in the journal which I kept in digital format on the Penzu™ website. Journaling helped me refine my understanding of the researcher's role in the inquiry process. Through the practice of reflective journaling, I explored researcher assumptions, bracketed personal beliefs, and engaged in preliminary data analysis. *Notes to myself*, reflective journaling after the interviews, and interactions with participants provided affective data not captured by the audio recordings. In addition, I examined these writings to uncover potential researcher bias.

In addition to the primary journal I maintained in digital format, I used a secondary journal, a spiral notebook, during my analytic process. As I began my preliminary analysis of

the first transcript, I noticed my mind wandered a bit trying to make connections between the data in front of me and interviews with the other participants. Since it was easier for me to make notes on paper rather than switching to my electronic journal, I decided to record my thoughts in a spiral notebook I kept next to me when I listened to the audio recordings of participant interviews. My spiral notebook became a way for me to process the data before me in relationship to the other interviews. By recording my ponderings during analysis, I was able to identify early categories and emergent themes. In the spiral notebook, I documented my early interpretations of the data, as well as the initial codes and themes I generated for each participant. In my researcher reflective journal, I recorded my thoughts about the research process, my interpretations of participants' responses, questions that emerged from the interviews, and my reflections about my role in the research process.

By utilizing a secondary tool for reflective analysis, I could record the musings that surfaced as I read the transcript or listened to the audio recording, rather than ignoring or setting them aside. In doing so, I was able to quiet my thoughts and focus on the experience of each participant. During data analysis, I began each session by reviewing what I had written during the previous session. This practice helped to refresh my recollections and focus my thoughts on the text. Both journals were essential to my analytical process; one kept me focused on the data in front of me, and the other helped me reflect on the research process overall. An extract from my researcher reflective journal can be found in Appendix K.

Analysis Procedures

After interviewing participants, transcribing audio recordings, conducting member checks, and reviewing collateral documentation and artifacts, I analyzed the interview transcripts

in order to make meaning of what was discussed during my conversations with each participant. In this study I used a three-phase approach to data analysis. I listened to the audio recordings of each interview prior to coding the corresponding transcripts. I identified critical incidents within participants' oral histories, and I conducted a content analysis of the interview transcripts.

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), hearing the data is a necessary part of the analytic process. In order to develop a clearer picture of the story being told, I listened to the audio recordings of participant conversations twice before coding the transcript. While listening to the interviews, I made corresponding notes on the electronic transcripts, and on several occasions I stopped the recording in order to make notes in the spiral notebook I kept beside me. In this initial phase of data analysis, I found myself working between the audio recording, the electronic transcript, and my spiral notebook. The time I spent listening to the data and making contemporaneous notes helped me to focus on each person's story.

I began the second phase of data analysis with an examination of the interview transcripts for critical incidents, an approach adapted from Suarez-Ortega's (2013) analytical process for biographical-narrative research. "Critical incidents make it possible to detect the points of change in people's lives, the most meaningful aspects that they are telling us about or narrating and that have given meaning to their experiences" (p. 193). By identifying critical incidents, I was able to organize the data into meaningful representations of each person's Writing Project experience.

During the third phase of analysis, I examined the interview data for emerging concepts and themes. To do so, I conducted a content analysis of each transcript utilizing Rubin and Rubin's (2012) five-step process for analyzing responsive interviews. These steps, as illustrated in Table 1, capture my approach to data coding through content analysis.

In this phase, I utilized open coding, a method that involved reading the data and developing coding categories based on what seemed most significant at the time (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To code transcripts, I searched for key phrases within the text in order to identify emergent themes and categories. I highlighted the phrases in various colors in order to obtain a visual representation of the data. This process aided in the organization and analysis of data.

Table 1. Data Analysis Steps in Responsive Interviewing

Step	Action	Purpose
1	Transcribe & Summarize	Prepare a full and accurate word-for-word written account of each interview, create a memo file, identify notable quotes, and summarize each interview. This step prepares the interviews for analysis.
2	Code the Data	Identify and label concepts, themes, events, examples, and topical markers, annotate in the text where important data is found. This step allows for the organization, retrieval, and examination of data units.
3	Sort & Summarize	From across interviews, extract excerpts with the same codes, sort into a single data file, and summarize the contents of each file. This step reveals how participants answered collectively.
4	Sort & Compare	Sort the material *within* each file, compare results *between* subgroups, and summarize the results of each sorting. This step reveals variations within participant responses.
5	Weigh & Integrate	After weighing different responses, synthesize descriptions to create a complete picture. This step integrates concepts and themes to address the research question and produce broader implications.

Research Trustworthiness

A central issue in qualitative research is determining the credibility and dependability of the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008). Trustworthiness speaks to this issue (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In order to establish the trustworthiness of study data, I provided each participant with the interview protocol prior to our meetings (see Appendix E, Interview Protocol). To develop a sense of trust with my

conversational partners, I requested that each person review the protocol in case there was an issue or experience the participant wanted to keep private.

Participant member checking provides an additional element of trustworthiness through verification of transcripts and early interpretations of data (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). Once all interviews were transcribed and reviewed for accuracy, I conducted individual member checks of the data. I emailed each participant an electronic copy of their interview transcript to review for discrepancies or misrepresentations (see Appendix F, Member Check Form). One participant notified me that I misspelled a colleague's name, which I fixed in the corresponding transcript.

To maintain credibility and ensure the trustworthiness of the data, I enlisted the assistance of a peer debriefer (Chenail, 2008; Given, 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Janesick, 2016) to review elements of this inquiry. Also known as a peer reviewer, this individual is a "trusted and knowledgeable peer who can give informed feedback to assist the researcher in exploring aspects of the study" (Given, 2008, p. 1999). The presence of a peer reviewer is consistent with the qualitative methodology employed in the investigation. "Accordingly, it is important that a peer debriefer has knowledge of the phenomenon under study as well as knowledge of qualitative methodology" (Nguyen, 2008, p. 605).

The individual I chose as a peer reviewer for this investigation was someone with whom I established both a personal and professional relationship with while pursing our doctorates and participating in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project (see Appendix G, Peer Reviewer Form). This trusting relationship with my peer reviewer provided another means through which I was able to establish and maintain researcher credibility as I endeavored to accurately represent the stories of the three women in this study. Chenail (2008) describes the value of a peer reviewer.

> In qualitative projects, researchers may call upon peers with relevant methodological and content area expertise and experience to scrutinize and critique a study's procedures and outcomes. This type of peer review, sometimes called investigator triangulation, provides researchers with an objective source familiar with the research or the phenomenon being explored to review the study's methodology, to analyze portions of data, and to critique findings. This peer reviewer can provide support and guidance, challenge researchers' assumptions and findings, and help improve the study's rigor or trustworthiness. (p. 605)

To reduce the likelihood of misinterpretations and to clarify meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), I collected three forms of data to inform this study: oral history interviews, participant artifacts and supporting documents, and the researcher's reflective journal. To assure data integrity, all information for this project was gathered and organized in a deliberate manner. In accordance with IRB protocols, the audio recordings, interview transcripts, and electronic documents were kept on a password-protected computer and secured in my home office.

Role of the Researcher

Within qualitative research approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and oral history specifically (Janesick, 2010), the researcher is the research instrument. As such, the data collected, analyzed, and represented in this study were influenced by my unique position as a member of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. This positionality is made transparent throughout the research process in an effort to inform the reader of any bias that may exist. I readily acknowledge my place in this research may be construed as biased due to my Writing Project involvement since 2011. Though a consideration, I did not attempt to bracket out or set

aside my connection to the phenomenon. Instead, I maintained a researcher reflective journal where I documented my thoughts, concerns and ponderings throughout the study. This reflective process helped me to make transparent any bias that surfaced during this inquiry.

Because the researcher is the one who obtains data from interviewees, "it is through the researcher's facilitative interaction that a context is created where respondents share rich data regarding their experiences and life world" (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003, p. 418). Developing appropriate interview skills is part of "sharpening" the research instrument (Janesick, 2010).

In addition to developing interview skills, an important task for any researcher is interrogating the assumptions that underpin one's actions (Brookfield, 1995). Through reflective journaling, I identified prescriptive assumptions, which represent researcher expectations in a particular situation rather than focusing on actual occurrences. As a result of this insight, I must remain cognizant of what I bring to a research setting, particularly when accessing a participant's oral history. In order to make sense of the lived experiences of others and to authentically represent what participants are sharing, I must listen for connections rather than anticipating responses. This is key to any good interview, but particularly one in which an oral history is generated.

Pilot Study

As a way to refine my interview skills and test my researcher assumptions, I conducted a pilot study in the spring of 2013 that engaged an oral history methodology. There are considerable benefits for conducting a pilot study, a procedure used for identifying potential researcher bias and for testing issues with the interview protocol (Chenail, 2011).

> In pilot studies investigators give their research method a "test run" by piloting their means for collecting and analyzing data on a small sample of participants with the same or similar inclusion criteria as would be the case in the main study. In this "dress rehearsal" researchers run through their study in an abbreviated form and make adjustments based upon the performance of the method. (p. 257)

The participant in my pilot study was a graduate of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project's 2003 Invitational Summer Institute. The individual was chosen because she had been involved with the Writing Project for at least 10 years. Accessing the experience of someone who was a member of TBAWP for a decade provided me with important insight into the impact Writing Project involvement had on an educator's practice.

As a result of conducting the pilot study, I gained considerable insight into the delicate balance that must be maintained in an interview. While processing the interview experience in my researcher reflective journal, I recognized my inclination to anticipate participant responses instead of waiting to hear what the person actually had to say. I felt the need to have a question ready as if I didn't trust a conversational interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) could or would occur. This practice caused me to be a step ahead of the interview rather than being present and "in it". Creating a situation like this only complicates the interview and convolutes the process.

By anticipating the participant's words, a genuine conversation is absent and true communication doesn't occur (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To understand and accurately represent the lived experiences of an interviewee, I needed to stay with the conversation rather than anticipating responses. Janesick (2016) offers guidance to the qualitative researcher who wants to improve interview habits. "You need to practice hearing the data, that is, listening skills to hear what your participants are telling you" (p. 2). In order to avoid such pitfalls during the

interviews for the main study, I focused on the conversation at hand and *listened* to the person in front of me.

A second area that I was able to clarify as a result of conducting the pilot study was the development of a two-phase interview protocol. During the first interview for the pilot study, it took almost one hour to get to the participant's initial involvement with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. During the interview, I became concerned I wouldn't have time to ask my participant about her experience following the Invitational Summer Institute. Although I needed to access her TBAWP story, we had a limited amount of time set aside for our meeting. I found this a hard place to be when accessing someone's story when the time allowed for the interview was quickly nearing an end.

As it turned out, extending our conversation was of little consequence, since we both planned extra time for the interview. I addressed this issue in planning for the dissertation by dividing the oral history protocol (see Appendix E, Interview Protocol) into two interview phases. The first phase focused on participants' teaching practices, career growth, and professional learning prior to and just after initial Writing Project involvement. The second phase focused on participants' teaching practices, career growth, and professional learning the decade following initial Writing Project involvement. When I conducted the interviews with the three participants, I discovered the place I ended the first protocol was a well-timed stopping point in our conversations.

As a result of conducting the pilot study, I gained a deeper understanding of the importance of authentically representing someone else's story. Though interpretation is part of all qualitative analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), I recognized true meaning is generated from the participant's words and experience, not the researcher's. From the development of the

protocols to conducting the interviews, I remained cognizant of my place in the research. Ever present was my awareness of the role I have as the research instrument. It is the participant's oral history I am here to tell. My responsibility is to share the story in the most accurate way possible. Oral history should be agenda free (Janesick, 2010). The story is already there.

Ethical Considerations

To maintain transparency and integrity of the research process, I addressed the following ethical considerations. Regarding my connection to the topic under investigation, I understand the importance of disclosing any connection I have to the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. As such, I want to make known my participation on TBAWP's Leadership Council since the fall of 2011. In order to insure fairness and to eschew questions concerning any conflict of interest, in February of 2015 I chose to relinquish my position on the Leadership Council for the duration of this study.

With respect to changes or modifications made while conducting this research, I contacted the Institutional Review Board (IRB) regarding my decision to reduce the number of participants. As a result of the change in study protocol, the IRB required me to amend the inclusion criteria in the original approved study (see Appendix H, IRB Approval Letter). In doing so, I combined the Elementary and Secondary Classroom Educator categories into a single category, Classroom Educator. Once the amendment was submitted and reviewed, I received approval from the IRB to reduce the number of participants in the study (see Appendix I, IRB Amendment Approval).

Although confidentiality requires changing the names and school locations of research participants, each person in this study chose to be identified by their real name rather than a

pseudonym. I informed all participants the final manuscript, a dissertation, would be published electronically with worldwide access, yet none declined to have her name associated with this research. I am humbled at each participant's generosity and willingness to share her story in such an honest and forthright capacity.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described in full detail the research techniques employed during this study. I outlined methodology governing my choice and use of oral history methods, including participant selection, interview procedures, data collection, analytical techniques, research trustworthiness, the role of the researcher, and ethical considerations. I concluded Chapter Three with a discussion of the pilot study that helped focus this inquiry.

Chapter Four is the presentation of data. In this chapter, I provide a storied account of each participant's Writing Project experience addressing impact on teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. Analysis is culled from interview transcripts, supporting documents, and the researcher's reflective journal and is represented through themes found within and across participants' oral histories.

CHAPTER FOUR:

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

> "With Aristotle, we declare that the ultimate test of understanding rests on the ability to transform one's knowledge into teaching. Those who can, do. Those who understand, teach."
>
> (Shulman, 1986, p. 14)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain participants' perceptions of Writing Project influence on professional learning over time. The goal was to learn if Writing Project involvement had a long-term impact on the professional lives of educators who joined the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project between 1998 and 2004. This inquiry explored the extent to which participants viewed their Writing Project involvement as an effective professional learning experience. The findings of this study provide insight into professional learning across time from the perspective of educators themselves within the context of their teaching practice and career growth. The following research question guided the investigation and is reflected in the purpose of this inquiry:

- In what ways, if any, has long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of participating educators?

Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I present the results of a three-phase data analysis plan described in Chapter Three. To conduct this inquiry, multiple techniques of data collection were employed. My analysis was culled from the audio recordings and transcripts of two semi-structured interviews of three participants purposely selected through snowball sampling, supporting documents such as participants' curriculum vitae and personal writings, and the researcher's reflective journals.

Regarding presentation of the data, each participant's oral history is represented as a separate and distinct case. I begin by discussing my connection to the participant, their entry into the teaching profession, and their summer institute experience. Next, I present findings for the research question focusing this study by describing the extent to which long-term involvement with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of each participant. To conclude each case, I present the major themes generated from each person's Writing Project experience. Participants' words are taken directly from the interview transcripts.

Throughout my analysis of the data, I continuously reflected on the constructivist framework grounding this inquiry. I focused my thoughts on how each participant made personal meaning of their Tampa Bay Area Writing Project experience as they communicated their individual stories of involvement over time. Within the oral history accounts, I provided background information and contextual factors that contributed to the meaning-making activities of each participant. In doing so, I enable the reader to more clearly understand the relationships among the themes found within individual cases and the ways in which long-term Writing Project involvement was described by all three participants. To address potential bias regarding

data representation, I presented the participants in the same order in which I received their individual commitments to participate.

In order to protect the anonymity of the three participants in this study, I asked each person to choose a pseudonym to replace their name. In each case, the individual chose to be identified by their real name rather than a pseudonym. With each decision to use an actual identifier in this study, I informed the participant her name would be included in the published dissertation manuscript and available for electronic retrieval on the Internet. In each case, I was told how proud the person was to claim her Tampa Bay Area Writing Project experience with her own name. Without question, the three women in this study honor the teaching profession by sharing their stories of participation in TBAWP's Invitational Summer Institute between 1998 and 2004. With heartfelt gratitude, I present the three participants in my study: Kym Sheehan, Holly Atkins, and Ola Harb.

My Connection to Kym Sheehan

I met Kym in the fall of 2011 when I joined the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project's Leadership Council as the co-chair for the next year's Fall Conference. I was new to the board and felt somewhat intimidated because I only knew a few people. With the exception of myself and another person from the 2011 summer cohort, everyone on the board was a returning member. At that first meeting we introduced ourselves, identified which Invitational Summer Institute we had graduated from, and said where we were currently working or teaching. When Kym shared her information with the group, I took particular notice for two reasons. First, she was from the 2002 Summer Institute graduating class, which meant that Kym had been with the project for nearly a decade. The second thing that caught my attention was the county in which

she currently worked. Kym mentioned she was the Language Arts Supervisor for Charlotte County Schools, the same county I attended during elementary, junior, and high school! What a coincidence, I thought.

Something else that occurred to me was how far Kym traveled in order to participate in the monthly board meetings at the University of South Florida campus in Tampa. She drove over 100 miles each way to be part of this group. I was shocked and intrigued. I wondered what would inspire a person to be committed to an organization in this way?

Over the next three years, Kym and I worked together on TBAWP's Leadership Council. Throughout that time, we developed a strong, collegial relationship. I found Kym to be a dedicated educator with a depth of expertise I had come to admire and respect. It was after I conducted the pilot study for this dissertation that I approached Kym with the possibility of participating in an oral history study about long-term involvement (a decade or more) in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. Without hesitation, Kym agreed to join me in my research endeavor.

After I received the approval from my committee to begin this research, I asked Kym if she would help me locate additional research participants (see Appendix L, Sheehan email correspondence) since she had been with the organization for over a decade and knew many of the people who had participated over the years. Kym agreed and was able to generate two additional participants for this inquiry, Holly and Ola. Together, these three women comprised my study population.

Kym's Story

Entry into the Teaching Profession

"It's a very strange road" (Interview #1, March 2015). This is how Kym described her entry into teaching. After graduating in 1994 with a degree in English and classical antiquities from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, Kym moved to Charlotte County, Florida where she hoped to find a job curating a museum, working in the advertising industry, or doing "something wonderful with words and history" (Interview #1, March 2015). To Kym's dismay, the sunny south held no promise for work in these areas.

That didn't stop Kym whose rebellious spirit led the way. As a single parent of two children, finding employment was at the top of her list. To support her family, Kym took on two jobs. During the day she was an ESE aide for students with severe disabilities. At night Kym worked at a deli doing the same job she held while attending college.

Although Kym knew her work in the ESE classroom was important, there was something missing. Kym reflected on her choice to move to substitute teaching.

> I needed to play with words and some of them didn't have words. So, I started subbing in English classes. The teachers got to know me at this one school, and they just had me come in every day to sub. They said, there'll be a place for you somewhere, and so I went to Port Charlotte Middle School every day for that year. (Interview #1, March 2015)

At the end of that school year, Kym asked the administration about a full-time position for the fall. Unfortunately, there were no job openings, however Kym was told to apply at Punta Gorda Middle School, which was also located in Charlotte County.

After interviewing with the principal, the vice principal, and the dean, Kym was hired to work in the program for successful learning. The job entailed working with the school's lowest performing students.

> They said, we'd like you to teach math and science. Then there was this lull, and I said, but you understand that I have a degree in English, right, and classical antiquities? That's like history and English? And they said, but we need a math and science teacher. I didn't get it. I really didn't get it. But, I needed a job. I had two kids, so I said okay. (Interview #2, April 2015)

In the fall of 1995, Kym began teaching at Punta Gorda Middle School. It happened to be the same school I attended in the mid 1970s, although it was a Junior High back then. Walt Disney was correct. It's a small world.

Most educators will agree that the first year in the classroom is the hardest. For Kym this was absolutely the case. Although she had a degree in English, she didn't know how to teach the subject. She didn't graduate from a teacher education program, which made the task especially difficult. Kym described her first year as a classroom teacher.

> I realize now that it was really stupid to say okay because I had 5 preps. I had math and science for 7th and 8th grade and a law class, which was for 8th grade. It was a rotation on a "specials" wheel, and there were two of us teaching this group of kids who had been tracked as problem kids. And really, they could have used an academy or something like that to put these kids through because they were low in reading and writing. They just didn't have the skills, and there were behavior issues. My first year I had a pregnancy of a 7th grader, one of my 8th graders was beaten to a pulp and hospitalized, not in class but outside of class, and I had a suicide attempt. (Interview #2, April 2015)

To Kym's credit, she made it through the 1995-96 school year without running in the opposite direction, which was a testament to her personal fortitude. Although she was assigned to teach math and science, Kym found a way to bring writing instruction into her classroom.

> I ended up using my words. And this is where it got interesting because I used what I knew about words and English, and how much I was passionate about reading and writing. And the science and math classes did an awful lot of writing. We did moon journals, and we always wrote about our math before it was traditional to write about your math problems. How did you get your answer? That's all I knew was English. So I went from what I knew. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Evidently, Kym's pedagogic instincts were on target, and she found a way to reach her students. Kym shared her thoughts about that first teaching experience.

> I decided after that first year, if I can make it through this first year I can do this. I just felt very confident, and my kids were great. They turned around. We built community again, even though I didn't know I was doing that. But, I did ask if I could teach English or writing. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Kym's request was granted and in the fall of 1996, she moved to the 6th grade team to teach writing and communications. Because there was no curriculum in place, Kym created it herself.

> I would find out what an English teacher was doing, what the science teacher was doing. We were a team back then. And then I took my writing prompts from everywhere. I worked one week maybe with social studies, and one week with English, and one week with science. It just seemed natural. (Interview #1, March 2015)

In addition to teaching 6th grade during the day, Kym took two classes at night in order to get her teaching certificate in secondary English. Although she learned a great deal, Kym's discontent surfaced. "I quit after my second year in 6th grade. I said I'm not staying here unless you give me 8th grade" (Interview #1, March 2015). She wanted to teach the older middle school students rather than those who had just come from elementary school. The change was made and Kym moved to the 8th grade team to teach communications, which also had no curriculum in place. Out of necessity, Kym developed and implemented a writing curriculum for her students in order to provide them with meaningful learning experiences.

It was at this point in her career Kym attended a 5-day professional development workshop presented by Janet Allen, called *It's Never Too Late*. Kym discussed the impact of this experience.

> It was something that they wanted us to do because they said all the gurus said it would be good, that Janet Allen is good. Well, I fell in love with Janet Allen the first time I heard her speak, and she made sense to me. She was all about kids. She was all about authenticity, and that's what I got. At that point, because I was teaching communications I had the freedom to do whatever I wanted, so I started pulling from all the stuff she had and realized how much better my classroom was. But, I still wasn't feeling like a teacher though. (Interview #1, March 2015)

It was apparent to Kym something wasn't quite right. Although she implemented Janet Allen's strategies in her classroom, Kym didn't feel connected to the classroom. She described her feelings about teaching. "Then another probably couple of years, three or four years went by and I still wasn't feeling like a real teacher, though. I was feeling like I was going through the

motions, and I was trying" (Interview #1, March 2015). I asked Kym if something was missing. She replied in a frank manner.

> For me it was. I mean everyone said I was doing a good job but it didn't feel right. I didn't feel like I was doing the best I could do for these kids for whatever reason. And because I was so passionate about reading and writing, I wanted them to love it like I did, and they didn't. I think that was part of the disconnect. (Interview #1, March 2015)

To her credit, Kym didn't give up. Instead, she tried a new approach with her students. The idea came to her on the way to work. It was one of those impromptu lessons that turned out to be an unexpected success. Kym read two different texts to her students, an editorial from the local newspaper about a car crash and a poem from *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* called "Dead at 17". She described the lesson to me.

> I read the article, and I asked the kids to respond and not say anything. And then I read, "Dead at 17" and I had 8th grade boys crying. I was like, oh! I said okay, now write. Write what you're feeling. Write your questions. Write whatever you know. Best class I ever had! I mean it was just, they were all engaged. They were writing. It was just amazing! (Interview #1, March 2015)

I could hear a sense of relief in Kym's voice, which prompted me to probe further, "What did you take from that?" Kym responded, "That it was authentic. That they connected not only with the topic but their ability to respond to it because they had some background knowledge" (Interview #1, March 2015).

According to Kym, this event occurred during the spring of 2002, which was the same time she received information from the curriculum specialist about the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute, a five-week professional development workshop that

focused on writing instruction. Although it sounded like a great opportunity to Kym, the driving distance was too far from her home in Charlotte County. Because there was no way she could travel over 200 miles each day in order to attend the institute, Kym's principal suggested she inquire about housing at the University of South Florida in Tampa since that was where the event was held each year.

> So, I went up and I interviewed. And I asked them, and they said they might be able to do something at one of the dorms. And I said okay, so if I get accepted is that something possible, and she said yes. So I got accepted, and I was really honored to be accepted. (Interview #1, March 2015)

The director of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, Dr. Pat Jones, was able to secure housing in the student dorms, which took care of the biggest obstacle for Kym, daily travel to and from Hillsborough County. To her credit, Kym's diligence was rewarded; she secured a place at TBAWP's 2002 Invitational Summer Institute, dorm room and all.

Summer Institute Experience

"So I went to Tampa Bay, which was a life changing, and I can't say that enough. It was a life changing experience" (Interview #1, March 2015). This was how Kym described her Tampa Bay Area Writing Project experience that summer. "It was the first day of the ISI, and I was so excited to be there!" (Interview #1, March 2015). At this point in the interview, Kym handed me her TBAWP journal, the writings she produced during the Invitational Summer Institute. She pointed to the journal.

> There is a thing in there. Pat had told us… Pat Jones who was the leader, and I just took to her right away. I just felt like she was family, and I knew her forever. And, she told

us to think about writing something for ourselves that day, and I wrote this thing about catching a wave. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Kym wrote the following journal entry on the second day of TBAWP's 2002 Invitational Summer Institute.

June 11, 2002 Tuesday
Pat's direction was "to capture the day for you with some sort of writing."

How do you capture a wave?

It builds slowly
It builds steadily
It gains strength and power
It overwhelms, but sometimes
you can ride it out
You learn from the ride, or
from the fall – Do you want to capture a wave?
You can't capture TBAWP either
We are building a sense of community
slowly, steadily
We nourish one another with words and ideas providing
strength and power
Sometimes we'll be overwhelmed, other
times we will ride out the things
that block our way
TBAWP is like a wave we will
learn from the ride and
the falls
I am part of TBAWP and I will
ride, fall, and ride again.
I will learn
I will grow
I will.
I won't be captured ~ I'm free
to be a wave.

Waves are sometimes
small – sometimes large. Uncontrollable
sometimes unpredictable but they
are. So am I.

The enthusiasm was evident in Kym's voice as she described her initial impressions of the 2002 Invitational Summer Institute.

> It was so exciting for me because my brain was engaged… But when I got there that first day and realized I was going to write and learn and think, I was so excited. I knew that the first day. I knew it. There was an energy in the room that was beyond anything I ever felt. It was just like, I don't know. It was like the humming of bees. You could almost feel it, you know. You couldn't hear it, but you could feel it. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Findings for the Research Question

Impact on Teaching Practice

With regard to the first component of the research question, Kym's teaching practice changed considerably following her summer institute experience. She modified the classroom environment, changed her instructional methods, and improved her peer collaboration.

The classroom environment. Kym returned to the classroom after her summer institute involvement with a renewed sense of purpose. As a result of her summer experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, Kym altered the way she arranged her classroom.

> I asked for tables because I realized that was part of building community. But they wouldn't give me tables, so I put all my desks together. Then I started scrounging because I didn't like the way the desks looked. I took all the desks out and put them in the hallway and told the janitor to take them. And then I asked him, where can I find some tables? Do you have any old tables that I could paint or do something with? He told me, "I have a bunch under the stage that have been there for years." I said, okay

let's go. So he helped me, and we brought in tables, which was really cool. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Instructional methods. Writing Project influence was also evidenced in Kym's pedagogical practices. She made several changes in student writing instruction when she returned to teaching in the fall.

> One of the things I did was I also wrote with my students, because I realized that the facilitators all sat down and wrote with us. Everybody had a group and everybody wrote with us, and it made me feel comfortable like they weren't looking over my shoulder. I realized when teachers do that circulation thing they're really annoying. So I would choose a different group each day, and I would sit down with the kids and whatever the prompt was, I would write but then I would use my writing as a model. I thought if I am asking them to do this, I have to be willing to do this. It was new for me because in TBAWP nobody withheld. You may say no, this is too personal. I don't want to read this one aloud. That's a choice, but I also gave my students that choice. (Interview #1, March 2015)

In addition to changes in her room setup and writing instruction, Kym incorporated other summer institute practices in her classroom environment.

> I also decided not to fight the battle that kids didn't have paper and pencil. I made a station, and I put paper, pencils, tape, a stapler there because we had stuff at our tables at TBAWP. They had highlighters and they had colored pencils. It was just there. I transferred the tables and the setup, and the way of work. I also transferred the peer advice. I taught them how to do that. I modeled it. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Kym explained how the feedback she received from the summer institute facilitators influenced the writing feedback she gave her students.

> They would guide us in our work and ask, "Where are you going to go with this? How are you going to do this?" They never told you what to do. They said, "How are you going to do this?" And you would talk it out with them and I realized that's part of the process, which I brought back to my classroom the next year. It was all good positive feedback about your writing, not about your ideas. I realized that was the difference that when you talked to kids about writing, you don't condemn their ideas. You nurture their ideas… So, that was a big thing because I was red-penning a lot of their writing because I was told that's what you do, and I realized it looked like somebody died when you look at the papers. When I went back, one of the first things I did was throw out all my red pens. Symbolic. I never used red pen again after that. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Peer collaboration. Kym's summer institute experience lead to improvements in her collaboration with peers. Because of her involvement with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, Kym clearly influenced the practices of her colleagues.

> The English teacher who I had the open walls with I explained it to him because we had tried to do the writing workshop, but we didn't know what we were doing. I said, I know how to do this now. So we tried, and he was wonderful. Although he had been doing this probably 28 years at the time, he didn't want to share stuff at first. He didn't want to write with the kids. And I said, "No, it's really cool. You'll really like this!" We opened the walls. We had 80 to 85 kids during a class period. We did writing and reading workshops. It was amazing! It was the best year I had! (Interview #1, March 2015)

Impact on Career Growth

With respect to the second component of the research question, Kym's career advanced significantly following her summer institute involvement. She moved from classroom teaching to working as a district level curriculum specialist for English language arts. In addition to receiving national recognition for her literacy work, Kym accepted state leadership roles within the teaching profession.

Classroom teacher to district level educator. Following her summer institute experience, Kym returned to Punta Gorda Middle School where she taught 8th grade for the next two years. In 2004, she moved to Charlotte High School, which was coincidently, the same high school I attended. From there, Kym transferred to Port Charlotte High School where she remained for the next two years.

During the summer of 2007, Kym was encouraged to apply for a district level position as the curriculum instruction specialist for Charlotte County Schools. A team of administrators interviewed Kym, and offered her the job on the very same day. Kym accepted the position, moving from classroom teacher to district level educator. Kym reflected on her role as curriculum specialist and the trajectory her career took following her summer institute experience.

> And I'm still there -- how many years later, eight years later? I work as a liaison between teachers and the district and the district and the teachers and everybody. But I'm always in the middle. I meet with Directors. I meet with the Superintendent. I work on censorship in writing policy. I'm helping to create our evaluation system, our special teacher on assignment evaluation system. I mentor and work with teachers. I coach in the classroom. I did a writing workshop at a middle school a month ago, and I'm doing

one in May at our alternative school. I get in the classroom all the time. It keeps you grounded and knowing what's going on out there because you want to talk with teachers and when I'm on campus, I have lunch with them. That's the best time to hear what they're thinking. It does keep you grounded, and it keeps you where you need to be. Because it's not about the legislation and saying, "Well, this won't cost as much money." It's about the fact that this kid needs help. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Advocacy and leadership. In addition to writing education policy, Kym has addressed censorship concerns in her job. She discussed her literacy advocacy, "I take care of censorship issues in the district and doing the research" (Interview #2, April 2015). To acknowledge her efforts for the work she did on a censorship case for Charlotte County Schools, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) presented Kym with the Intellectual Freedom Award in 2010.

Regarding professional leadership, Kym described her involvement with the Florida Council of Teachers of English (FCTE), a state professional organization for language arts educators.

Well, I was president of FCTE… I didn't want to be president; I was just a member. Then back in like 2006 or '07 I said, "You know, I want to get involved. I really like this group. I like what they do." And so they brought me on as historian... I've worked my way through the chain, and right now I am senior executive director. (Interview #2, April 2015)

I asked Kym to contemplate her career path had she not participated in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project's 2002 Invitational Summer Institute.

> I probably would've quit by now and gone on to something else because I don't like to do anything that I don't do well. I don't think any of us do. But I was struggling knowing how to keep kids engaged. I knew what I liked, but they didn't like what I liked. And I remember thinking how do I get there with them? And what I found through TBAWP there were so many of us that summer that came from different tables, let's say. And we brought to the kitchen table everything we all had, and we became family. It was kind of that kitchen table mentality, if you know what I mean. (Interview #2, April 2015)

As Kym spoke, I was reminded of a conversation I had with the director of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. I shared the recollection with Kym. "I think Pat Jones would be pleased to hear that metaphor. I interviewed her quite a while back about TBAWP, and she talked about wanting to create that, the idea where everyone had a place at the table" (Interview #2, April 2015). Kym responded affirmatively.

> See, that's exactly how I felt! That's how I felt. And what was funny about Pat is I felt like I had known her my entire life. I just bonded with her immediately. I mean she's just amazing anyway. And it was one of those things where I thought, "How can I feel so close to somebody that I don't even know?" I mean, she just allowed me to be who I was. I think it does cleanse your soul and kind of moves your soul forward. I think it really does. It's totally encompassing, and I think it allowed me to see who I was, see who I had been, and see where I was going. I mean, honestly, that's what it did for me. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Impact on Professional Learning

Regarding the third component of the research question, Kym described how the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project engaged her professional learning and prompted her to pursue a graduate degree. In addition to furthering her own education as a result of Writing Project involvement, Kym transferred her professional learning experiences to others by engaging them in methods she learned during the Invitational Summer Institute.

> Oh my God, every day was amazing! It was like I couldn't wait to get up and get there even though we had eight hours of really hard work. We were reading professional books. We were sharing writing. We were looking at all kinds of genres. We were doing demonstration lessons, and you learned something not just about your professionalism but about yourself with every lesson you went through. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Graduate education. Kym's attributed her continued professional learning to her summer institute experience. "Here's the other thing, from doing the Writing Project… I decided I wanted to get my Master's degree. So, I went back right after that and got my Masters in Reading and finally finished in 2005" (Interview #2, April 2015).

Comparing the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project to other forms of professional development she has experienced, Kym offered the following analysis.

> It's the right way to do PD because it engages you body, mind and soul. I mean, it really does. And it stays with you. It's totally stayed with me. I still have my TBAWP notebooks up there that I pull something down every once in a while and go, "I know who did something like that. I can look at that." And it's never outdated. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Engaging learners. Kym discussed her work delivering professional development to teachers in her district and the connection writing has to professional learning. "But that's also how I learn. Because from doing the PD, I get to meet so many cool teachers and get ideas and have conversations and the dialogue" (Interview #2, April 2015).

Kym described how she conducts professional development workshops. "I start every PD within five minutes you're writing." Her statement prompted me to ask, "And where does that come from?"

> From TBAWP. From going through the Writing Project. Because if I can't engage them right away, I'm not going to keep them. I may do an introduction of this or that, but then its here's the door. I'm inviting you in. Now, tell me something. And I have them write right away. No matter what kind of PD I'm doing, I always have them write. And I also have them fill out an exit slip for me. Sometimes an admit slip is the way to get them to write while everybody is putting their names on nametags. But I treat them just like kids, and they have to write. And if they say, "I don't write." I say, "Well, you have to. What do you do when your kids do that?" And they say, "Well, I say you have to." And I say, "Well, there you go. You gave your own answer. Write." And that's what it is. It's building the community. It's also getting them engaged. Because if I don't get them right away, then I don't have them, and there's no use for me standing up there. (Interview #2, April 2015)

"But the tool is writing?" I wanted clarification. Without hesitation, Kym replied in a matter of fact tone, "Yes, the tool is writing, definitely" (Interview #2, April 2015).

Overarching Themes

In addition to answering the three components of the research question guiding this study, data analysis found two overarching themes present within the oral history generated from this participant, *From Professional Development to Professionalism* and *Finding and Expressing Voice*.

From Professional Development to Professionalism

The first theme, professionalism, was evidenced in the views Kym expressed regarding her work conducting professional development for teachers.

> It just kept going and getting better. Because I stayed involved with TBAWP. I always go to the Fall Conference, you know, whether I'm involved as a board member or just as a participant. In the beginning, it was just as a participant. I was just so excited. It also made me confident enough to go out there and present in the way that the Writing Project does. I came back and did a couple things in the district and got comfortable, and then I went outside the district. Then the state did a call for presenters for FLAIR. I got involved with FLAIR and went around one summer and did presentations all over the state. (Interview #2, April 2015)

"And do you attribute that to what the Writing Project? I asked Kym, to which she quickly responded, "Absolutely! I never would have done it without TBAWP! Number one, I wouldn't have had the faith that I was professional enough" (Interview #1, March 2015). Kym's words prompted me to ask, "Did you feel like a professional in TBAWP?"

> In TBAWP I did. I just felt like a teacher, and not a very good teacher before I went to TBAWP. But then I realized, okay, I need a lot of work. As they say, a work in

progress. But I got some good strong roots that came from wherever because I never went through a teaching program. And it's just I felt it was my passion for reading and writing that really kind of propelled me, and it also gave me a sense of self because we started with a very simple formulaic "I Am" poem in TBAWP. And then Pat had said something about well, "What did you survive?" Or you know, "I want to know more." So then I did an "I Used To Be" poem, and I wrote that. And I realized, wow, that's where I realized my voice had been silenced. So then each time I wrote, I learned more about myself, more about my professional understandings, more about who I could be as a professional… It was a total life changing experience about everything I did, about how I felt about myself, how I felt about my kids at school, what I thought about my own kids learning. It was totally, totally unexpected. I mean I just didn't know I had it in me. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Finding and Expressing Voice

The second overarching theme that emerged from analysis of the data was the concept of voice, which was evidenced in the how Kym described her experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

One of the things I found, the reason this was so life changing for me was that I found my own voice… my writing voice, my individual voice, my self, my inner whatever. I was allowed to write and express. And nobody condemned your writing, they criticized your writing for form, but nobody condemned your words. And so, I think for the longest time I was silenced in my marriage, silenced in my life… And I realized going back to that day in my classroom with the poem. I realized what was missing from my kid's writing

was voice, and that became my study. I got my self. My self voice, my professional voice, it all came out of TBAWP. I mean voice is probably for me the most important thing in any piece of writing. And if I can hear that voice, that's amazing. (Interview #1, March 2015)

I probed further, "Have you felt that your voice has been silenced most of your…" Kym quickly responded, "Most of my adult life… and actually, as a kid. Because my getaway from a dysfunctional family was to read and write. I never realized it was my getaway, but it was also my box" (Interview #1, March 2015).

Kym's comments prompted me to ask if there was a lack of opportunity to express her voice while growing up. She responded, "With most people, except for my grandfather who would listen to everything. He was my best bud" (Interview #1, March 2015). Kym reflected on how her past experiences led to the voice she found as a result of her Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement.

I think that's why part of me is sort of rebellious because I refused to silence it anymore. It's like the cork came out. It was life changing. I think that the core for everybody that goes through TBAWP is finding their own voice, but not necessarily in the same way. Because I think for me, it was allowing those words to flow and feeling like a good person and then, just a capable person, and all that stuff along with finally recognizing that I really was teaching, but I needed to change some stuff. And going through TBAWP kind of validated that sense of community that you had to build that I knew I was doing. I didn't know what it was, but I knew it was important. But now I had a name for it. So, I mean I was on fire when I came home. I was like, oh my God! I can't wait to get back in the classroom! (Interview #1, March 2015)

My Connection to Holly Atkins

During the summer of 2011, I attended TBAWP's Invitational Summer Institute. As many members do, Holly stopped by one day to visit the class and meet the new participants. While she was there, we each introduced ourselves to Holly and told her where we had most recently taught. I had no reason to believe Holly remembered me from that day, but it turns out she did. When we began our first interview for this study, Holly said she recalled meeting me during her visit to the summer institute in 2011. Aside from that brief introduction, I had no connection to Holly prior to her participation in this study.

Holly's Story

Entry into the Teaching Profession

When asked about early influences that took her into teaching Holly responded frankly, "I never wanted to be a teacher. I was one of those odd birds. I wasn't one of those eight year olds that was having her dolls all sit there teaching them" (Interview #1, March 2015). Although she didn't plan on becoming an educator, Holly enjoyed school as a young child.

> But I loved at an early age reading and writing. Loved it! I can remember in 2nd grade thinking that all the stars in the heavens had aligned perfectly because it was my birthday, and it was also library day at school. And, I just thought there couldn't be anything more perfect! (Interview #1, March 2015)

Holly discussed her entry into the teaching profession. Holly's mother encouraged her, while her own children inspired her.

> I really didn't go into teaching. It was a second career for me. I had a major in criminology, worked in a retail shop, just completely nothing to do with teaching and

education. I can remember my mom saying, "Why don't you go into teaching?" She was a full time stay-at home-mom, and I think she wanted to be a teacher, too. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Holly also credited her mother with introducing books to her. She discussed the connection that grew from their common interest in reading.

That was our bond, in fact. The first chapter of my dissertation I started off with a memory of my mom and I walking to St. Pete Beach Long Key Library on a Friday night. That was the root of my own history as a reader, that special mother-daughter time. (Interview #1, March 2015)

As Holly spoke, the relationship with her mother emerged as an obvious influence in her life. Her sentiments prompted me to ask, "You liked books, but was it the relational piece you had with your mom that engaged you?" Holly responded enthusiastically.

Oh, absolutely! Sure. And, you know *Little Women*. She read it to me. She read it when she was little. Every summer I read *Little Women, Little Men, Jo's Boys*. I reread all of them every summer. I named one of my children after two of the characters. It was funny because I was in a conference not too long ago with some Writing Project people and they said, "Oh, that's kind of funny. It's like you tattooed your daughter with that influence of books." And you know, I didn't just connect with Jo March; I was Jo March. I mean, I just saw myself as this writer up there, you know. And, of course she ended up becoming a teacher. So, who knows maybe little seeds are planted in ways that you hardly ever know. But, yes, definitely the relational aspects. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Holly reflected on her decision to pursue a degree in teaching. Familial bonds and her passion for literacy significantly influenced Holly's choice to further her education.

> I started thinking about it. How did I get so far away from the idea of how much I love to read and write? I thought about that, and I thought about the fact that I loved my days with my kids being with them. Not that I wanted to teach younger children, but you reflect back on the things that were so important to you. And I'd been volunteering a lot at my kids' schools. It seemed like the right thing to do. (Interview #1, March 2015)

After receiving her English Education degree from the University of South Florida in 1997, Holly began teaching 6th grade reading at Bay Point Middle School in St. Petersburg. Holly discussed how fortunate she was to work for an administrator who supported educator professional development. "I had a principal that would pay for me to go to just absolutely any seminars, workshop conference, whatever. He used to joke and say, "Every time I see you Holly, I have to lock up my wallet" (Interview #1, March 2015).

During her first year as a classroom teacher, Holly attended a five-day professional development workshop in Punta Gorda hosted by Janet Allen. Holly described the spark that was ignited by this experience.

> Choice. You know, bringing in the books, immersing them, just surrounding them with what I was surrounded with growing up. That those seeds, you know, can be planted whether it's a five year old or 15 year old. I think there was quite a bit of talk at the school again. There was that idea of what is teaching reading, and there was a big, big push at that time in the school for technical reading. That, in fact, the principal really wanted to get rid of any kind of fiction that I would teach. They would be reading manuals. They would be reading resumes, almost vocational kind of reading. And my

reaction wasn't, "Well, that's not going to help them to read." My reaction was, "Yuck, I don't want to teach that!" So, what I learned from Janet was that combination of strategies. She's the queen of graphic organizers and really making your reading and your whole teaching very transparent. Modeling, you know. I don't think I got that in school. I know I never got that at district training, which was a lot of textbook training. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Holly described her teaching practice the year following her attendance at the Janet Allen workshop. "It was long. I was just floundering." Her admission prompted me to ask, "You had tools, but I hear you saying there was something missing. No collegiality?" Holly quickly responded, "I needed that. I needed that person to bounce those ideas off of. I needed that" (Interview #1, March 2015).

It was apparent from her comments teaching in isolation wasn't producing the kind of practice Holly expected from herself. She wanted to be like her son's elementary school teacher whose passion for the classroom never waned even as she approached retirement. Holly described the conflict she felt at that time.

Things weren't working. And I always wanted to be like this teacher, Sarah that my son had for 5th grade. It was her last year of teaching, and she was one of those legends. I met her over the summer, and she was bubbling with enthusiasm because she'd been to this workshop. And she's like, "I'm just so excited I can't wait to try this." It was her last year of teaching, and she had that same enthusiasm. When I went into teaching, I said the day I'm not like Sarah is the day I need to quit. That's the model I'm after. And what I found even in those first few years is that growing and staying positive and energized doesn't happen by accident. It has to be intentional. I really knew that I

needed those active connections that were going to keep me being more like Sarah was. I wanted to be that. I felt like that was what I needed for me. I needed it for my students. They needed somebody who was refreshed. (Interview #1, March 2015)

After teaching 6th grade reading for a few years, Holly transferred to 7th grade Language Arts. In order to gain a better writing foundation for her teaching practice, Holly attended the Poynter Institute during her summer break. It was there she met a colleague who told her about the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project's five-week summer institute that focused on writing instruction.

With Janet Allen, it was the seeds of that reading workshop. Then I got out of teaching just reading, and I started teaching 7th grade Language Arts. That's why I went to the Poynter Institute to get the writing foundation. That's where I met Michael Taylor who said, "You know, what you really should do is this thing I do. I've done it other summers. It's called the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project." And, so I was kind of the mind that I followed good people, and I had no idea what this was all about but I knew Michael. I knew his mind set… And I honestly had no idea what it was. I had no idea about the National Writing Project. I just knew that he said if you like this, then you will love the five-week. Because it was five weeks in those days, the summer institute. Okay, that's definitely good enough for me. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Holly's Summer Institute Experience

Holly recalled her decision to attend the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project's 2003 Invitational Summer Institute. In addition to a lack of professional community at the school

where she taught, Holly wanted to enhance her teaching practice. Holly shared her thoughts about entering the Writing Project that summer.

> I can remember just going there and thinking, "What the heck am I doing?" I really didn't know anything about TBAWP or the National Writing Project. I just honestly knew that I needed to find the connections with people and organizations. I don't know if nurture is the right word. It's almost like looking for somebody who's kind of that life preserver, because I didn't find it in my school. I didn't find it in my district. And again, I taught with very good people, but their ways of doing. It wasn't resonating with me. It wasn't what I wanted to see happen in my classroom. It wasn't what I was trying to make happen. And I knew that if I was going to continue to grow, I needed to be connected with people. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Holly described the first day of the Invitational Summer Institute with her small group members. It was here she found the professional community she longed for in her teaching practice.

> I knew this was, this was coming home. Because, it was again, it was the community… And Pat, I'm sure she still says this, "We hope you'll think of TBAWP as your professional home." And you know, it was and still is. (Interview #1, March 2015)

For Holly, her first impression of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project became a lasting professional experience. "So, I applied and was a participant in 2003. I was a facilitator in 2004, 2005 and 2006… I became the co-director for six years, till I left to take this job" (Interview #1, March 2015). The "job" to which Holly referred was her position as an Assistant Professor of Education at Saint Leo University.

Findings for the Research Question

Impact on Teaching Practice

Regarding the first component of the research question, Holly discussed the ways the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project influenced her practice as a classroom teacher and as a university professor. As a result of her Writing Project involvement, Holly gained a deeper perspective on what it means to be an educator. "My vision of what and who a teacher is goes back to a lot of what we did with NWP and with TBAWP. I don't know any other model. This is right. This just feels right" (Interview #2, April 2015).

Transparent teaching. When Holly returned to the classroom after the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute, she made significant changes in her teaching practices.

> My persona, my role in that classroom changed so much because I was much more transparent about everything I was doing… I think that's one of the hardest, biggest barriers is that idea of being a writer in the classroom. Not the teacher of writing, but being a writer along with the students… I had shared pieces I had written, but I don't think that I wrote *in process* and shared *in process* warts and all. That was completely different. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Holly's response prompted me to ask if she noticed anything different in the students as a result of changing her writing instruction. Holly discussed the impact of her decision.

> More students wanted to share. And, I think my relationship with them improved. I mean, not even in terms of writing, but it was like, wow, you know, it's risk taking. Everything we do every day is putting ourselves out there. I don't care what it is. But, wow, she's willing to do that with us, and show when it works out well. And then there are those days where a lot of the students could whip something off that was 10 times

what I could write, and I would be fine with saying, "That's incredible! Wow, that's so cool. I love this. I love that!" And, I think that that whole atmosphere changed things in just the whole classroom dynamics. I could see them seeing me differently than what they had seen other teachers… I was much more transparent and intentional. I felt so much more comfortable teaching writing because I was writing with them. I was learning about writing. I was learning from them as writers. So, again, it just really shifted. All of it. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Once Holly became a university professor, I wondered if her practice of writing *in process* changed. "Do you still write with your students?" I asked.

Now, Maggie, you know that's just like, that is one of the first things that I definitely make transparent to them. And I'll say, "What did you notice?" Maybe at first they're like, "Nothing." And I'm like, "What about me? What was I doing? "Well, you were writing." Then I say, and you'll always remember that. Whenever I come to observe any of you at some point, your students are going to be writing, right? "Yes, my class is going to be writing." And what are you going to be doing? Are you going to be checking your email? Are you going to be marking attendance because this is a good time while they're quiet? "No. I could be writing." And we talked about why and that idea of its modeling and its value. Whatever you're doing, again it goes back to that time, right? If you're taking that time to be writing, then you're saying this is important. Just like you're reading when they're reading. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Instructional feedback. Holly discussed the observations she made while facilitating Tampa Bay Area Writing Project summer institutes. She incorporated into her university

teaching the same strategies she observed during demonstration lesson debriefing sessions with Writing Project participants.

> Having somebody like Pat as this model, and truly that was another aspect of spending so many summers, because I was always watching her. After a demo lesson when we'd have our debriefing session, I had to remember that I had to contribute, too, because I loved watching how she empowered individuals by saying, "You know, this is your professional development. I want you to take the lead." But what was so important to me was I never saw an individual leave a debriefing session that they didn't feel inspired and ready to do better, to become better, to improve. I think that's the communication of "I believe in you" and they feel it. And I appreciate having seen that. When I go out and do my field placement observations, it's that same pattern as when we did debriefing. I do the observations. We come back, and we're sitting in the teacher's lounger or we're sitting some place private, the pre-service teachers and I. Because this is part of their professional development, I start off saying the same thing that I want them to take the lead. And I say, "I know you want to talk about the things that didn't go well, and we'll get to that soon. But we're going to start off with what you think went well, and if you were going to teach these lessons again, what would you continue?" Again, it is like verbatim of the script we use in the summer institute. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Professor as facilitator. In addition to changing her classroom teaching practices and instructional feedback, Holly transferred much of what she experienced during the summer institutes to the teaching structures she implemented as a university professor. Holly credited her way of work with pre-service teachers to what she learned and experienced while facilitating Invitational Summer Institutes for the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

> My role, we were called facilitators in the summer institute, and I get that's a little bit of a shift for some students in a first education course. Maybe in some of the education courses they'd seen that kind of model of the professor as a facilitator. But some of them hadn't, and I think it was a shift in expectation for them, too… So, I would make it all real explicit. Here's how this way of work is going to look this semester, and this is why. This is the way to learn. I used those structures I had experienced that felt very successful. I could see the growth in individuals, in teachers in the five-week summer institute. So, certainly that was going to be applicable to a semester long course. And again, small group, collaborative, community building, and sharing of one another's knowledge. Not negating my role at all, but shifting it in a way that students maybe weren't as familiar with but again, making that transparent for them helped them see. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Impact on Career Growth

With respect to the second component of the research question, Holly discussed the influence Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement had on her career. "Would I be here without TBAWP? I don't see that I would because I wouldn't have been that same person that would have envisioned doing these things" (Interview #2, April 2015).

Becoming a teacher of writing. Holly expanded her teaching repertoire after joining the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. While she was teaching 7th grade language arts, Holly took on an additional instructional challenge.

> I started teaching a play-writing class. It started out with the principal saying, "I need somebody that is willing to give up their 3rd period language arts class for these educators

from American Stage to come in and teach you." I was the only one. They could not get anybody in the district to get to do this. I started co-teaching with them, and then we created an elective of playwriting. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Holly's work with American Stage prompted me to ask if it was something she would have done prior to her participation in the Writing Project. She responded adamantly.

No, of course not! Or, do these things? I never taught playwriting… Just taking more risks and going out there, I think that confidence set in. At first, I knew how to assign writing, but I didn't know as much about teaching writing. And the big shift, it really took just grew exponentially at TBAWP of what it means to be a teacher of writing. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Classroom teacher to teacher educator. Holly attended the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute as a participant; then she became a facilitator for the next three summers. She was co-director of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project until she left to take a position as Assistant Professor of English Education at Saint Leo University. Holly's move to university teaching prompted me ask if her Writing Project involvement had anything to do with her decision to leave classroom teaching. "Was getting your doctorate a continuation of the professional learning that you were going through? Why teacher education?" Holly reflected on her work as a university professor.

I just had that "Aha!" moment, because I think with my involvement with TBAWP did both. It did start as, "I need to figure this out. What does this mean to be this teacher of writing?" But inherent in that model is the best teachers of writing are those who write. And it's teachers teaching other teachers… Boy, thank you for that revelation, because I think it now is reflected in my work with pre-service teachers. This idea of, I'm a

teacher. I know I'm a professor, but I'm a teacher teaching teachers. Okay, they're pre-service teachers, but it's that same kind of model. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Leadership in the profession. Holly discussed her continued involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project and the impact participation had on her professional growth. For Holly, the time she spent as a facilitator for TBAWP's Invitational Summer Institutes led to a deeper understanding of herself as a leader. As Holly's career advanced, she accepted leadership positions that afforded her the opportunity to empower others.

> I kept doing it for six years. That was my professional home. For me, I knew that being connected was something I needed to do. Both for what I was getting from it because I was really growing and learning. But again, just being back and being connected with these people. It was keeping me from withering… I needed it to not just keep going, but I thought so much about this, it was just integral to me being a better teacher, to my personal and professional growth. For me, I just knew this was part of a renewing cycle. And I think that was my process, too, of seeing my identity, seeing myself in that leadership role. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Holly's response prompted me to ask if she had accepted any leadership roles since becoming a teacher educator. Holly described her committee involvement at Saint Leo University.

> So, we have at the university these KRA's, which are Key Results Areas. The idea with the president is that these are groups of strategic planning teams that get together every year and say, "Okay. What's leading edge that we need to look at?" And then committees are formed from those KRA's, and those things get funded first even before the operating budget. So, it's not like let's do the operating budget and see what's

leftover. So, that's why I love being here. It's one of the reasons why I'm really working here. This year I'm on three of those KRAs. (Interview #2, April 2015)

In addition to her work on KRA committees, Holly described a major grant project she currently leads for Saint Leo University.

Like the grant, we are at the end of a multi-year grant that provides backpacks with digital equipment to students. It started out in our rural centers. What is that based on? It's based on the TBAWP model because it's forming communities of practice. We gather together once a month. They have to come in with some tools, some way they've used the tool, and they teach one another. And in the exit interviews that we do each year, they mention those opportunities to teach their peers as being the most significant thing that they took from the project. (Interview #2, April 2015)

"And would you attribute doing that to your experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project?" I wanted to know if Holly felt there was any connection to her Writing Project involvement.

Yes, because it's all about empowering others. I guess when you ask me about leadership roles, I think that's a thread in any of the leadership roles that I've taken. I like being in the position where I can do things that empower others.

As Holly discussed her career, I wondered if she attributed any of it to her involvement with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. "This is very hypothetical. If not for TBAWP, let me ask you this. Do you think you'd be where you are today if you hadn't…"

Holly interrupted, **"**No, no, I will not think about that. I can't even!"

I was surprised at her reaction. "I didn't even get it out of my mouth. Let me just ask. Do you think you'd be where you are today if…"

“No! No!” Holly put her hand up as if to stop me from asking the question. I could tell this wasn’t going to be easy for either of us.

“Do you think you’d be the person you are today?” I was finally able to ask Holly the question.

“No,” she commented softly. “And that’s maybe more important.”

“Talk to me about that.” I could see Holly was quite affected by my question.

“Gosh, Maggie, thanks a lot.” There was a long pause, and then Holly responded through tear-filled eyes.

> No. Because even that first summer at TBAWP, even being a facilitator, I’d get up there going, “Oh, my gosh. I am so bad at this. This is just awful.” This would be like a narrative that ran around my head. And why I felt like I could keep doing it? Maybe I wasn’t as bad as what I thought but you know, I knew that was a place I was going to. What kept me coming back and feeling like I could grow? Because I don’t feel like I was where I wanted to be even after that first summer. Maybe that’s why I wanted to facilitate and to keep going. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Impact on Professional Learning

Regarding the third component of the research question, Holly commented on the influence the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project had on her professional learning. “Everything smart I learned, I learned from TBAWP. I'm just laying it on the line here” (Interview #2, April 2015).

Advanced graduate degree. As a result of her summers with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, Holly decided to pursue a doctoral degree at the University of South Florida. Holly discussed the reasons behind her choice to advance her education.

> I think that maybe if somebody had said in another context and prior to going through the Writing Project, "Have you ever thought that one day you might get a Ph.D. and work at a university?" I think my perception of who I would have to be and my role maybe, it would have been different. And I think it was probably the summer of 2005, and I was just finishing up my Masters degree that a participant who was a doctoral student said, "You know, you should keep going." And I'm like, "Keep going and do what?" I didn't have some end goal working in a university. And honestly, the hook was kind of the same thing with the summer institute. I found I was kind of addicted to TBAWP. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Continued growth. After her first summer institute experience, Holly returned to the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project several summers as a facilitator. Although her role had changed since her initial involvement with the Writing Project, Holly continued to benefit in multiple ways. She discussed the impact the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project had on her professional knowledge and growth. "Were you learning?" I asked Holly.

> I was, yes! I had just tremendously, so much so. I felt like I grew. But if I hadn't had those summers, and I hadn't had that ongoing connection, and I didn't have those opportunities to work with the people that I worked with, I have no clue where I'd be. And I definitely would not be the same person. I think it's made such a difference in my life. I'm not even sure I could pinpoint for you all those things that would be different. (Interview #2, April 2015)

I wondered about her comment, "But you know something would be, you would be different?"

Holly replied adamantly, "Oh, yes! And I would not be here. It never really was part of my mindset."

I couldn't help but ask, "Is here the place where you want to be?" Holly responded emphatically.

> Oh my, yes! I don't take this for granted and it occurs, if it doesn't occur to me every day, it feels like every day. I'm grateful I have a career that gives me those opportunities to fully be there and change lives or support people in their goals, and I can be there for them. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Overarching Themes

In addition to addressing the three components of the research question guiding this study, data analysis found two overarching themes present in the oral history generated from Holly's interviews, *Blending the Professional and the Personal* and *Transformation of Self as Educator*.

Blending the Professional and the Personal

"In TBAWP there was the personal. I can't separate the personal and the academic. I teach reading and writing. If it's not personal, what is it?" (Interview #1, March 2015). Holly reflected on the difference between what she experienced in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project and other forms of professional development. She described her summer institute experience in the following manner.

It's very cathartic. You're in there five weeks all day long building those real bonds with people and the intensity of it. I'm a very intense person. I really love the surprises that came out of people through their writing. And I think that was it. I saw personal development as well as professional development. But it forever tainted me for any kind of district trainings. Do not call it professional development, because for me professional development is somehow, you as a person are changed, too. That was reinforced those summers when I got to pick those different topics. I was able to grow, connect, and it was professional, but it was personal, too. (Interview #1, March 2015)

I asked Holly to describe her Writing Project experience and the totality of her involvement. She shared the following insight about professional development and her time with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

It was that powerful intersection of the professional and the personal development and growth. Maybe because it is so people oriented. And again, I compare trainings. You do a random ice-breaker, and you really don't care about who one another is or what happens after that. Check that off the list, give you the poster, and you're on your way. Last summer we did an institute for Pasco teachers, we had a hundred applicants for 20 spots. We had the application process open for 10 days. And, what was it modeled from? It was modeled on NWP and TBAWP. It was relationships. We were only together for a week but it was with small groups. The seeds were right there, because that's what I know. That's what I know about professional development. So yes, TBAWP really put that model of what professional development and growth looks like. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Transformation of Self as Educator

The second overarching theme that emerged from analysis of the data was personal transformation. Holly described how she saw the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project transform herself and others.

> It's not hyperbole if I say it's life changing. And it wasn't. And I would say for so many people, they would say the same thing. Isn't it just remarkable to be able to think that in five weeks you can see a transformation? But I did… I had seen a transformation in the summer institutes of people who were very talented and perhaps leaders in their schools. But it was maybe to a different degree they had legs to stand on. I just loved to watch those transformations because they never realized they were on those platforms without those legs, and now they had those legs. They were not just delivering PD. They owned it, and it was meaningful to them. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Holly reflected on her decision to make room in the curriculum for writing and sharing. Though time consuming, Holly believed this practice, which she experienced during the Invitational Summer Institutes is beneficial to the personal and professional growth of her students.

> So, it was basically the same kind of structure. We did all sorts of personal writing and sharing. And once again, I see it with my undergrads and the methods. I saw it with the grad students and teachers. The personal writing and sharing which is time, it's always about time. Can I justify this expenditure of that time? And I know I can, because again I see personal growth and transformation through writing. So, what does that have to do with being a teacher educator? Why does it matter that somebody is experiencing personal growth? Well okay, that's just my crazy idea about what education is in

general. We're talking about developing the whole individual. It's the academic. It's the affective. There's no separation. That's how we do this. (Interview #2, April 2015)

At the end of the second interview, Holly made the following observation. Her words encapsulated the change she experienced from her involvement the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

> You know, I think people would think maybe if they'd been outside listening, "You're talking about professional development and how you wouldn't be the same person?" I don't know that you could explain that to anybody. And yet, it's not hyperbole. It is life changing. It's identity changing. The things I do, sure they change. But the person I am was really such a transformation. (Interview #2, April 2015)

My Connection to Ola Harb

Prior to the onset of this study, I had never met Ola Harb, nor was I aware of her involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. As discussed in Chapter Three, Kym Sheehan, my first participant, initiated the snowball sample for this research. It was Kym who suggested Ola's name as a participant in this study.

Ola's Story

Entry into the Teaching Profession

The path to the classroom is different for everyone. Ola shared the reason for her decision to become an educator. "What did I want to do? I really wanted to be an influence on someone else's life just like my teachers were in my life" (Interview #1, March 2015). Ola discussed her high school experience and the impact those years had on her.

> I was a very lucky student. I had wonderful teachers. I had older teachers and younger teachers. Both age groups had different influences on me. The older ones really instilled this thirst for knowledge and respect. I had younger teachers who were just brand new graduates from college. The line between friend and teacher was very clear, but still their influence was very lasting on me. I loved English although I am, as you will find out, I am not a native English speaker. I started learning English in 4th grade up to high school, to college, to my major, to my career of teaching English. I love the language. I've always excelled in it as a student. I was a good student. Teachers liked me a lot. I loved my high school experience with passion. (Interview #1, March 2015)

After graduating from high school, Ola chose to go directly to college. "I went to school in Israel. I'm from Nazareth, Israel. I went to the University of Haifa" (Interview #1, March 2015). Although she was barely 18 years old, Ola decided on teaching as a career.

> I was faced with the decision of my life. What do I want to study? What do I want to do? I knew it would have to do with English because I loved English. Then I figured if I'm going to be an English major, I'm going to be a teacher. I wanted to do a dual major. So, I did English and education. (Interview #1, March 2015)

As the eldest of five children, familial expectations played a significant role in Ola's decision to advance her education.

> I was ready to go. By the way, none of my parents went to college. My grandfather was a judge, and we had that expectation in my family. It was there that we all go. We're very highly motivated. I was also that way. As evidenced in my later study, I have two Masters degrees. And, I might end up being in your shoes in a couple of years from now as a doctoral student. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Ola's enthusiasm for academia became apparent as she discussed her university education. "How did teaching come into this picture?" I inquired. Ola described her first experience as a classroom teacher in Israel.

> I started '83 and in '86 I was almost done with my degree. My roommate came from a village about an hour away from Nazareth. They were starting a brand new high school and were in need of teachers, specifically English. Although I hadn't graduated yet, they offered me a job. I started teaching English at 21. I was teaching English as a third language to Arabic speaking high school students. That was an interesting experience because I wasn't sure what teaching really entailed. I was engulfed more in the teaching of the language than the teaching experience itself. I was still learning how to be a teacher. I did that for three years. It was very difficult because my being a good English student gave me the wrong idea of how hard English was to Arabic students. That was hard. I did not have any training in how to become a teacher, mind you. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Ola's reflection prompted me to ask, "You said you were there for three years. What happened after that?" Ola discussed her reason for moving to the United States from Israel.

> I met my husband who lives here. We met there, of course. So, I moved to this country. I did not teach right away because I needed my degree to be validated. But, I needed to work. I'm not a person that will stay home and do nothing. I was new to this country, so I was trying to figure out the whole experience of being American out of no American experience. My English was not a problem. I was already fluent in English. In walking distance there was a day care center. I applied and they took me. I worked as a caregiver for preschoolers for eight years. Meanwhile, I had my own two boys. My youngest was

two when I decided, "That's it. I've had it. I'm not doing baby talk anymore." So, I told my husband, "If they tell me I have to redo my whole Bachelors degree, I might have to do it." I called USF and got with Dr. Jones. That's when I first met her and I told her, "Here is what I want to do. What do I do about it?" She said, "You can apply for the Masters degree, and if we accept you that will validate your Bachelors degree." (Interview #1, March 2015)

All worked out and Ola was accepted into the Masters program at the University of South Florida in Tampa. After her Bachelors degree was validated, Ola received her eligibility to teach. In the fall of 1998, Ola accepted a position teaching English at a middle school in Bartow, Florida. Ola discussed her experience as a new teacher in the United States. Initially, things did not go well.

I started teaching, which was a devastating experience to begin with. It was really hard. Here's what happened. Here we are in September, and there's an opening in Bartow for an English teacher, a late opening. I interviewed, and on the spot, he hired me. Here is the situation I walked into. They had too many 7th graders, and so they had to pull out a bunch from other periods. This is hard. The assistant principal goes into a classroom and says, "Who doesn't want to be here?" They all raise their hands, and he takes names. He puts them together and forms these classes from hell, if I may say that. They became my students. Mind you, I have only worked with American babies and two year olds so far. I have never been in an American classroom, much less a 7th grade American classroom. So, to me it was a really hard experience. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Although she found herself in a difficult situation, Ola did not give up. Consequently, her determination was rewarded. Hope was on the horizon.

> I'm not a quitter, but I just felt like it. It felt like it was agonizing. But, God was looking after me. Come December, the senior English teacher retired. The principal came to me and said, "Would you like to take all of his classes?" I'm like, "Hallelujah! Yes!" Here is my chance to start over and do it right. I had just discovered Harry Wong, too. That's very important. So, I started over and it was wonderful, because now I can set my classroom procedures as Harry Wong gave. Meanwhile, I have Dr. Jones in the background. By the way, I've never sat down and talked and reflected over all of this before. So, thank you. I like this. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Near the end of her Masters degree, Ola received an invitation from Dr. Pat Jones to apply for a fellowship to attend TBAWP's 2003 Invitational Summer Institute. Ola reflected on the opportunity she was given to participate in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

> After I had taken a number of Pat's classes she says to me, "How many more classes do you have to take?" I said, I think I have just three more credits to go. She says, "What about if you enroll in this and you get six credits? You don't have to pay for it. You get a scholarship." It was an amazing opportunity for me. It worked out perfectly. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Ola's Summer Institute Experience

Ola discussed the quality of her teaching practice when she entered the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute. "I wasn't prepared. I was trying, but I didn't know how to exactly" (Interview #2, April 2015). Ola's desire to improve her instruction was impetus for her involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. "I was actually motivated to go because I needed to become a

better writing teacher. And I did. It was an amazing transformation" (Interview #1, March 2015).

In addition to finding herself in a difficult situation in her career, Ola faced challenges in her personal life. While she was attending the five-week summer institute, Ola and her family had to live in temporary housing. Though inconvenient, Ola did not let that hinder her learning experience.

> I was learning a lot. I was looking forward to going there everyday which is interesting because we lived in a hotel for the duration of that. We sold our house, and we rented a house. And, the house wasn't going to be available for another month. So, we lived in a hotel with our two boys. The fact that I had to go to TBAWP everyday did not get on my nerves. Actually, it was something I looked forward to. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Considering the difficult living arrangements she and her family were experiencing, I wondered what it was that captured Ola's attention. I asked Ola to describe her initial impression of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

> I liked the camaraderie. It felt more personal than just a class. Although I did not know any of those people, I only knew Pat. I don't think there was anybody else in that class I knew before. So, we got to know each other. But, it felt like it was more family-oriented but very professional. (Interview #2, April 2015)

With respect to professional development over the years, I asked Ola to discuss how TBAWP's Invitational Summer Institute compared to other learning experiences she has had as an educator. In addition to impacting her professionally, Ola described the influence the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project had on her personally.

> The difference was the degree of intimacy or the degree of openness, because the nature of the writings that we produced was different than before. Before I wrote a paper because I had to write a paper. Whether it's a research paper or whatever paper I had to come up with, it was done because I had to. Although I had to meet these expectations of the Project, I still felt that I was writing what I wanted to write. I was writing memoirs. I tried poetry. I did become better with poetry since. I explored different formats of writing where my comfort zone was- that in itself, and also the relationship with the people who were in that group, and of course, your shoulder partner. The group, the people at my table, and especially my shoulder partner Holly Atkins, I was blessed there, too. Holly is an amazing teacher and person. We've developed a friendship, as well. It's that comfort zone that you get to in the Writing Project that you don't with others, and that was unlike anything else up to that point. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Again, I found myself thinking how small the world really is. When Ola mentioned that Holly Atkins was her shoulder partner, I was pleasantly surprised. I didn't choose either participant for this study, and had no idea Holly and Ola knew each other. I didn't mention my revelation to Ola, as it wasn't germane to the conversation. It was just another unexpected connection within the scope of this inquiry. I did email Kym to ask how she happened to choose Ola for the study. Since Kym initiated the snowball sample, I felt I needed to get clarification. Because Kym is past president of the Florida Council of Teachers of English (FCTE), she knew of Ola's involvement with the organization at the state and local levels. This was the reason for her choice. Interestingly, Kym had no idea that Holly and Ola were acquainted (Email correspondence, February 8, 2016).

Findings for the Research Question

Impact on Teaching Practice

Regarding the first component of the research question, data analysis revealed Ola's teaching practice changed considerably following TBAWP's 2003 Invitational Summer Institute. Ola reflected on the impact participation in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project had on her professional practice. "I don't know that I would have been the same teacher had I not attended TBAWP. I don't know" (Interview #2, April 2015).

Becoming a teacher of writing. As a result of her summer institute experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, Ola returned to middle school teaching with a sense of empowerment and an enthusiasm for writing instruction.

> From that experience I became a stronger writing teacher. I'd accomplished a beginning with the whole Masters degree of becoming an English teacher, but the writing teacher in me was nurtured to become more successful. Since TBAWP I have felt a growth, a huge jump in growth, of my ability to teach and my ability to work with other teachers to convey the message of how English should be taught. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Writing Project influence was evidenced in Ola's classroom pedagogy. In addition to improving her instruction, Ola shared her teaching knowledge with other practitioners by delivering professional development with a writing focus.

> My whole teaching of writing changed and evolved. Actually, if you ask me now what is my strength in teaching English, I'd say writing. I have since presented many- I can't even count- many presentations, workshops, formal and informal PLCs with a writing focus. I've adopted writing as my area of teaching, although this was my least

comfortable area to begin with. And now over the years, it became my strength to teach writing, seriously. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Writing in the classroom. Ola's passion for writing instruction was evidenced in the comments she made about her teaching practice. Her words prompted me to ask, "How much do your students write?" Ola discussed the extent of student writing in her classroom.

> They write all the time. I insist on writing poetry, and that's a whole unit. I'll tell you why, because I did not know how to write poetry. When I did the Writing Project, I wrote poetry, but I didn't know what I was doing. The assignment from Dr. Jones was to write a poem. So, I wrote a poem, and I was not proud of it at all. And it challenged me. If you challenge me, then I have to figure it out. Now, when I figured it out, I fell in love with it. And when I understand it, I want to do it more and more. Then I want to develop it, and I want to give it my all. I read a lot of poetry instruction books because I wanted to teach myself how to teach poetry. And so I've become a fan. I love it. (Interview #1, March 2015)

In addition to poetry writing, Ola incorporated other Tampa Bay Area Writing Project practices into her classroom teaching. "Do you ever write *with* your students?" I asked.

> Yes. This year they wrote in class more than ever because they do progress monitoring. They have to write for that which worked perfectly because we have to write anyway. I wrote with them a couple times this year… I look to the TBAWP model that I do as they do. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Promoter of student writing. Ola extended the writing curriculum in her classroom to include student competitions sponsored by the Florida Council of Teachers

of English (FCTE). Ola has a deep belief in her students' writing abilities, and the quality of their work is evidenced in their performance.

> I was judging for the writing competition that FCTE does every year. And I'm like, "Why am I judging and not submitting? Oh, I'm submitting." And after the last five years, I've been submitting for FCTE, and I've had a first place winner every year. Last year, I submitted creative writing. We did a different ending to a story we read, and that's who won first place in fiction. I have been submitting literary analysis every year. Last year, I had two first place winners. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Ola's passion for writing motivated her students to go above and beyond what was expected of them in class. One of Ola's students chose to submit a poem she wrote to a national magazine.

> My student who won first place in poetry went and submitted to *Scholastic*. I was sent a letter recently that she won. Well, she got honorable mention. But, you know thousands and thousands of students all over the country send to *Scholastic*. She got excited, because her poem won district and won state. I didn't even go to *Scholastic*. She looked it up. She came to me and said, "Would you be my sponsor because I'm submitting the poem?" I'm like, "Yes, sure!" I'm very proud of my students' accomplishments. I'm very happy that I'm able to do something and see them gain from what I do-- learn and get excited. I like that. I like teaching writing. I really do. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Impact on Career Growth

With respect to the second component of the research question, Ola reflected on the path her career took following the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute. "The Writing Project, I never

thought about it, but it really refined my look at what teaching writing should look like. It guided me. It gave me this turn in my career and in my writing career" (Interview #1, March 2015).

Teacher of the year. Ola discussed the impact of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project on her career. The school year following her summer institute involvement, Ola was acknowledged for her instructional expertise by the Polk County Council Teachers of English.

> I happened to become the Teacher of the Year that year, too. 2003 was a good year for me, seriously. I think it might have been a result of that, I'm sure. I know that the Project had a great influence on my career and on my professionalism. (Interview #1, March 2015)

National board certification. In addition to receiving recognition for her classroom instruction, Ola achieved another important milestone in her professional career. "That year, 2003, I got my National Board Certification. I did that the semester after I did the Project. I did not get it the very first time, which was the biggest disappointment in my life, by the way" (Interview #1, March 2015). Ola shared the significance of this event.

> I did my National Board Certification, which is writing, writing, writing, and writing some more. I did TBAWP in the summer of 2003. I acquired my Certification in November of 2003. I tried it the first time before TBAWP, but I didn't make it. I needed one assignment after TBAWP. Before, in 2002 is when I submitted my portfolio, and it was writing, writing, and writing. I didn't make it. So, I chose to redo only one component of it. It was a risk, but I wasn't going to redo everything. (Interview #2, April 2015)

"The redo was after TBAWP? Did it have to do with writing?" I asked Ola to clarify her comments. I wanted to make sure I had the correct order of events.

> Yes. It always translated into writing, into my teaching, and my reflection on my teaching. Pat's presentation was about professional writing, too. It helped me because she did a presentation on how to write reflectively as teachers. Everybody had to present a project, and hers was on how to write professionally. She did it in the same format as the National Boards. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Professional involvement and leadership. I asked Ola if she noticed a change in herself following the Invitational Summer Institute. Ola responded enthusiastically. "Yes! I became a lot more involved within my community of teachers. I have always been in touch with Pat, and I have always said that I am involved in my community because of the Writing Project" (Interview #1, March 2015). Regarding leadership, Ola described her involvement with local and state professional organizations following her summer institute experience.

> I have since become a board member with the Polk County Council Teachers of English, and then I became a President for two terms. I'm Treasurer right now. I've become an active member of FCTE. I've attended a conference every year since. I've attended a couple of national conferences. That school year, 2003 to 2004 was my first year in joining the Council and becoming active, and then becoming a poetry judge. I have been a poetry judge since then for the county and for the state, for FTCE. I have been on the judging committee for years for the county, for our district, for our competition. (Interview #1, March 2015)

In addition to her involvement in professional organizations, Ola has mentored teachers new to her school and those working on alternative paths to certification. Ola discussed other ways she shares her expertise with educators in the profession.

> I've worked with aspiring National Board candidates and helped with their writing. I've done multiple workshops for teachers who are trying to write their portfolios. I pulled from that summer, too, because that was how to write professionally. (Interview #2, April 2015)

With respect to her experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, I asked Ola to consider how her career path might be different had she not participated in the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute. Ola shared her thoughts with me regarding the Writing Project's influence.

> I would still seek knowledge in different avenues, probably the harder way. But, having had TBAWP opened avenues I probably wouldn't have thought of in professional writing, in writing instruction, specifically. But, TBAWP helped me and was a great introducer. The institute held my hand and walked me into teaching. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Impact on Professional Learning

Regarding the third component of the research question, Ola described how the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project engaged her professional learning. "To me, I felt like I'm a student but at the same a teacher. It was a mixture between the two me's. I'm always thinking about myself as both" (Interview #2, April 2015).

Teacher as student. Ola's Invitational Summer Institute involvement led to a deeper understanding of herself as a learner. By changing roles, she moved from teacher to student where she gained a level of insight that had not come from previous learning experiences.

> The Project was a great perspective as a student, not just as a teacher. I am switching seats. I'm a student now. I'm having to come up with the writing. On writing, I didn't do much of that in class with my students. I always assigned writing. I never sat down to write except for my papers that I had to write. But writing for the sake of writing, for the sake of creativity, for the sake of whatever the assignment was that day in the Project was a new thing for me. I really enjoyed that. I enjoyed the camaraderie with all the other teachers also being writers and students, as well. Taking the role between being an instructor, switching back and forth in that because we had to do our own presentation. We had to teach and at the same time learn every time it was someone else's turn to present. Although it was a long time ago, a lot of it is still very vivid in my memory. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Ola discussed the difference between her involvement with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project and other types of professional development she has experienced throughout her teaching career.

> The summer institute was more of you learn, but you teach others at the same time. Whether it's the structure of the presentation itself, you're learning from that. Also, it was the interaction with other teachers and listening to other teacher's writings. There were elementary level, and I was secondary level. It was a variety of diverse teachers. But, everybody was writing. Everybody was writing about their personal lives, too. There were a lot of personal narratives written there. That was neat because it's that human connection. It was more personal writing and at the same time, professional writing. It was a combination of all kinds of things. Whereas, when I did other professional development involvements at least up until that time, it used to be like more sit and listen

and take ideas. Most of it you'd probably forget, or most of it doesn't really matter. It was just a requirement or something you had to do. That was to me the difference between TBAWP and other professional developments. I was learning, and I was enjoying learning. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Improved instruction. Ola described the ways in which the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project prompted her professional learning and ultimately improved writing instruction in her classroom.

It gave me exposure because what I liked about the demos was that every one had a different focus. Mine was grammar. Somebody did a presentation on writing traits. So, I went and bought the book. I read the whole book. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Ola's comments prompted me to ask if she incorporated what she learned in the Invitational Summer Institute into her classroom teaching. "Did you infuse writing traits in your instruction?"

Absolutely! Actually, I went to a three-day training on writing traits with my district. That came from one of the demos. Writing poetry was another demo. That was a great influence on me because it opened doors. All you have to do is just give me the way, and I'll find all the little hallways and corridors in there. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Ola discussed the impact participating in demonstration lessons had on her professional learning. By sharing what she knew with others, Ola deepened her understanding of her own writing practice.

Until then, I remember just being recipients but not necessarily contributors at the same time. I felt that was a great addition in the Writing Project is being a recipient through

practice. Through giving, I was learning. And, it's like teaching. To me, teaching is like that. I learn as I teach every single day. (Interview #1, March 2015)

During the Invitational Summer Institute, Ola was engaged in various forms of writing, which she incorporated into her instructional repertoire. "I think that's what happened with the Project. All those demos were great exposure. I picked up ideas here and there from each one of them, and then made them mine" (Interview #1, March 2015). Ola's views on writing instruction changed considerably following her summer institute involvement.

> The Writing Project exposed me to different kinds of writing. Then there was professional writing. Pat Jones was professional writing. That was another thing, how to sit down and reflect and think about what I do as a teacher. It also opened my mind to that. I can't remember all of them, but many presentations gave me a wider spectrum of what writing really is. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Overarching Themes

In addition to answering the three components of the research question guiding this study, data analysis found two overarching themes present within the oral history generated from Ola's interviews, *Longevity in the Classroom* and *Sharing Professional Knowledge*.

Longevity in the Classroom

The first theme that emerged from analysis of Ola's interviews was longevity in the classroom. Following her summer institute experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, Ola returned to Bartow Middle School where she taught for the next two years. From there, Ola moved to Bartow High School to teach 9th grade English and Arabic as an elective in

the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Although she moved from middle school to high school teaching, Ola has remained a classroom educator for the entirety of her career. "I feel the whole experience made me grow into a better writing teacher or maybe an accomplished writing teacher. I think I learned that after all these years" (Interview #2, April 2015).

Ola discussed the impact of her involvement in TBAWP's 2003 Invitational Summer Institute. In addition to collaborating with other educators, Ola expanded her knowledge base in writing instruction.

> Ultimately, it made me a much better teacher. I had never worked that extensively with teachers of other subjects. And, there were middle school teachers and elementary teachers. Everybody was doing a different expertise area or interest area. It widened my spectrum. It is so important. TBAWP is writing the right way. (Interview #2, April 2015)

I asked Ola how she chose what to do when she returned to the classroom since she was exposed to so much in the Writing Project. Ola reflected on her teaching practice after experiencing the Invitational Summer Institute.

> I can tell you I did one thing at a time. It's hard. It is overwhelming, and it's a lot of, "I want to do this, but which one do you get to first?" But it wasn't just a year; it took 10 years. It started that year, and I couldn't get everything done that year. But it kept on happening, and I kept on. I read a ton of writing books, a ton of English instruction books. I read how to teach lit, how to teach poetry, how to teach writing. I immersed myself. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Ola's reflection prompted me to ask, "Was TBAWP a spark for you? Did it spark that? Because you said it kept on, and I kept on." Ola responded adamantly, "Oh, it was the spark!

Yes, it sparked! And, it's been maintained by self-motivation to know more. I am a knower. I like to know, and I like to learn. I'm a learner" (Interview #1, March 2015).

Ola discussed the totality of her experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project and the long-term impact participation had on her career. Ola left the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute feeling changed as an educator.

> Once I came out of it, I felt that I'd become a better writing teacher. Of course, you need time to feel the effect of something because one year does not give you a chance to experiment or to experience change or growth. And, it really has deepened over the years. (Interview #1, March 2015)

Sharing Professional Knowledge

The second overarching theme that emerged from analysis of the data was the concept of sharing professional knowledge, which was evidenced in Ola's description of her Tampa Bay Area Writing Project experience.

> It's the maturity that you get from the experiences. Then you put it together and you go, "Okay. What do I do with all of these now? I have all this. I need to do something. I can't just put it aside and ignore it. I need to do something, and that's where I'm at now. I'm at a point in my career that I feel I have gained so many different things from so many different avenues. They're all coming together, and I have all this ability that I want to pass on. I don't think being in my classroom within my four walls is enough or is a good way to share or to impact more. I'm trying to see how I can spread what I have, and I can't do it by myself. So, if I'm working with other teachers, hopefully other teachers can also pass it on. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Regarding her work with educators, Ola attributes the enthusiasm she feels for sharing professional knowledge to her involvement with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

> I'm very excited about all that I've learned, and I don't want to contain it to just myself. I've been sharing, whether it is casual talk or putting an email together and sending it to English teachers in my school or doing workshops at my school or district-wide. That's something I took from TBAWP. Specifically, I think it helped me become more of a teacher of teachers. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Ola experienced considerable benefits from her participation in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. In addition to improving her classroom instruction, Ola developed another skill base, teaching other teachers.

> Going back to TBAWP, I just want to say that it, among other professional involvements that I've done in my career, but definitely the Project taught me how to be a teacher of teachers, as well, not just a teacher of students. It helped me see how what I now know should be shared with others. It's really a very important theme throughout my career. (Interview #2, April 2015)

As we concluded our time together, Ola shared a final comment regarding her experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project and her involvement in the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute.

> I took from TBAWP and relayed what I took to whomever it actually would've affected starting with students. Everything that happened in that summer is still carried along with me throughout the years in different ways. (Interview #2, April 2015)

Cross-Story Analysis

The Participants and their Stories

Kym, Holly, and Ola were selected as study participants because they each represented different career paths in education – district level administrator, university instructor, and classroom teacher. The resulting data revealed that the participant selection criteria allowed the identification of three distinct stories producing unique perceptions of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project influence on teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning.

Each person involved in this inquiry brings different perspectives and life experiences. While both Kym and Holly were born in the United States, Ola is the only participant who was raised in a foreign country. During the first interview, Ola discussed her formative years growing up in Israel. Although her primary language is Arabic, Ola is fluent in English.

Entrance into the teaching profession. Familial influence held a significant place in each participant's decision to advance her education and ultimately join the teaching profession. Though Kym didn't feel supported in her academic endeavors from her parents, the relationship with her grandfather inspired her to pursue undergraduate studies in English and classical antiquities. Although Holly already had a degree in criminology, encouragement from her mother motivated Holly to pursue a graduate degree in teaching. As for continuing her education after high school, Ola's parents were adamant she would pursue a university degree. Familial motivation and Ola's early dedication to the teaching profession were evidenced in her decision to pursue a double major in English and education.

Attendance at the Invitational Summer Institute. As per the inclusion criteria for this study, participants must have attended a Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute between 1998 and 2004. Kym participated during the summer of 2002, while Holly and

Ola attended in 2003. Although all three participants entered the Invitational Summer Institute as middle school language arts educators, they each came from different schools and counties across the state.

When Kym joined the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, she was teaching language arts at Punta Gorda Middle School in Charlotte County, which is located in southwest Florida. Holly attended the following summer, and was teaching language arts at Bay Point Middle School in Pinellas County, which is on the west coast of Florida. Ola, who also entered in 2003, was teaching language arts at Bartow Middle School in Polk County, which is located in the mid-region of Florida. Interestingly, Kym and Ola lived in temporary housing during the entire five weeks of the Invitational Summer Institute. Unlike Kym and Ola, Holly commuted each day of the summer institute from her home located in St. Petersburg, Florida.

During the initial interviews, participants discussed previous professional learning experiences. Kym and Holly attended a Janet Allen workshop during the late 90's which both found inspiring. During Ola's Masters degree, she was exposed to Harry Wong's work in classroom management, which boosted her teaching confidence, as well. Although each participant reported feeling energized and hopeful after these learning experiences, the momentum did not last. When Kym, Holly, and Ola entered the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project summer institute, they came hoping to find answers to their current teaching dilemmas.

Data collected during the first interviews indicated that all three participants were facing major challenges in their teaching practice at the time they entered the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. The difficulties each experienced in the classroom did not deter these educators. Instead, the three women chose to invest their time in the five-week Invitational Summer Institute. While Kym, Holly, and Ola were unified in the need to improve writing instruction,

they also expressed a desire to connect with colleagues on a professional level due to a lack of peer collaboration in practice settings.

Addressing the Research Question

Participants' perceptions of writing project impact on teaching practice. The first component of the research question I asked addressed the influence of the Invitational Summer Institute on participants' teaching practice. All three women expressed a direct impact, both short and long term, on their classroom instruction as a result of their Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement. Specifically, each participant shared the view they felt better prepared to teach writing and were more confident in their pedagogical choices. In addition, all three participants shared a perspective that the Invitational Summer Institute was instrumental in changing their approach to writing instruction, which they continued to refine across their careers.

Participants' perceptions of writing project impact on career growth. The second part of the research question I asked addressed the influence of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement on participants' career growth. In this part of the question, the shift moves from changes in educators' classroom instruction and pedagogy to the way in which the Writing Project impacted their teaching practice in a broad sense. As unified as the participants were in their experiences in the years immediately following their Invitational Summer Institute involvement, they were widely divergent in their descriptions of impact on their careers. Although Kym remained in the classroom for a few years after the summer institute, she moved to a district level position as the language arts supervisor. Like Kym, Holly continued as a classroom teacher until she made the decision to get her doctorate and become a teacher

educator. However, unlike Kym and Holly, Ola has remained a classroom teacher since her involvement with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, although she moved from middle to high school teaching.

Participants' perceptions of writing project impact on professional learning. The third part of the research question I asked addressed the influence of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement on participants' professional learning. In this part of the question, all three participants believed the Invitational Summer Institute experience played a critical role in shaping the way the felt about professional learning. The women stated how the freedom to choose their own research topics was significant to their learning experience. In individual interviews, the study participants discussed the impact of exploring various writing genres, reading professional books, and conducting demonstration lessons which are 90-minute interactive research-based learning experiences created by each member of the Invitational Summer Institute. In addition to the academic element, the three participants in this study experienced a personal dimension to professional learning. Regarding every demonstration lesson she experienced, Kym said she learned something new about herself. In addition to appreciating the freedom to research areas of professional interest, Holly enjoyed the collegial learning environment in the summer institute, which resulted in the professional connectedness she so deeply desired. Ola emphasized that a unique aspect of professional learning in the summer institute was conducting the demonstration lessons and being a recipient through practice. Through giving, Ola was also learning.

Themes Across Participants' Stories

Regarding the oral histories generated from the three participants in this study, a cross-story analysis revealed educators' descriptions of their Invitational Summer Institute experience consistently reflected impact on their teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. Analysis across participants' stories produced three overarching themes related to Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement: *professional community*, *leadership in the profession*, and *teaching other teachers*.

Professional community. The first theme that emerged from cross-story analysis was *professional community*. All three participants identified a sociocultural impact from their Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement. Specifically, the three women shared the view their Invitational Summer Institute experience, which included a community and relational element impacted them professionally and personally. Kym stated that going through the Writing Project validated that "sense of community" you had to build with learners. Holly employed the phrase "community of practice" to describe the collegial relationships and strong bonds that resulted from working collaboratively with peers. Like Kym and Holly, Ola felt camaraderie in the summer institute. Ola used the term "community of learners" to describe what she tries to establish in her teaching practice as a result of the time she spent with the Writing Project. As a result of experiencing professional community during the Invitational Summer Institute, each participant infused the concept of community into her pedagogical framework. All three educators discussed how they build community whenever they are teaching students or leading professional learning experiences for educators.

Leadership in the profession. The second overarching theme that emerged from cross-story analysis was *leadership in the profession*. All three participants described increased

professional involvement and acceptance of numerous leadership roles as a direct result of their Invitational Summer Institute experience. Each person attributed their growth in leadership to their involvement with the Writing Project. Kym spoke of the professionalism she experienced as a result of attending the summer institute and the confidence she gained as a leader. In addition to Kym's work as a district supervisor, she has held several offices, including president of the Florida Council of Teachers of English, the state professional organization for language arts educators. Holly discussed her continued involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project and the impact participation had on her professional growth. For Holly, the time she spent as a facilitator for Writing Project summer institutes led to a deeper understanding of herself as a leader. Holly also stated that her leadership involvement at Saint Leo University directly resulted from the confidence she gained from her work on TBAWP's Leadership Council. Like Kym and Holly, Ola attributed her leadership involvement with local and state professional organizations to the professionalism she gained as a result of her summer institute experience. Ola stated that her work with PCCTE, the Polk County Council Teachers of English, was directly influenced by the confidence she gained through the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. Kym, Holly, and Ola each confirmed that their leadership in the profession was nurtured by their Writing Project involvement.

Teaching other teachers. The third overarching theme that emerged from cross-story analysis was *teaching other teachers*. All three participants stated their work conducting learning opportunities for educators was a direct result of their Invitational Summer Institute experience. Kym delivers professional development workshops as a main component of district level job supervising language arts educators. Holly works as an assistant professor in the teacher education department at a private university. In addition to conducting writing

workshops for educators in her district, Ola is contemplating a new avenue for sharing professional knowledge, getting a doctorate in teacher education. Be it mentoring new practitioners, conducting workshops for educators, or sharing expertise with those already in the teaching profession, Kym, Holly, and Ola each attributed their desire to share professional knowledge with other educators to their involvement with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented contextualized stories of educators' long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project in order to advance previous work in effective professional development, educator learning, and Writing Project research. I described the work lives of three female participants who attended the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute between 1998 and 2004. My analysis of the research data was culled from interview transcripts, supporting documents, and the researcher's reflective journal. I summarized the data by presenting a storied account of each participant's Writing Project experience highlighting impact on teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning.

In Chapter Five, I begin by providing a brief summary of the study's purpose, research question, literature review, and methodology. I continue discussion of the data in terms of themes found within and across participants' oral histories that resulted from consideration of the ways in which study findings inform new insights regarding educator professional learning and Writing Project involvement over time. With respect to the 2004 National Writing Project Legacy Study, I advance that inquiry by addressing the concept of legacy and the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. As a result of the knowledge gained from conducting this investigation, I propose a conceptual model for evaluating the lasting impact of professional learning

experiences via educator perspectives. In addition, I discuss the implications of this inquiry, explain the significance of this study, and make recommendations for future research. To conclude the dissertation, I summarize the last chapter, explain the impact of this study on the researcher, and share a final personal reflection with the reader.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFLECTION

> "What discoveries I have made in the process of writing stories all begin with the particular, never the general."
>
> (Welty, 1983, p. 14)

Acquiring knowledge and understanding from conducting formal inquiry involves a recursive process of looking at the past, present, and future. To begin this chapter, I provide a brief summary of the study's purpose, research question, literature review, and methodology. Discussion of the data continues in terms of themes found within and across educators' oral histories. Regarding the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project and the concept of legacy, investigation of program impact over time was informed by the generative experiences each participant shared regarding her Invitational Summer Institute involvement. As a result of the insight gleaned from accessing participants' stories, I propose a conceptual model for qualitative studies that advances inquiry into the lasting impact of educator professional learning. Next, I discuss the implications of this inquiry, explain the significance of this study, and make recommendations for future research. In bringing the dissertation to a close, I summarize Chapter Five, explain the impact of conducting this inquiry on the researcher, and share a personal reflection with the reader.

For most teaching practitioners in the public school system, professional development is an expected and often unpleasant mandate. More often than not, educators are required to participate in professional development activities that have little impact on the practitioner or their practice (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). These activities come in many forms, however most are usually brief, one-day events. Researchers, scholars, and practitioners question the value of short-term workshops as a form of professional development (Borko, 2004; Gray, 2000; Wei, Andree, & Darling-Hammond, 2009). To this end, research over the past two decades has defined a new goal for educator professional development, one that rejects the ineffective "one-shot" workshop models educators have come to know and resent (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Although new standards for effective educator professional development have been identified (Blank, 2013; Blank & de las Alas, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2009; Penuel et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2009) implementation is not nearly as successful.

For the purpose of this research, I engaged an oral history methodology to access participant's stories of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement over time. As Milleson notes, (2009), oral history researchers "are given information about personal experiences surrounding certain times and events; yet the powerful nature of this methodology stretches beyond documentation to an active, shared construction of knowledge about our past, as well as our present" (p. 61). I chose this method because it affords me the opportunity to use shared oral story to capture the nuances of educators' lived experiences.

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain participants' perceptions of Writing Project influence on professional learning over time. The goal was to determine if Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement had a long-term impact on the professional lives

of educators who participated in an Invitational Summer Institute between 1998 and 2004. This inquiry explored the extent to which participants viewed their Writing Project involvement as an authentic and lasting professional learning experience. The findings of this study provide insight into professional learning by accessing the perspectives of educators themselves within the context of their teaching practice and career growth. The present study's relevance lies not only in extending, supporting, and questioning extant research, but also in contributing to filling gaps in the landscape of professional learning research. The following research question guided this undertaking:

- In what ways, if any, has long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of participating educators?

Findings, Themes, and Insights

Finding Meaning in the Particular

In the previous chapter, I presented contextualized stories of educators' long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project highlighting impact on teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. In this chapter, I continue discussion of the data in terms of themes found within and across participants' oral histories that resulted from consideration of the ways in which study findings informed new insights regarding educator professional learning and Writing Project involvement over time.

With respect to study outcomes, I make no claim findings are generalizable to a broader population, nor do I assert that Kym, Holly, and Ola are representative of all Writing Project members. Believing, however, that "in the particular resides the general," (Lawrence-Lightfoot,

2005, p. 13) my intention was to provide a space for educators to engage in professional discourse by documenting their stories and sharing their Tampa Bay Area Writing Project experiences. My hope was to create a resonance and verisimilitude with the reader that elucidates and illuminates the shared lived experiences of these three women whose stories are positioned at the center of this research.

Learning from Kym. Two overarching themes emerged from Kym's story of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement, *finding and expressing voice* and *professionalism*. As a result of her summer institute experience, Kym discovered she no longer needed to silence her voice. Participation in the 2002 Invitational Summer Institute gave Kym an avenue for self-expression. From journaling, to poetry writing, to researching topics of professional interest, Kym immersed herself in the Writing Project, and by doing so found a voice that had been silenced for many years. During her involvement with the Florida Council of Teachers of English and her work as Language Arts Supervisor for Charlotte County schools, Kym became a voice for educators across the state. She also became a voice for censored texts, as evidenced in the Intellectual Freedom Award she was given by the National Council of Teachers of English for addressing censorship issues in her school district. No longer silenced, Kym has used her voice to advocate for the teaching profession.

Through her summer institute experience, Kym found in herself the professionalism she didn't feel as a classroom teacher. Kym's involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project helped her learn more about herself, her professional understandings, and who she could be as an educator. These insights increased Kym's confidence and propelled her career forward. Kym attributes her professional growth to her Writing Project involvement.

For educators who feel silenced in their professional voice, Kym's story illustrates how involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project can open up doors to self-expression that might otherwise remain closed. Kym's story also offers inspiration to those who feel lost professionally. Illuminating the path, the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project can be a beacon for educators who seek professionalism in their teaching practice.

Learning from Holly. Two overarching themes emerged from Holly's story of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement, *blending the personal and the professional* and *transformation of self as educator*. Through her summer institute experience, Holly found the professional connectedness she desired with her teaching colleagues. Participation in the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute provided for Holly the relational element that was missing in her professional practice. As a result of her Writing Project experience, Holly was able to develop meaningful professional relationships and build strong community bonds with educators who attended the summer institutes.

Holly stated that Writing Project involvement changed her life by giving her the confidence to pursue an advanced graduate degree, which she had never before contemplated. Holly felt empowered in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, and now empowers those entering the teaching profession through her work as a teacher educator at Saint Leo University. Holly described her Writing Project experience as a powerful intersection of the professional and the personal. For educators who are at a crossroad in their career, the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project can offer much needed direction.

As a result of her Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement, Holly saw a considerable change in her self as an educator, which she referred to as a transformation. While professional development may influence an educator's instruction or pedagogy, Holly believes

the person must be changed, too. For Holly, this was the case. She experienced a personal and professional transformation in the Writing Project, which translated for her into a life changing experience. Holly's involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project helped to transform her teaching practice and her understandings of who she could be as an educator. These insights not only impacted her professional practice, they increased Holly's self-awareness and improved her professional identity.

For educators who feel disconnected professionally and personally, Holly's story demonstrates how Writing Project involvement can fill that void and transform lives. Holly's story also shows how the Invitational Summer Institute can be a bridge for educators seeking connectedness or desiring a change. For educators needing a professional home, the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project is the place to find it. And as Holly's story confirms, there's no place like home.

Learning from Ola. Two overarching themes emerged from Ola's story of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement, *longevity in the classroom* and *sharing professional knowledge*. According to Ola, she always wanted to be a classroom teacher; this was her career goal. Because she was greatly influenced by her high school teachers, Ola wanted to be an influence in students' lives. Although she learned about the field of education through her university studies, Ola didn't participate in an internship or receive any kind of professional mentoring. Therefore, Ola struggled as a classroom teacher, which prompted her entry into the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project summer institute. She needed something to improve her classroom instruction. Ola stated that Writing Project involvement transformed her teaching practice and gave her the skills and inspiration she needed to impact her students' learning and writing performance.

Participation in the 2003 Invitational Summer Institute helped Ola develop expertise in writing instruction, an element she felt was missing in her teaching practice. Through her summer institute experience, Ola gained considerably in her knowledge base for writing instruction, which ultimately became her teaching specialty. As evidenced in Ola's story, her students are prolific writers, and she has clearly impacted their performance in various genres of writing.

During the Invitational Summer Institute, Ola developed her presentation skills for delivering professional learning experiences. Since her involvement in the Writing Project, Ola has continued to deliver professional development workshops for educators. Ola attributes her desire to share professional knowledge with her peers to her experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

For educators who need to refine their skills in writing instruction, the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project is the place to turn. Ola's story also demonstrates how participation in the Invitational Summer Institute can assist educators in developing the skills needed to present effective learning experiences for educators. Ola's story can also be an inspiration to classroom educators who seek professional improvement. Her experience with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project reminds us all that we are *a work in progress*.

Finding Meaning Across Stories

Three main findings emerged from the cross-story analysis of participants' oral histories: *professional community*, *leadership in the profession*, and *teaching other teachers*. These findings were evidenced in the core features of the Invitational Summer Institute and in the outcomes of long-term participation in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

The first finding, *professional community*, was seen in participants' descriptions of the core features of the Invitational Summer Institute. All three educators discussed the impact of participating in a professional learning experience that incorporated community building. The Invitational Summer Institute included a social and relational dimension, which contributed to the learning experience for each person in this study. Findings also suggest that establishing community among participants not only translated into a better and more effective learning experience, it was then infused into participants' teaching practices. Furthermore, each participant went on to conduct professional learning experiences for educators, which always incorporated a community and relational element.

The second finding, *leadership in the profession*, was evidenced in participants' description of their professional involvement after attending the Invitational Summer Institute. Study findings indicate that all three educators went on to become leaders in the teaching profession. Involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project inspired professional confidence in these educators, which promoted their acceptance of leadership roles in the profession. These roles included council presidencies for state and district English teacher organizations, co-directorship of TBAWP's Leadership Council, as well as committee and grant leadership at the school, district, and university level. Findings also suggest that leadership involvement enhanced educators' professional practices and contributed to their career growth.

The third finding, *teaching other teachers*, was also evidenced in participants' discussions of professional involvement after summer institute attendance. Findings indicate that Tampa Bay Area Writing Project participants extended their classroom instruction to include educator professional learning. As participants advanced in their careers, findings also suggest their desire and comfort in sharing their professional knowledge grew substantially as a result of

their Tampa Bay Area Writing Project experience. Involvement in the Invitational Summer Institute gave participants the foundation needed to effectively implement learning opportunities for educators and become teachers of other teachers.

Together, the three main findings in this study are evidenced in participants' descriptions of long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. As illustrated in Figure 5, educators' Writing Project experience led to impact over time. First, educators participated in a Tampa Bay Area Writing Project summer institute at least 10 years prior to the evaluation of learning impact. Findings indicate attendance at the Invitational Summer Institute increased educators' knowledge and skills and/or changed their attitudes and beliefs. Educators then returned to the classrooms to use their new understandings to improve instruction or pedagogy. The instructional and/or pedagogical changes were then applied across time.

Educators' professional learning experiences were evaluated for long-term impact on teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. The lasting impact of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement was seen in the ways in which educators infused the concept of community into their teaching practice, accepted leadership positions within the profession, and ultimately went on to conduct learning experiences for educators, which consistently included community and relationship building. The lasting impact of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement is evidenced in the recursive learning model illustrated in Figure 5.

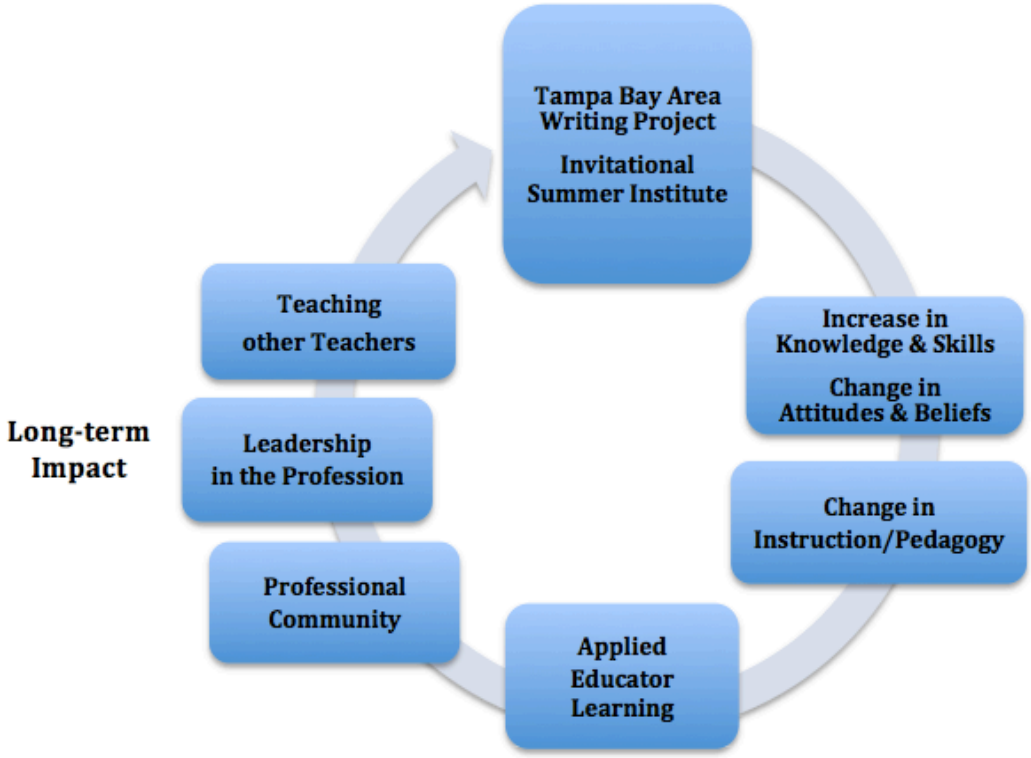

Figure 5. Model of Lasting Impact of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Involvement

Conceptual Framework for Evaluating Educator Professional Learning

Core Features of Effective Professional Development

There are at least two central components to a conceptual framework for studying educators' professional learning. The first is recognizing the core features that define effective professional development, and the second is establishing an operational theory of how professional development works to influence learning (Desimone, 2009). With respect to literature informing educator learning, recent research reflects a growing consensus about the core features of effective professional development that are critical to increasing educators' knowledge and skills and improving their practice (Blank, 2013; Blank & de las Alas, 2009;

Desimone, 2009; Garet, et al., 2001; Guskey, 2009; Penuel et al., 2007). Those core features are: (a) content focus, (b) active learning, (c) coherence, (d) duration, and (e) collective participation.

In contrast to Desimone's conceptual framework used in "causal studies of professional development" (2009, p. 184), I advance an alternative model and recommend its use in qualitative studies of educator professional learning over time. In addition to the five core features of effective professional development proposed in the Desimone (2009) framework, I posit a sixth core feature, community of practice, which is grounded in research and evidenced in the findings from this inquiry.

Establishing a Community of Practice

Over the last two decades, researchers have looked closely at the nature of educator learning in inquiry communities (Barab & Duffy, 2000; Buysse et al., 2003; Chalmers & Keown, 2006; Hausman & Goldring, 2001; Little, 2002; McDermott, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Underpinning this research is the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed by educators who work together to address issues of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

The term "community of practice" is most closely associated with the collective work of Lave and Wenger (Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) who introduced the concept to capture the importance of bringing individuals together for a common purpose. A community of practice involves a collection of individuals sharing mutually defined practices, beliefs, and understandings over an extended time frame in the pursuit of a shared goal (Wenger, 1998). According to Little (2002), "Communities of practice are a crucial locus of learning" (p. 935). With that in mind, when educators work together to form communities of practice, powerful learning will likely result (Chalmers & Keown, 2006).

There are "two central tenets of the community of practice framework: (a) knowledge is situated in experience, and (b) experience is understood through critical reflection with others who share this experience" (Buysse et al., 2003, p. 267). Being a participant in a learning community is an essential component of the educational process. However, "a community is not simply bringing a lot of people together to work on a task" (Barab and Duffy, 2000, p. 49). According to McDermott (2000), developing personal relationships among community members is essential. Building a community of practice is all about relationships.

The community of practice as a model for professional development is well documented in the teacher education literature (Buysse et al., 2001; Chalmers & Keown, 2006; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Little, 2002; Palincsar et al., 1998; Stamps, 1997). As a model for educator professional development, "The community of practice framework recognizes that knowledge is generated and shared within a social and cultural context" (Buysse et al., 2003, p. 266).

With respect to educator learning over time, "Tools by themselves are not enough to guarantee effective professional development… Building 'communities of practice' will become significant in lifelong learning models" (Chalmers & Keown, 2006, p. 139). A long-term look at educator professional learning brings to the forefront what would be otherwise go undocumented or remain hidden from view. According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), "An across-the-life-span perspective on teacher learning is more relational- making salient the role of communities and intellectual projects of groups of teachers over time" (p. 293).

Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) describe the efforts of the National Writing Project to bring educators together in communities of practice that promote lifelong learning.

> The widespread activities of the National Writing Project, which some argue is the most successful large-scale professional development initiative ever… Here the focus has

been on writing, language, and literacy: Knowledge is constructed collaboratively, teacher to teacher, in institutes and on-line networks established to provide intellectual communities for exploring the social, cultural, and political dimensions of teaching and learning over time. (p. 285)

A Model for Studying the Lasting Impact of Educator Professional Learning

While Desimone's model (see Figure 6) represents "interactive, non-recursive relationships between the critical features of professional development, teacher knowledge and beliefs, classroom practice, and student outcomes" (2009, p. 184), the model I propose represents interactive, recursive relationships between the core features of effective professional development, educator knowledge and attitudes, changes in pedagogy, and educator learning applied across time.

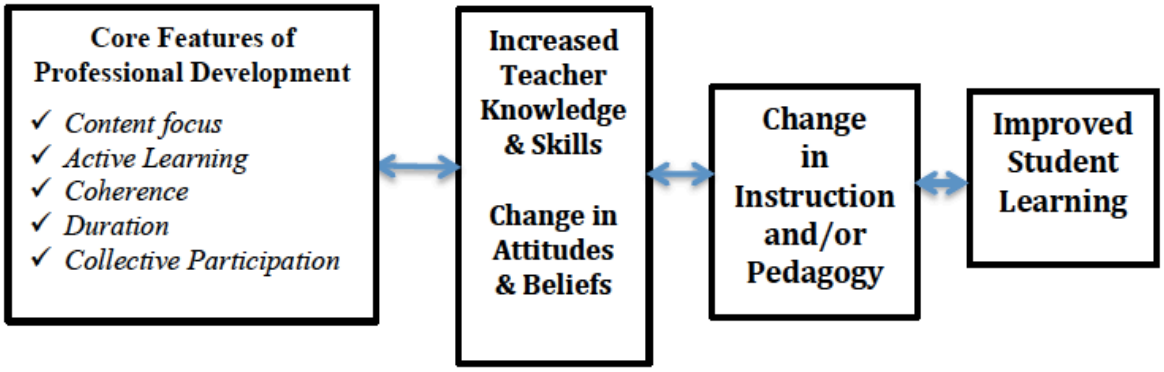

Figure 6. Core Conceptual Framework for Studying the Effects of Professional Development (Adapted from Desimone, 2009)

Even if the outcome measure of Desimone's (2009) model were changed to "improved educator learning", a major weakness still remains within the framework if it is to be used to evaluate long-term impact. Because the model stops at improved learning, there is nothing that indicates how the educator was able to apply what was learned over time. A longitudinal look at educator professional learning necessitates a model that addresses lasting impact through *applied learning* rather than short-term impact through *improved learning*.

A conceptual framework for studying the long-term impact of educators' professional learning allows for testing both a theory of educator change (e.g., the professional learning experience altered educator knowledge, attitudes, or practices) and a theory of long-term impact (e.g., the experience promoted leadership involvement or inspired career growth). As reflected in Figure 7, the Saturley model for studying the lasting impact of educator professional learning would include the following steps:

1. Educators participate in a learning experience that includes the six core features of effective professional development (i.e., content focused, active learning, coherence, duration, collective participation, and community of practice).
2. The professional learning experience increases educators' knowledge and skills and/or changes their attitudes and beliefs.
3. Educators use their new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs to improve instruction and/or pedagogy.
4. The instructional and/or pedagogical changes are applied across time.
5. Educators' professional learning experiences are evaluated for long-term impact on teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning.

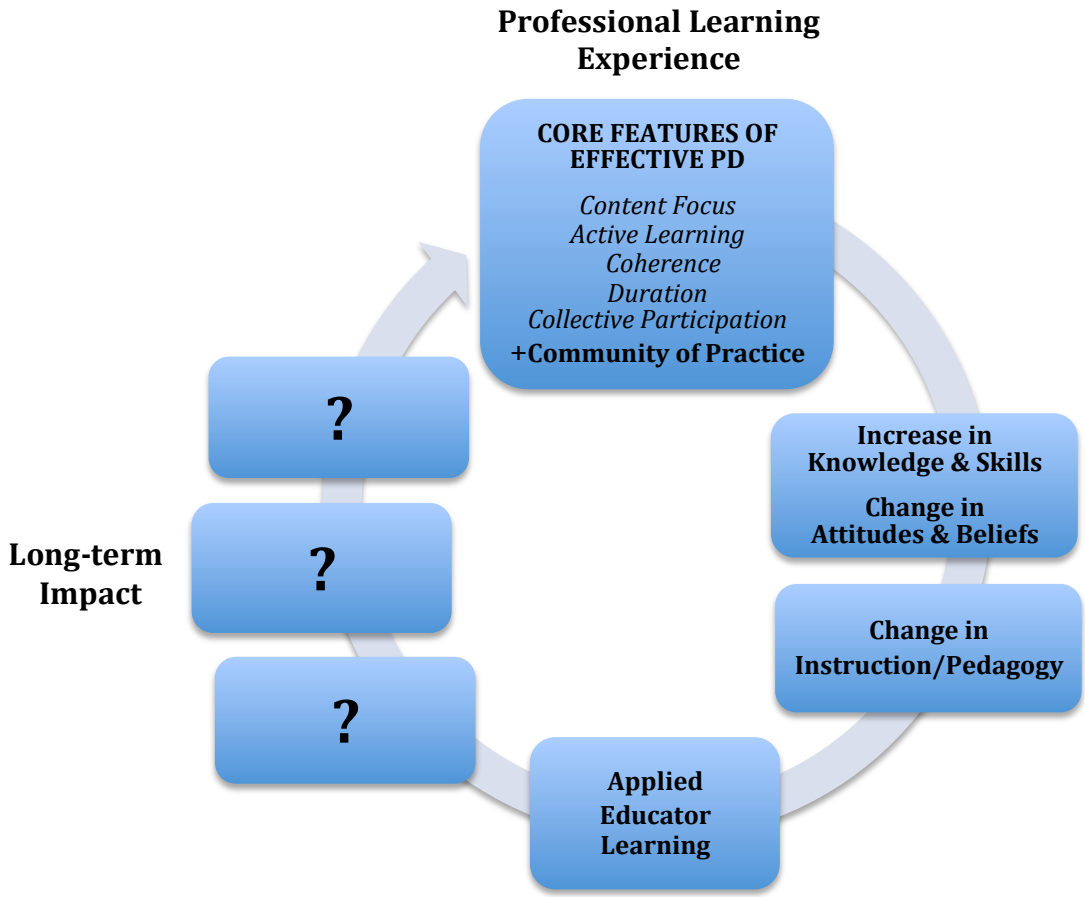

Figure 7. Saturley Model for Studying the Lasting Impact of Educator Professional Learning

Implications

The Legacy of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project

After a decade or more since their attendance at the Invitational Summer Institute, participants are still claiming involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project to be the most significant learning experience of their lives, paling in comparison to any other form of professional development attended before or since. Educators' stories revealed Writing Project participation significantly impacted their teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. When considered in a broad sense, the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement was evidenced in the three main findings generated from cross-story analysis, *professional*

community, *leadership in the profession*, and *teaching other teachers*. These findings have important implications when considering the legacy of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

Regarding the lasting nature of the National Writing Project, it is possible to discuss organizational legacy in terms of contributions that extend beyond the immediacy of reform initiatives and accountability mandates to the long-term broader implications of educator learning (Friedrich, Swain, LeMahieu, Fessehaie, & Mieles, 2007). Whitney and Friedrich (2013) view legacy as "what lasts in the work of individual participants which, when taken in the aggregate, transcends individuals to characterize the network over time" (p. 3). The findings from this inquiry point to a significant legacy that has been established by the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. By accessing educators' lived experience through oral history interviews, this study documented the legacy of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project as it relates to educator professional learning.

Funding for Writing Project Initiatives

The findings from this study generate important understandings about educator professional learning over time. Clearly, involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project impacted the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of three educators who participated in an Invitational Summer Institute between 1998 and 2004. During those years, the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project received funding from the National Writing Project (NWP) in the form of grants that were used to offer fellowships to attend Invitational Summer Institutes. At that time, the NWP received their funding from the federal government through a line item in the budget for National Writing Project initiatives.

In 2011, government funding for the National Writing Project was terminated by the Obama administration. Though President Obama included literacy funding in his proposed budgets, the absence of budget approval has eliminated financial support from the federal government to date. The lack of funding for NWP translated to a reduction in funding for local initiatives, which for the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project meant they had to discontinue offering fellowships to summer institute participants. Currently, all Invitational Summer Institute participants must pay their own tuition. The findings from this inquiry have important implications for funding initiatives. Considering the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement, those who are in the position to fund professional learning initiatives should allocate monies to the National Writing Project or to their local network sites.

Investigating the Lasting Impact of Educator Professional Learning

Because nothing exists in the current research landscape that offers a framework for assessing the long-term impact of educator professional learning, this study has important implications for research that documents effective learning initiatives. The conceptual model advanced in this inquiry is the only framework to date that examines the lasting impact of educator professional learning. Research that utilizes this framework can add significantly to understandings of educator learning over time. The implications of this finding are significant for longitudinal inquiry that examines educator professional learning and for impact studies of long-term Writing Project involvement.

Significance of the Study

In addition to providing exemplars of educator stories of practice over time, this inquiry contributes to the body of research pertaining to effective professional development, educator professional learning, and the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement. The present study extends the National Writing Project's Legacy Study launched in 2004 that examined the professional learning experiences of educators who participated during the early years of the Writing Project (Friedrich et al., 2007). This investigation explores Writing Project impact on professional learning by accessing the oral histories of educators involved in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project between 1998 and 2004. The study addresses professional learning across an educator's career, which can be examined only with the benefit of time and through focus solely on the practitioner.

Regarding research perspective, this study provides thick, rich descriptions of three career educators' professional learning experiences with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, and how those experiences revealed impact over time. As evidenced in the educators' oral histories, benefits from Invitational Summer Institute involvement went beyond the acquisition of content knowledge to include changes in teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning. Findings from this work begin to fill a gap in existing research by responding to the call for inquiry that is situated within the perspectives of educators themselves.

In addition to a commitment to leadership in the profession and teaching other teachers, the importance of establishing a community of practice emerged as an important finding in this inquiry. Educators' stories reflected the impact building community had among participants. Experiencing a sense of camaraderie added another dimension to their professional learning, which elevated the experience for each person. This understanding holds significance to those

who create curriculum for educators because it points to establishing a community of practice as an essential element in professional learning.

To those who mandate professional development for educators, the findings from this inquiry have important implications for education policy and reform initiatives. When educators are supported and encouraged in their professional learning endeavors, their practice reflects it. Although it's been over a decade since initial Tampa Bay Area Writing Project involvement, each educator in this study remains adamant the Invitational Summer Institute influenced major aspects of their teaching career and professional lives. In each case, educators' stories reflected a change in their pedagogical awareness, professional involvement, and career trajectory as a result of their time with the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. Such findings could inform policy-makers and those responsible for professional development initiatives for educators.

Recommendations for Future Research

Those in the teaching profession have important experiences to share. To that end, there is a place in the research landscape for educator's stories of their professional lives. "The telling of stories can be a profound form of scholarship moving serious study close to the frontiers of art in the capacity to express complex truths and moral context in intelligible ways" (Firestone, 1989, p. 377). If we are to understand those who teach, their voices must be heard and their stories told. Listening to those in the education profession will propel the field forward. We need to attend to educators' stories if we are to understand the profession in which they work. Future inquiry should access the perspective of educators themselves in order to better inform those responsible for professional learning initiatives.

To better understand professional learning, researchers must consider the individual educator and the social systems in which she or he operates. There is a need for more research that investigates the experience of professional learning constructed and embedded within an educator's professional practice. Studies that address the educator as the unit of analysis can provide valuable insights into professional learning. However, inquiry that focuses on educators' lived experiences is an element absent from many studies (Hamilton, 2013). This gap in the research provides further support for inquiry focusing on educator lived experience and professional learning.

As discussed in Chapter Two, impact studies linking effective professional development to student achievement data elicit major concerns with experimental designs due to reliability and causality concerns. As evidenced in the research literature, significant problems exist with measures of professional development impact that center inquiry on student learning. For that reason, studies of professional development effectiveness should focus on educator knowledge only, and future inquiry should investigate professional development activities that lead to educator learning. Furthermore, the review of literature in Chapter Two found a significant gap in longitudinal studies that documents effective professional development programs and their impact on educator learning. This absence of research warrants consideration and provides impetus for future inquiry into the long-term impact of professional development on educator learning. Utilizing the conceptual framework posited from this research, effectiveness studies should track the impact of professional learning experiences of educators over time.

Although the 2004 NWP Legacy Study contributed significantly to the research landscape informing Writing Project impact over time, there is an absence of research that extends the Legacy Study to individual network sites, which provides further support for inquiry

focusing on educator professional learning and the lasting impact of Writing Project involvement at the local level. Regarding the current inquiry, although the small number of participants may limit the findings, this study could be replicated with greater numbers of Writing Project participants to yield more examples of professional learning impact over time. Additionally, since evidence of impact was tied to educators' experiences of professional learning, storied cases might be collected and examined through oral history inquiry.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Five encompassed a detailed discussion of study findings in terms of themes found within and across participants' oral histories that resulted from consideration of the ways in which findings informed new insights regarding educator professional learning and long-term Writing Project involvement. I began the chapter with a brief summary of the study's purpose, research question, literature review, and methodology. Next, I discussed meaning derived from participant stories, which produced three main findings from this inquiry.

As a result of the knowledge and understanding gleaned from conducting this research, I proposed a conceptual model for evaluating the lasting impact of professional learning experiences via educator perspectives. With respect to the 2004 NWP Legacy Study that investigated Writing Project impact on educators a decade after involvement, I advanced that inquiry by addressing the concept of legacy and the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project. Finally, I discussed the implications of this inquiry, explained the significance of this study, and made recommendations for future research. To conclude this dissertation, I explain the impact of this inquiry on the researcher and share a closing reflection with the reader.

Impact of this Study on the Researcher

As I have learned in my quest for stories, it's best to start at the beginning. Regarding the impact of this study on the researcher, I shall begin with a continuation of my Chapter One reflection – When Inquiry Meets Irony. I ended that section with somewhat of a "cliff hanger" in that I informed the reader while attending *Content Area Training*, a professional development workshop mandated by the school district that recently hired me, I found myself in a position in which I never expected to be. I was *living my literature review*. My colleagues and I were experiencing inadequate and ineffective professional development. Knowing this was a situation that would significantly influence the way we began our school year, I couldn't help but think I had some responsibility to address it.

That is where I first noticed the impact of this inquiry on myself. As I was sitting at the front of the media center contemplating what to do about this unfortunate situation, in walked one of the facilitators from the New Teacher Orientation, the introduction to working in the district that took place the previous week. What was different about that learning experience was the facilitators had taken the time to build community with the group of educators who had been assigned to them for orientation week. Feeling comfortable enough to speak with the facilitator about the quality of "training" we were experiencing, I decided to broach the subject. Having acquired a knowledge base and "language" for effective professional development, I discussed with this educator the core features of effective professional development that were not present in the workshop we were currently attending. In addition to a lack of active engagement of the learners, the facilitators of this workshop neglected to build community among the group. As a result, our learning was significantly impeded and most attendees had lost interest.

After our discussion, the facilitator from the New Teacher Orientation assured me she would speak to someone in charge of the workshop to see if anything could be done to improve this learning experience. As it turned out, when we returned the next day to continue the workshop, the facilitators made a concerted effort to reorganize their presentations to include active learning and community building. The remainder of our time together turned out to be quite productive. As a result of the knowledge I gained during this inquiry, I was able to address an issue that effected change and improved learning for an entire cohort of language arts educators who were new to the district.

Final Reflection

At the core of this research is my belief an educator's learning belongs to that educator. As I see it, educator professional learning should not be evaluated based on how well students perform on any type of informal or formal assessment. Clearly, student learning is at the center of every committed educator's practice, as it should be. However, educator learning and student performance are two separate constructs. In this inquiry, I chose to focus on the former. The educators in this study, and those in classrooms across this nation, focus on the latter.

During my interview for admission to doctoral studies, Dr. Pat Jones invited me to apply for a fellowship to attend the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project's 2011 summer institute. That invitation was the beginning of a journey that would take me right here to this moment in time where I am sharing with you, the reader, the thoughts and ponderings that resulted from my dissertation research.

Having joined TBAWP's Leadership Council in the fall of 2011, I remained active until February of 2015 when I had to temporarily relinquish my position due to participation in this

study. Since then, I have focused my energy on dissertation research, and as a result, gained considerable knowledge and understanding. It's as if I've been on a "walk-about", and the journey is finally over. Without question, I look forward to my return to the Leadership Council.

How is it that a professional learning experience can give a person both roots and wings at the same time? It's hard to believe that involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project can have an impact like that, but it did. It gave me both. TBAWP is my professional home. I know where I belong professionally. But there's work to do and stories to share. Where will the future take me? Only time will tell.

Written with Dr. Pat Jones' words in mind, I end this dissertation with an invitation to educators everywhere:

Come to the table
Where everyone is welcome.
Come to the table
Where relationships are built.
Come to the table
Where lives are changed.
Come to the table
There's a place for you!

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: NCLB Definition of High-Quality Professional Development

The following definition of *professional development* is found in NCLB Section 9101(34). Professional development activities reflecting the principles in this definition are considered to be high quality.

(34) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: The term 'professional development'

(A) includes activities that-

(i) improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified;

(ii) are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans;

(iii) give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;

(iv) improve classroom management skills;

(v) (I) are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom; and

(II) are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;

(vi) support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;

(vii) advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are-

(I) based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under part D of title II); and

(II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and

(viii) are aligned with and directly related to-

(I) State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and

(II) the curricula and programs tied to the standards described in subclause (I) except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of Section 2123(3)(B);

(ix) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;

(x) are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;

(xi) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;

(xii) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
(xiii) provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;
(xiv) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and
(xv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and

(B) may include activities that-
(i) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;
(ii) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; and
(iii) provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.

Appendix B: NCLB Definition of Scientifically Based Research

The following definition of *scientifically based research* is found in NCLB Section 9101(37).

(37) SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH: The term 'scientifically based research'

(A) means research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and

(B) includes research that -

(i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;

(ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;

(iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;

(iv) is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;

(v) ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings;

(vi) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Appendix C: NCLB Description of the National Writing Project

The following description of the *National Writing Project* is found in NCLB Title II, Part C - Innovation for Teacher Quality - Subpart 2, Section 2331 and Section 2332.

SUBPART 2—NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

SECTION 2331 – PURPOSES: The purposes of this subpart are -

(1) to support and promote the expansion of the National Writing Project network of sites so that teachers in every region of the United States will have access to a National Writing Project program;

(2) to ensure the consistent high quality of the sites through ongoing review, evaluation, and technical assistance;

(3) to support and promote the establishment of programs to disseminate effective practices and research findings about the teaching of writing; and (4) to coordinate activities assisted under this subpart with activities assisted under this Act.

SECTION 2332 – NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

(a) AUTHORIZATION - The Secretary is authorized to award a grant to the National Writing Project, a nonprofit educational organization that has as its primary purpose the improvement of the quality of student writing and learning (hereafter in this section referred to as the 'grantee') to improve the teaching of writing and the use of writing as a part of the learning process in our Nation's classrooms.

(b) REQUIREMENTS OF GRANT - The grant shall provide that-
(1) the grantee will enter into contracts with institutions of higher education or other nonprofit educational providers (hereafter in this section referred to as 'contractors') under which the contractors will agree to establish, operate, and provide the non-Federal share of the cost of teacher training programs in effective approaches and processes for the teaching of writing;

(2) funds made available by the Secretary to the grantee pursuant to any contract entered into under this section will be used to pay the Federal share of the cost of establishing and operating teacher training programs as provided in paragraph (1); and

(3) the grantee will meet such other conditions and standards as the Secretary determines to be necessary to assure compliance with the provisions of this section and will provide such technical assistance as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

(c) TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS - The teacher training programs authorized in subsection (a) shall –

(1) be conducted during the school year and during the summer months;

(2) train teachers who teach grades kindergarten through college;

(3) select teachers to become members of a National Writing Project teacher network whose members will conduct writing workshops for other teachers in the area served by each National Writing Project site; and

(4) encourage teachers from all disciplines to participate in such teacher training programs.

(d) FEDERAL SHARE -

(1) IN GENERAL - Except as provided in paragraph (2) or (3) and for purposes of subsection (a), the term 'Federal share' means, with respect to the costs of teacher training programs authorized in subsection (a), 50 percent of such costs to the contractor.

(2) WAIVER - The Secretary may waive the provisions of paragraph (1) on a case-by-case basis if the National Advisory Board described in subsection (e) determines, on the basis of financial need, that such waiver is necessary.

(3) MAXIMUM - The Federal share of the costs of teacher training programs conducted pursuant to subsection (a) may not exceed $100,000 for any one contractor, or $200,000 for a statewide program administered by any one contractor in at least five sites throughout the State.

(e) NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD -

(1) ESTABLISHMENT - The National Writing Project shall establish and operate a National Advisory Board.

(2) COMPOSITION - The National Advisory Board established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall consist of -

(A) national educational leaders;

(B) leaders in the field of writing; and

(C) such other individuals as the National Writing Project determines necessary.

(3) DUTIES - The National Advisory Board established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall -

(A) advise the National Writing Project on national issues related to student writing and the teaching of writing;

(B) review the activities and programs of the National Writing Project; and

(C) support the continued development of the National Writing Project.

(f) EVALUATION -

(1) IN GENERAL - The Secretary shall conduct an independent evaluation by grant or contract of the teacher training programs administered pursuant to this subpart. Such evaluation shall specify the amount of funds expended by the National Writing Project and each contractor receiving assistance under this section for administrative costs. The results of such evaluation

shall be made available to the appropriate committees of Congress.

(2) FUNDING LIMITATION - The Secretary shall reserve not more than $150,000 from the total amount appropriated pursuant to the authority of subsection (h) for fiscal year 2002 and each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years to conduct the evaluation described in paragraph (1).

(g) APPLICATION REVIEW -

(1) REVIEW BOARD - The National Writing Project shall establish and operate a National Review Board that shall consist of - (A) leaders in the field of research in writing; and (B) such other individuals as the National Writing Project deems necessary.

(2) DUTIES - The National Review Board shall -

(A) review all applications for assistance under this subsection; and

(B) recommend applications for assistance under this subsection for funding by the National Writing Project.

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS - There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subpart $15,000,000 as may be necessary for fiscal year 2002 and each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years.

Appendix D: Informed Consent - IRB Stamped Form

Study ID:Pro00020606 Date Approved: 2/4/2015 Expiration Date: 2/4/2016

USF
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SOUTH FLORIDA

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

IRB Study # Pro00020606

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you, please ask her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. I encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

I, Margaret Saturley, am asking you to take part in a research study called:

Educators' Oral Histories of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Involvement

The person who is in charge of this study is Margaret Saturley. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. Margaret Saturley is guided in this research by her faculty advisor, Dr. Pat Jones.

Purpose of the study

- The purpose of this study is to describe and explain participants' perceptions of writing project involvement and professional learning over time. The study posits the long-term involvement in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project will enhance the teaching practice, career growth, and professional learning of participating educators.
- Margaret Saturley is in charge of the study and is conducting this research to fulfill degree requirements for doctoral studies at the University of South Florida.

Study Procedures

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in two semi-structured, one-hour interviews.
- Review the interview transcripts for discrepancies or misrepresentations.
- The study will take place from January 1, 2015 to September 1, 2015.
- Interviews will be conducted at locations and times convenient for each participant.
- Audio recordings of interviews will be made. Study staff will have access to the recordings and transcripts.
- Pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity.
- Audio recordings and interview transcripts will be stored on the researcher's personal computer.
- Data will be kept for five (5) years then destroyed. Paper copies will be shredded. Electronic documents will be deleted.

Total Number of Participants

The total number of participants for this study is four (4).

Alternatives

You do not have to participate in this research study.

Benefits

The potential benefits of participating in this research study include:

Possible benefits are educational and academic, that is to contribute to the body of knowledge about educator professional learning, effective professional development, and lasting benefits of writing project involvement. Therefore, this study has the potential to benefit you as an educator.

Risks or Discomfort

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to study participants.

Compensation

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Cost

There will be no additional costs to you as a result of being in this study.

Privacy and Confidentiality

I will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, which includes the Principal Investigator and study coordinator.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. Individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to review your records. This is done to ensure I am doing the study correctly. They also need to ensure I am protecting your rights and your safety.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP).
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, staff in the USF Office of Research and Innovation, USF Division of Research Integrity and Compliance, and other USF offices who oversee this research.

I may publish what I learn from this study. If I do, I will not include your name. I will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you stop taking part in this study. Decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your status within the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an adverse event or unanticipated problem, call Margaret Saturley at 727-507-1244.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study or have complaints, concerns, or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638.

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study

It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in this study. If you want to take part, please sign the form, if the following statements are true.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____ _____

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he/she understands:

- What the study is about;
- What procedures will be used;
- What the potential benefits and known risks might be.

I can confirm this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in that language. This subject reads well enough to understand this document. This subject does not have a medical/psychological problem that would compromise comprehension and can, therefore, give legally effective informed consent. This subject is not under any type of anesthesia or analgesic that may cloud judgment or make it hard to understand what is being explained and, therefore, can be considered competent to give informed consent.

_____ _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Appendix E: TBAWP Study Interview Protocol

Phase I

1. Can you recall your earliest influences that took you into teaching?
2. How did you become an educator? Describe that to me.
3. How did you first learn about TBAWP?
4. How did you come to take part in TBAWP? Talk to me about your memories of that experience.
5. Describe your experience during the Invitational Summer Institute (ISI).
6. Can you recall for me how you felt as a learner during ISI?
7. Did your classroom practice change after attending ISI?
8. Can you tell me about one specific approach to teaching or writing instruction that you were able to develop or refine because of your TBAWP involvement?
9. Before we end today, is there anything else you'd like to say that you feel needs to be said?

Phase 2

1. Tell me about the work you are doing currently. Talk to me about your typical day.
2. To what extent, if any, has your experience with TBAWP informed your work in your current position?
3. In what ways, if at all, do you think your career path would be different if you had not encountered the writing project?
4. Can you describe your personal and/or professional writing prior to and since TBAWP involvement?
5. Can you tell me about your leadership experience prior to and since TBAWP involvement?
6. To what extent do you feel part of TBAWP's ongoing community?
7. What have you liked best about your involvement with TBAWP?
8. Are there any improvements you'd like to see made within the organization?
9. How has your experience with TBAWP compared to other forms of professional development in which you've participated?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add to today's conversation that should be said?

Note: This study employed a modified version of the Interview Guide referenced in the NWP Legacy Study (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013).

Appendix F: Member Check Form

Directions: Please review at least 10 pages of the attached interview transcript as part of the member check that I am requesting you to do for this research study. Should you find any discrepancies or misrepresentations that inhibit data analysis or interpretation, please identify the page number(s) on the space below and return this form to me so that I can address the situation as soon as possible. If no discrepancies are found, please indicate this with an X in the appropriate space below and sign your name and date on the lines provided.

Thank you very much,

Margaret H. Saturley

I, _____, have conducted a member check on at least 10 pages of the interview transcript provided to me by Margaret Saturley.

_____NO DISCREPANCIES OR MISREPRESENTATIONS FOUND

_____DISRECREPANCY OR MISREPRESENTATION FOUND
(Errors identified, transcript marked, document returned to Interviewer)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G: Peer Reviewer Form

Peer Reviewer

I, Laura Sabella, have served as a peer reviewer/outside reader for *Educators' Oral Histories of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Involvement*, a dissertation by Margaret H. Saturley. In this role, I have worked with the researcher in capacities such discussing emergent themes, prompting researcher reflection, and reviewing the dissertation manuscript for errors or misrepresentations.

Signed: _____**Laura D. Sabella**_____

Date: _____**Mar. 10, 2016**_____

Appendix H: IRB Approval Letter

USF
UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

February 4, 2015

Margaret Saturley
Teaching and Learning
Tampa, FL 33605

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**
IRB#: Pro00020606
Title: Educators' Oral Histories of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Involvement

Study Approval Period: 2/4/2015 to 2/4/2016

Dear Ms. Saturley:

On 2/4/2015, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
Study Protocol - The TBAWP Study

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Informed Consent Form - The TBAWP Study.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Appendix I: IRB Amendment Approval

USF
UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

June 9, 2015

Margaret Saturley
Teaching and Learning
Tampa, FL 33605

RE: **Expedited Approval for Amendment**
IRB#: Ame1_Pro00020606
Title: Educators' Oral Histories of Tampa Bay Area Writing Project Involvement

Dear Ms. Saturley:

On 6/9/2015, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** your Amendment. The submitted request has been approved for the following:

Other Changes: Study criteria have been modified; three participants will be recruited for this study.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John A Schinka, Ph.D.

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Appendix J: Interview Transcript Excerpt

Date: March 14, 2015 – Interview #1
Interviewee: Kym Sheehan
Interviewer: Maggie Saturley

Kym: So, I went to Tampa Bay, which was a life changing, and I can't say that enough. It was a life changing experience.

Maggie: When you first got into the Writing Project initially they let you in…

Kym: They said okay, and they found housing.

Maggie: You got in, and then the first day of the Writing Project, can you even recall what that was like for you?

Kym: Got it right here.

Maggie: You do? Okay! And what you're showing me is a journal.

Kym: Yes, which is really funny because like I said, I always journaled and wrote.

Maggie: (Looking at the journal) June 10th, 2002.

Kym: Yes. It was the first day of the ISI, and I was so excited to be there! I was so excited to be there. And if you want, you can take and pull from that.

Maggie: You don't mind?

Kym: No, I don't mind at all.

Maggie: Okay, I will treasure this. And so what I have here is her journal from the very beginning.

Kym: And there is a thing in there. Pat had told us, I think it's the next day. Pat was the, Pat Jones who was the leader, and I just took to her right away. I just felt like she was family and I knew her forever. And, she told us to think about writing something for ourselves that day, and I wrote this thing about catching a wave.

Maggie: I see that here! How do you catch your wave?

Kym: And you're free if you want to use any of that, quote it…

Maggie: May I?

Kym: You can, sure!

Maggie: Thank you! This is what…

Kym: That was just from the beginning, and it was so exciting for me because my brain was engaged. I loved college even though I went back as an adult. And I always felt like my professor, my senior professor for my senior seminar class had always said to me, you know, my class is very Victorian. You are very Baroque. That's why there is a difference.

Appendix K: Researcher Reflective Journal Excerpts

Saturley Journal

Star Date: 03-04-2015

Re: Methodology Ponderings

Oral history: Here are some thoughts about oral history that I need to process. Because I have engaged an oral history methodology for this research, I feel a deep sense of responsibility to get participant interviews right. After all, this is not just how I am accessing participants' stories, it's a methodology that has such a profound history attached to it. After researching the background of oral history for the methodology section, I discovered how oral history has been used in education to discuss teachers who have worked under apartheid in Africa. Apartheid! That's heavy. It is the historical nature of the methodology that positions educators' stories at that center of inquiry, and for that I am grateful. I think an oral history methodology is a beautiful fit for this study, but the responsibility of accessing, analyzing, and reporting results rests with me.

My oral history haiku:

Oral history
Meaning from experience
Tell me your story

Saturley Journal

Star Date: 03-13-2015

Re: Interview Ponderings

Accessing participant stories: What I mean by accessing participants' stories is how I go about getting them to discuss their experiences. The interview. I enjoy interviewing and have been told I am quite good at it, but I know there are areas I need to monitor. As I discussed in this

dissertation and in previous research, I have a tendency to anticipate participant responses or think ahead in an interview while the person is speaking. This is what Brookfield referred to in his research as having "prescriptive assumptions". In previous interviews I noticed that I wasn't *in the conversation* with the participant. I wasn't truly listening because I knew I could rely on the audio recording to capture each and every word. What I was doing while an interviewee was answering a question is thinking about the next question that I was supposed to ask. Not only is this detrimental to the interview, frankly, it's rude. Let's be clear, if you're not listening to someone, you're not really in the conversation.

The irony of the situation is this: For my dissertation research, I am conducting "conversational interviews" as per Rubin and Rubin. So, I really need to eliminate this behavior from my interview habit. I recall that Janesick writes about developing proper interview habits. I couldn't agree more that you have to sharpen your skills as researcher. Without question, interviewing is an important skill for me to develop if I intend to access lived experience in future research endeavors. That's why it's so important to conduct several interviews prior to doing your dissertation research. I'm glad I did. I'm glad I conducted every interview in my doctoral studies because each one helped me to refine my interviewer skills. Conducting your first formal interview during dissertation is tantamount to researcher malpractice. Dissertation research is absolutely not the time to practice on anyone.

My interview haiku:

In the Interview
Did I listen to your words
Or was I absent

*I noticed something in this reflection. I find myself making references to research literature as I reflect upon the issues that are surfacing during this inquiry. In my reflecting, I've become researcher and writer together.

Saturley Journal

Star Date: 03-15-2015

Re: Interview Ponderings

Kym's interview: Yesterday, I drove down to south Florida to meet with Kym so I could conduct our first interview for this study. What a great way to start the data gathering for this dissertation! Kym is a wonderful person to interview. The conversation, and yes, it was a conversation as per Rubin and Rubin. The conversation went extremely well. The interview went smoothly. I was better prepared than I had ever been for previous interviews, which helped me to stay in the conversation and truly listen to what was being said by the participant. I was "present" for every word of the interview. I heard Kym share her TBAWP experiences without worrying about what I was going to ask next. When I mentioned earlier that I was prepared, what I meant by that was I had reviewed the interview protocol numerous times the night before the interview so I knew the order and content of all the questions. In addition to addressing all the questions on my protocol, I was able to ask Kym several probing questions in response to her recollections.

Just after the interview started, Kym gave me her journal from her 2002 summer institute experience. She was so excited to show it with me. I was honored she felt comfortable enough to share her personal writings from over a decade ago. Kym wrote a poem on the second day of the ISI, which she pointed out to me when she handed me the journal. It was about capturing a wave. She said I could use it in the dissertation, which I probably will. That was such an unexpected surprise in this interview. That, and the fact that I didn't let my mind wander while Kym shared her story. Chalk one up for preparedness!

My haiku about Kym's interview:

You shared openly
And I listened intently
Interview well done

Appendix L: Letter to Kym Sheehan

Re: TBAWP Study

Maggie Saturley <msaturley@mail.usf.edu> Mon, Feb 16, 2015 at 12:13 PM
To: kym.sheehan@[redacted]
Bcc: Maggie Saturley <msaturley@mail.usf.edu>

Hi Kym!

I hope you had a lovely Valentine's Day!

The time has finally arrived... I have received approval from my committee to begin the study! If you are still willing, I would like you to begin the process of choosing potential participants. I have attached a few items to assist in this process. The first is a description of the "snowball" sampling technique I provided to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which outlines the criteria for study inclusion. I have also provided a list of the TC's who attended ISI's between 1998 and 2004. Finally, I have included the Informed Consent Form that I will have participants sign once they agree to participate. The form has a description of the study on it. You do not need to send the form to the TC's. I will do that if the person agrees to participate. I just thought you might like to review the document for the particulars of the study.

FYI... You will choose 3 potential participants to contact (one elementary educator, one secondary educator, and one university educator). You will represent the district level educator.

[redacted] is not available as she participated in my pilot study.

If you need the contact information for anyone on the list, I am sure that Pat will gladly provide that to you. Once you have chosen the potential participants and made contact, please email me their names so that I can anticipate contact from the individuals. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have or to provide you with anything that will assist you with this process. Please know how much I appreciate your help and support with my research!

Many thanks,

Maggie

Margaret H. Saturley
Doctoral Candidate/University Intern Supervisor
Department of Teaching and Learning
College of Education
University of South Florida
Cell: 727.507.1244

3 attachments:
Sheehan Study Information.docx 125K
TCs 1998-2004.docx 84K
Informed Consent - The TBAWP Study.pdf 159K

Appendix M: Permissions to Reprint

Permission to Reprint Figure 3 - National Writing Project Network Sites, p. 49

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Understanding the Effectiveness of the National Writing Project

(Slide presentation)

Authors

Dr. Mark St. John, Dr. Laura Stokes, Inverness Research Inc.

Purpose

This is a slide presentation prepared for the 2011 Spring Meeting of the National Writing Project, held March 31-April 1 in Washington, D.C. The presentation uses data from Summer Institute participant surveys, the annual site profile, the NWP legacy study, and the Local Site Research Initiative to demonstrate the effectiveness of the National Writing Project in providing high quality professional development that translates into improved student writing. The presentation explains that the national network infrastructure and improvement community that the NWP has built up is what enables the more than 200 local sites to develop teacher leadership and serve local teachers in every state. The presentation also explains how the NWP cost-efficiently leverages federal funds to serve the nation's teachers, and explains why federal funding is vitally important to its ability to continue providing services.

Intended Audience

The National Writing Project, Federal, State, and Local Policy Makers, Funders, Educators, Teachers, Reform Leaders, and general public.

Disclaimer

Any and all errors are claimed by the authors of this document, Inverness Research.

Date published

March 2011

Distribution Policy

Inverness Research gives members of the NWP permission to share this presentation or parts of it.

Continued: Permission to Reprint Figure 3 - National Writing Project Network Sites, p. 49
Letter verifying Margaret H. Saturley is a member of the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project, which is a network site of the National Writing Project.

University of
South Florida
College of Education
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Tampa, FL 33620-5650

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(813) 416-9304

E-mail:
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Website:
www.tbawp.com

Tampa Bay Area Writing Project

February 25, 2016

To whom it may concern;

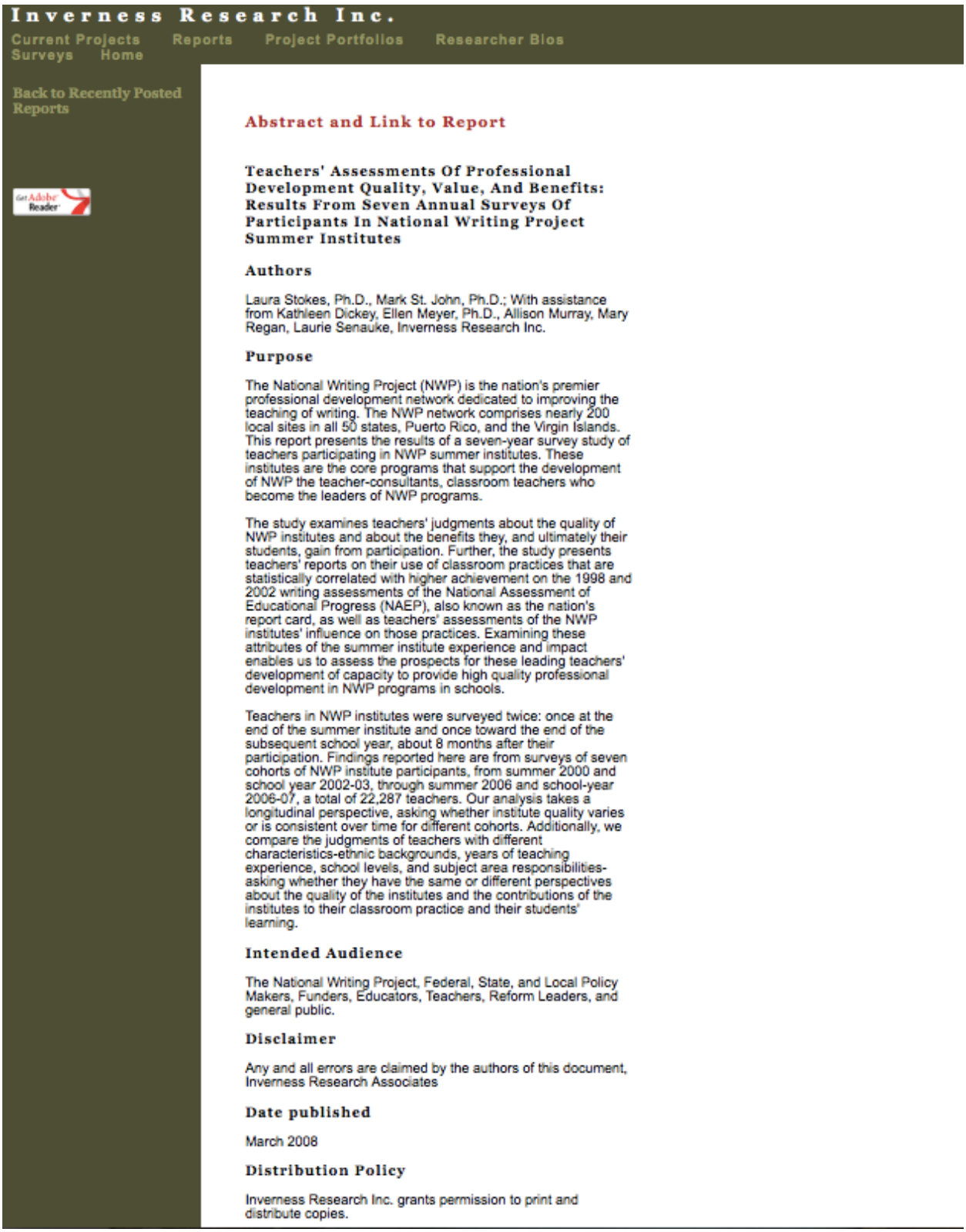
I am writing to confirm that Maggie Saturley is a member of and Teacher Consultant for the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project (TBAWP) and is a member of the National Writing Project (NWP). Maggie attend the 2011 Invitational Summer Institute. She then went on to serve on the Leadership Board and worked as a Facilitator at the 2012 and the 2014 Summer Institutes.

In addition, she co-chaired our 2012 Annual Fall Conference and chaired the event in 2013. We are very fortunate that Maggie is a member of TBAWP. We look forward to her return to the Leadership Team in the very near future.

Sincerely,

Connie Jones
Leadership Council Chair
15042 Shaw Road
Tampa, Florida 33625
(813)416-9305

Permission to Reprint Figure 4 - Seven Year Overall Assessment of Benefits to Teachers, p. 53



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Abstract and Link to Report

Teachers' Assessments Of Professional Development Quality, Value, And Benefits: Results From Seven Annual Surveys Of Participants In National Writing Project Summer Institutes

Authors

Laura Stokes, Ph.D., Mark St. John, Ph.D.; With assistance from Kathleen Dickey, Ellen Meyer, Ph.D., Allison Murray, Mary Regan, Laurie Senauke, Inverness Research Inc.

Purpose

The National Writing Project (NWP) is the nation's premier professional development network dedicated to improving the teaching of writing. The NWP network comprises nearly 200 local sites in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. This report presents the results of a seven-year survey study of teachers participating in NWP summer institutes. These institutes are the core programs that support the development of NWP the teacher-consultants, classroom teachers who become the leaders of NWP programs.

The study examines teachers' judgments about the quality of NWP institutes and about the benefits they, and ultimately their students, gain from participation. Further, the study presents teachers' reports on their use of classroom practices that are statistically correlated with higher achievement on the 1998 and 2002 writing assessments of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the nation's report card, as well as teachers' assessments of the NWP institutes' influence on those practices. Examining these attributes of the summer institute experience and impact enables us to assess the prospects for these leading teachers' development of capacity to provide high quality professional development in NWP programs in schools.

Teachers in NWP institutes were surveyed twice: once at the end of the summer institute and once toward the end of the subsequent school year, about 8 months after their participation. Findings reported here are from surveys of seven cohorts of NWP institute participants, from summer 2000 and school year 2002-03, through summer 2006 and school-year 2006-07, a total of 22,287 teachers. Our analysis takes a longitudinal perspective, asking whether institute quality varies or is consistent over time for different cohorts. Additionally, we compare the judgments of teachers with different characteristics-ethnic backgrounds, years of teaching experience, school levels, and subject area responsibilities-asking whether they have the same or different perspectives about the quality of the institutes and the contributions of the institutes to their classroom practice and their students' learning.

Intended Audience

The National Writing Project, Federal, State, and Local Policy Makers, Funders, Educators, Teachers, Reform Leaders, and general public.

Disclaimer

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Maggie Saturley <msaturley@mail.usf.edu>

Permission to reprint/reproduce

2 messages

Maggie Saturley <msaturley@mail.usf.edu> Wed, Jan 27, 2016 at 3:38 PM
To: cassieq@clemson.edu, Maggie Saturley <msaturley@mail.usf.edu>

January 27, 2016

To: Cassie Quigley, Newsletter Editor for QR SIG

Re: Permission to reproduce poem

Dear Cassie,

I am not sure if you are still the editor of the AERA Qualitative Research SIG Newsletter, but I am hoping you may be able to assist me. I am seeking permission to include in my dissertation a poem I wrote that was published in the fall, 2013 AERA *Qualitative Research SIG Newsletter.* The poem appeared on page 3 and was titled, *A Qualitative Look At Where I'm From*.

If you are not the current editor, could you provide me with the name and email of the person who is so that I may contact her/him regarding permission to reproduce my poem?

Thank you in advance for your time,

Maggie

Margaret H. Saturley
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Teaching and Learning
University of South Florida

Cell: 727.507.1244

Cassie Quigley <cassieq@clemson.edu> Thu, Jan 28, 2016 at 8:51 AM
To: Maggie Saturley <msaturley@mail.usf.edu>

Hello!

Yes, you have permission.
Thank you,
CQ
[Quoted text hidden]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*A Qualitative Look at Where I'm From**

I am from critical friends,
from feedback carousels and sticky notes.
I am from the research paradigms.
(Ontology, epistemology,
they guide my work.)
I am from narrative writings,
the stories
whose messages reflect
my own lived experiences.

I'm from joining in and knowing the I,
from Interviews and Abstracts.
I'm from the IRB's
and the gatekeepers,
from say what you mean and mean what you say.
I'm from Do unto others
as you'd do to me,
golden words to live by.

I'm from collecting data and making meanings,
themes and constant comparisons.
From it's clear as mud
to reading between the lines,
quality indicators and credibility measures.

On my desk is a file,
overflowing with research ideas,
a reminder of important work that must be done.
I am from these moments-
lessons learned in this qualitative course-
a novice researcher searching for meaning.

**Reprinted from* *Saturley, Fall 2013, p. 3.*