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AN EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS' WRITING SELF-EFFICACY, FIRST-GRADE
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND SELF-EFFICACY IN WRITING, AND STUDENTS'
WRITING BEHAVIORS

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS' WRITING SELF-EFFICACY, FIRST-GRADE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND SELF-EFFICACY IN WRITING, AND STUDENTS' WRITING BEHAVIORS

Julie Bridget Mary Dashiell
Old Dominion University, 2014
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Angela Eckhoff

Teachers' self-efficacy has been demonstrated to be an important construct linked to teacher competence (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Graham & Perin, 2007). However, little is known about how teachers think about writing, particularly as it relates to their writing instruction and to writing tasks they assign to their young students. The purpose of this multiple methods inquiry was to explore teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and orientations about writing and to examine if these factors were connected to their writing instruction. This study also aimed to examine if students' self-efficacy and attitudes towards writing are connected to their classroom writing behaviors. Data was collected from two first-grade teachers and 42 first-grade students in a suburban elementary school. The results indicated that both teachers had high self-efficacies for teaching writing, employed a combined teaching approach using process and traditional instruction, and assigned writing tasks were in line with their self-efficacy beliefs and orientations. Analysis of the data revealed that 90% of the students had positive attitudes towards writing in their elementary classrooms and the students' classroom writing behaviors were consistent with their reported survey responses. Data analysis also revealed that numerous factors (e.g. motivation, environment) contribute to the complex task of teaching writing to young students and that these factors are seemingly connected to students' writing self-efficacy and their classroom writing behaviors.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Mike; my children Brooke and Michael; my mother Lillie; my mother-in-law Kitty; and my dear friends Anna, Lynda, Christy, and Heather, all of whom gave me their unconditional love, support, and patience throughout this study. They sacrificed of themselves so I could pursue my dreams. Without their love and support, this journey would have been impossible.

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CHAPTER 1

AN EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS' WRITING SELF-EFFICACY, FIRST-GRADE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND SELF-EFFICACY IN WRITING, AND STUDENTS' WRITING BEHAVIORS

Writing is a central part of professional, community, and social pursuits. The ability to write is a vital skill in the workplace; many employees are expected to write reports, submit clearly written documents, create electronic messages, and prepare presentations for businesses (Cutler & Graham, 2008). A person's ability to write well is a crucial component of communicating effectively to diverse audiences. Writing skills are an important foundation for critical thinking skills and are essential for continued academic success (Berninger et al., 2006; Graham, Berninger, & Fan, 2007). Furthermore, writing is a means of communication that allows one to learn, influence others, express oneself, and build knowledge (Graham et al., 2007). Writing is an important tool for learning and self-expression. People who do not have sufficient writing skills may be at a disadvantage and may face limited educational opportunities that limit their future employment opportunities (US Department of Education Report, 2012).

Writing ability is a complex skill and is central to the development of early literacy skills. Young children need to develop an early foundation in writing to communicate their ideas in a proficient and effective manner. It remains a necessary skill after the completion of elementary and secondary school. For students, writing skills are often used as determinates for university acceptance, and these skills continue to be evaluated throughout their academic life.

The concern is that many students are not strong writers. National estimates of

students' writing ability in the United States suggest a considerable need for improvement. Results from a 2002 study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which reports on national writing data from fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students, reported that 72% of fourth-grade students were unable to write at the Proficient level (i.e., a level that displays mastery of grade-level expectations) (Persky, Daane, & Jin, 2003). In 2007, the NAEP reported that 67% of eighth- and 76% of twelfth-grade students were unable to write at the Proficient Level (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008). The 2011 Abridged NAEP Writing Framework and Assessment defined the Proficient level as "a solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter" (p. 11). Moreover, the quality of students' writing over the past two decades has shown little improvement (Conley, 2005; NAEP, 2008). Even with these glaringly poor writing performance results, writing has not been a focus for school reform, and only 20 minutes on average is spent writing each day in the classroom (Cutler & Graham, 2008).

The National Commission on Writing (NCW) (2003) noted that the development of effective writing skills is a fundamental aspect of elementary and secondary education. Research has shown that writing can enhance content learning (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2004; Graham & Perin, 2007c). However, if students are not strong writers, they are less likely to use writing to support and extend their learning in content classrooms than their more capable classmates (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Failure to acquire the writing abilities necessary for acceptable coursework can put children at risk

of behavioral problems, enduring school failure, and dropping out of school (Berninger et al., 2006).

Teachers play a substantial and influential role in students' achievement and the successful development of students' literacy skills (Darling-Hammond, 2002).

Unfortunately, many teachers report feeling less prepared to teach writing compared to other subjects (Grisham & Wolsey, 2005). Teachers' sense of self-efficacy has been related to their behavior in the classroom and to student outcomes, such as students' self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989). To raise achievement levels in writing and increase students' academic performance, students need to believe that they are capable writers and be confident in their abilities as writers. Teachers need to believe that they can fulfill the complex task of teaching writing to young students. Studies by Chapman (1988) and Polychroni, Koukoura, and Anagnostou (2006) found that students with writing difficulties often have low self-efficacy.

It seems important that elementary educators be fully aware of students in their classrooms who have writing difficulties and that educators provide an appropriate means for identifying, addressing, and directly targeting the issue of writing self-efficacy and writing attitudes; these constructs might have a connection to students' confidence and achievement in their writing. This study explored teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices and examines how these factors might be connected to first-grade students' writing self-efficacy and attitudes about their own writing. Furthermore, this study examined how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices align with their approach to the types of writing assignments given in

their classrooms. The information garnered from the results of this self-efficacy study can help inform educators who teach writing to young students.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) (see Figure 1). The theory is composed of four processes of goal realization: self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). Each of these four components affects motivation and goal attainment (Bandura, 1995). This study focused on the self-efficacy process of goal realization in Bandura's SCT to investigate if a connection exists between first-grade teachers' writing self-efficacy, first-grade students' attitude toward writing, and students' classroom writing behaviors.

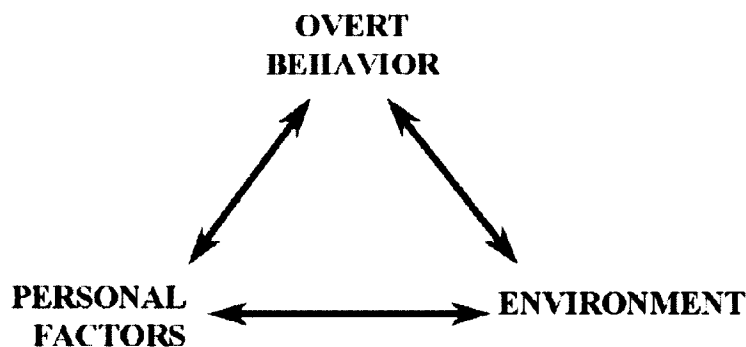


Figure 1. Bandura's social cognitive theory model.

Self-efficacy has been defined as a person's belief in the probability of accomplishing a goal (Bandura, 1996). According to Axtell and Parker (2003), "self-efficacy refers to peoples' judgments about their capability to perform particular tasks. Task-related self-efficacy increases the effort and persistence towards challenging tasks,

and therefore increases the likelihood that they will be completed” (p. 114). A person’s self-efficacy beliefs affect how that person thinks, acts, and feels (Bandura, 1996). Self-efficacy beliefs can affect what people do and choose to do; these beliefs center on what people believe about what they can accomplish and can act as an intermediary between people’s beliefs and their behaviors (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy research has demonstrated that students are more likely to engage in activities if they have high self-efficacy and are less likely to engage in those activities they do not have high self-efficacy in accomplishing (Van der Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett, 2002). Furthermore, self-efficacy is comprised of self-efficacy expectations and outcome expectancies. A self-efficacy expectation is a person’s belief in his or her ability to perform a behavior successfully (Bandura, 1986). An outcome expectancy is the belief that the behavior will result in particular consequences (Bandura, 1986).

Teacher self-efficacy stems from the self-efficacy component of Bandura’s (1986) SCT. Teacher self-efficacy is a two-dimensional construct that includes personal teaching self-efficacy (a teacher’s belief in his or her teaching effectiveness) and teaching outcome expectancy (a teacher’s belief that effective teaching can result in positive student learning outcomes in spite of external factors) (Enochs, Smith, & Huinker, 2000; Swars, Hart, Smith, Smith, & Tolar, 2007). According to Bandura (1986), these two dimensions should be viewed separately because a teacher might believe that effective teaching leads to student learning but may be unsure about whether he or she has the necessary abilities for effective teaching. Researchers have recognized that teachers’ self-efficacy, in addition to teachers’ behavior, is associated with students’ achievements and motivation (Henson, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teacher self-efficacy is

associated with a teacher's resilience, persistence, and effort (Pendergrast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007); the use of a variety of instructional strategies (Riggs & Enochs, 1990); and the use of student-centered strategies (Czerniak & Schriver, 1994).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy and Writing

Self-efficacy beliefs are very important to the act of writing. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy beliefs can affect health, cognitive factors, career development, and academics. Since Bandura suggested that self-efficacy can affect academics, it may affect the perceived usefulness of writing and writing apprehension, both of which are key factors in terms of writing performance (Pajares & Valiante, 1999).

According to Pajares and Valiante (2001), self-efficacy beliefs affect what students do by influencing the choices they make, the effort they expend, the persistence and perseverance they exert in the face of adversity, and the anxiety they experience. Believing that they are capable writers, “for example, will serve students well when they attempt to write an essay, not because the belief itself increases writing competence, but because it helps create greater interest in writing, more sustained effort, and greater perseverance and resiliency when obstacles get in the way of the task” (Pajares & Valiante, 2001, p. 353).

To date, few studies have examined the potential connection between teachers' writing self-efficacy and young students' attitudes and self-efficacy towards their own writing. Additionally, fewer studies have simultaneously examined first-grade teachers' writing self-efficacy, first-grade students' attitudes towards and self-efficacy in writing, and students' classroom writing behaviors. It is vital to investigate if teachers' writing

self-efficacy affects first-grade students' quantity and quality of writing because of the importance of effective writing skills, which are necessary for a child's future success in school and in the workplace.

Teachers' Self-efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy has been defined as a teacher's belief that she or he can influence desired student outcomes even when teaching the most difficult students (Coladarci & Brenton, 2001; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005; Soodak & Podell, 1996; Wheatley, 2005). It is important for teachers to understand student self-efficacy because once positive or negative self-efficacy is established it can be difficult to reverse (Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers who have a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to persist and build on the motivation those beliefs support and, fueled by subsequent successes, ultimately continue to nurture high self-efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Conversely, teachers who have weaker self-efficacy beliefs are likely to reinforce and strengthen these self-efficacy beliefs through self-defeating actions. Self-efficacy beliefs can become a self-fulfilling prophecy that can validate beliefs of being a competent or incompetent educator.

According to Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001), teacher self-efficacy is subject-matter specific. For example, middle school and high school teachers may be confident in their abilities to teach in their areas of expertise and/or interest, thus resulting in subsequent student successes. However, elementary school teachers are responsible for teaching all academic subjects and do not necessarily have expertise in all the academic areas they teach. Early childhood teachers may feel inadequate when teaching outside

their comfort zones for certain subjects, such as writing, which can lead to dismal student results. Usher and Pajares (2008) suggested the need for an increased understanding of the roles teachers and other students play in the development of a student's confidence to perform academic tasks. Understanding how to nurture and support high self-efficacy beliefs with regard to literacy instruction would be very beneficial. For this study, teacher self-efficacy is defined as a teacher's "judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783).

Student Self-efficacy and Attitudes towards Writing

A person's belief in his or her ability to write is essential to writing motivation and performance (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Pajares, 2003). Self-efficacy beliefs can influence the degree to which a particular student will succeed or progress in a given subject area. Self-efficacy can affect a person's actions, the determination put into activities, persistence on a task, perseverance in the face of difficulties, and eventual accomplishments (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Pajares & Valiante, 1997). A student who possesses low self-efficacy in writing and a negative attitude toward writing might be more likely to give up when faced with difficulties, might put less effort into their work, and might experience more failures in writing.

The level of a person's self-efficacy beliefs can have a positive or negative effect on achievement. Bandura (1986) contended that students who display high self-efficacy tend to demonstrate strong achievement, while students who display low self-efficacy demonstrate weaker achievement. This relationship between high and low self-efficacies and achievements was also shown in previous research (e.g., Pajares, 1997). A student

who possesses positive self-efficacy may tend to view demanding tasks as a challenge, while students with negative self-efficacy may tend to avoid tasks they perceive as too challenging (Bandura, 1994; Kim & Lorschach, 2005). Those students may give up easily when faced with difficult challenges (Bandura, 1997; Kim & Lorschach, 2005).

Role of Self-efficacy and Attitude on Quantity and Quality of Students' Writing

Young children's teachers are in a unique position. They play a vital role in the development and enhancement of writing skills by providing supportive and nurturing learning environments for their young students. They focus on inspiring children to write by offering interesting, authentic, and meaningful literacy experiences. It is essential that teachers establish and strengthen positive learning environments in their schools that nurture writing development and self-efficacy in writing so students will not give up. Teachers have the potential to directly affect not only the quantity and quality of young children's writing abilities but also their self-efficacy in their own writing abilities. According to LeVine (2008), "the more children write, the more proficient they will become" (p. 8). By helping students become more proficient in writing, teachers prepare them for the fast-paced and complex world of the future.

In a review of the literature on self-efficacy beliefs, Pajares (2003) found that self-efficacy beliefs and writing performance are positively related. Students who have high writing self-efficacy beliefs and positive attitudes towards writing spend more time on writing tasks, are motivated to earn good grades and participate in writing tasks, are willing to try any given writing task, and are more willing to take risks than those with low self-efficacy (Kim & Lorschach, 2005). Students with a higher sense of writing self-efficacy also demonstrate a greater degree of writing development than those with lower

self-efficacy for writing; in addition, students who demonstrate a greater degree of writing development are likely to have more enhanced self-efficacy beliefs (Kim & Lorschbach, 2005).

Hidi, Ainley, Berndorff, and Del Favero (2007) found that students' self-efficacy for writing is positively related to the quality and length of their written compositions. Their results suggest that when a student feels more confidence towards writing, their compositions will be longer and better. Students who demonstrate poorer writing achievements possess lower self-efficacy than students who demonstrate higher writing achievements (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995). Since elementary schools today are expected to raise young students' writing proficiency levels, it is important to examine the potential connection between students' self-efficacy in and attitudes towards their own writing and how those factors might relate to young students' writing.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

Bandura (1977) found that self-efficacy is inter-connected with teachers' and students' success. However, few studies have attempted to simultaneously link teachers' self-efficacy, students' attitudes towards writing, and students' writing behaviors. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the potential connection between teachers' writing self-efficacy, first-grade students' attitudes towards and self-efficacy in writing, and students' classroom writing behaviors. This study built on previous research linking self-efficacy beliefs to performance, attitudes to performance, and self-efficacy beliefs to attitudes (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Graham et al., 2007; Hidi, Berndorff, & Ainley, 2002; Knudson, 1995; Pajares, 1997, 2003). In addition, this study examined the links among these constructs. The following research questions were examined in this study:

1. What are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in first-grade classrooms?
2. How do first-grade students' writing self-efficacy and attitudes about their own writing affect their classroom writing behaviors?
3. How do teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices align with their approaches to the types of writing assignments given in their classrooms?

Study Overview and Methods

This study used a multiple methods design that utilizes in-depth measures with a small sample. The study contained qualitative and quantitative components. Post-positivism is a methodological approach that encourages the use of multiple methods. Therefore, a post-positivist lens was applied to the study design. The post-positivism theory asserts that research is considered scientific if internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity is addressed. Furthermore, the post-positivism theory asserts that the experience (writing self-efficacy) being researched can be directly and/or indirectly measured (Patton, 2002; Ponterotto, 2005). The researcher believed a post-positivism focus would allow an inquiry, through structured methods, into the degree to which the phenomenon of writing self-efficacy can be measured. The teachers and students involved in the study were from two intact groups. For this study, two first-grade classes from a Catholic school in a southeastern city in Virginia participated; the participants from these two classes included two first-grade teachers and 42 students.

Throughout the study, the researcher collected writing samples from each participating student. Additionally, three students' writing portfolios were randomly collected from each participating teacher's classroom. The portfolios were used for

content analysis to examine the types of assignments given to first-grade students in each of the teacher's classrooms. The Writing Attitudes Survey (WAS) (Kear, Coffman, McKenna, & Ambrosio, 2000) was used to determine the first-grade students' attitudes towards their own writing.

The data collected for teachers included teacher interviews, classroom observations, a writing self-efficacy questionnaire, a writing orientations questionnaire, and a writing beliefs questionnaire. The Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW) (Graham, Harris, Fink, & MacArthur, 2001) was used to determine each teacher's self-efficacy in writing instruction. The Writing Orientation Scale (WOS) (Graham et al., 2001) was used to assess teachers' beliefs about the role of explicit instruction, informal teaching methods for writing instruction, and their expectations for accuracy in students' writing. The Teacher Classroom Writing Practices Survey (TCWPS) (Graham et al., 2001) was utilized to determine how frequently each teacher uses specific writing activities and instructional procedures in their current classrooms.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nearly \$3.1 billion is spent annually in the United States on writing remediation (NCW, 2004). Findings from the NAEP (Persky et al., 2003) showed that writing from two-thirds or more of students tested in grades four, eight, and twelve scored below the respective grade-level proficiencies in writing. As these reports indicate, the ability to write is an important variable for a student's success in school and in the future marketplace.

The ability to write well allows future employment and promotional opportunities at work (NCW, 2005); increases students' chances of attending and being successful in college (Cutler & Graham, 2008); and enables students to extend learning content in the classroom (Bangert-Drowns et al., 2004; Graham & Perin, 2007). In classrooms where writing reports and taking written tests are the main avenues for assessing student progress, young children without adequate writing skills will be at a disadvantage and their grades are likely to suffer (Graham, 2006). The NCW (2003) reported that if students are to be successful in the classroom and in the future, writing needs to be positioned "squarely in the center of the school agenda" (p. 3).

As previously mentioned, writing skills are important for success in school and beyond. Writing is also a vital factor in facilitating young students' growth as readers (Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000). The ability to write well is a powerful instrument for students' self-expression and the examination of their ideas (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Additionally, writing is an effective way for educators to evaluate their students' knowledge (Graham & Harris, 2000). Although writing achievement in school is

important, it is a complex and difficult subject for teachers to teach and for students to learn. Teachers have reported feeling less prepared to teach writing and teach it well compared to other subjects (Grisham & Wolsey, 2005).

Since writing is one of the most crucial outcomes of formal education, it is important to examine and understand the factors affecting writing development and writing achievement in school. The purpose of this study was to explore self-efficacy beliefs because these beliefs may affect effective instruction with young children in the domain of writing and, therefore, may affect students' writing behaviors and writing achievement. The aim of this study was to deepen the field's understanding of teacher self-efficacy and orientations regarding writing instruction, student attitudes towards and self-efficacy in writing, and students' writing behaviors. This was accomplished through an examination of the potential connections between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and orientations towards writing and by examining students' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs towards their own writing.

Chapter Overview

The studies included in the literature review examined young children's attitudes and self-efficacy towards their own writing, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, and teachers' orientations related to writing in an early childhood classroom. The criteria for inclusion also required that studies be discussed in predominately peer-reviewed research articles published between 2000 and 2012. Although priority was placed on studies published within the last 12 years, earlier studies were selected if they pioneered a new path of research, offered a view distinct from the existing literature, or were often cited as important to the field of writing and self-efficacy.

This chapter includes four overall sections discussing the following topics: (a) a

theoretical study framework; (b) background information on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and classroom writing practices and on measuring teachers' self-efficacy; (c) the roles of self-efficacy and attitude in students' writing as well as measuring student attitudes and self-efficacy in writing; and (d) young children's writing development and challenges with the writing process and the potential connection between the complexities of writing tasks and students' writing self-efficacy. Each section will summarize a number of individual studies that have contributed to an understanding of the core components supporting the theoretical foundation of this study. The chapter summary will synthesize the literature review and provide a foundation for the methodological approach proposed in Chapter 3.

Several questions were presented in this study to provide a better understanding of the potential connection between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and orientations regarding student writing, students' attitudes towards and self-efficacy in writing, and students' classroom writing behaviors. The three research questions examined (1) teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in first-grade classrooms; (2) how first-grade students' writing self-efficacy and attitudes about their own writing and the potential connection to their classroom writing behaviors; and (3) how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices align with their approaches to the types of writing assignments given in their classrooms. A systematic review of the research literature provided background information for the research questions and addressed the study questions. A post-positivism theoretical lens was utilized for the methodology design and is presented in the next chapter.

Theoretical Framework

A Socio-Cognitive Perspective

Because this study aimed to examine self-efficacy beliefs, it was necessary to incorporate a socio-cognitive perspective. Albert Bandura (1977, 1986) was the first to propose a socio-cognitive perspective regarding self-efficacy within the social cognitive theory (SCT). The SCT emphasizes that learning occurs in a social context and postulates that much of what a student learns increases through observation. A socio-cognitive perspective has previously been utilized by researchers interested in understanding classroom learning, motivation, and achievement (Pajares, 1996; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994, 1998).

The SCT contains a few important assumptions about behavior and learning. One of the assumptions in the SCT is that environmental, personal, and behavioral factors influence each other in a bi-directional, reciprocating manner (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 2001). According to Bandura (1977, 1986, 2001), this means an individual's daily functioning is a result of a constant interaction between contextual, cognitive, and behavioral influences. For example, classroom learning is influenced by dynamics within the academic environment. Simultaneously, learning is affected by students' own thoughts and self-beliefs and by their interpretation of the classroom context (Bandura, 2001).

Self-efficacy has also become an important aspect of the SCT. According to Bandura (1986), if individuals do not believe that their actions will create the effect they desire, they will not be motivated to act or persist in the face of difficulty, especially with a challenging, complex task such as writing. Bandura (1986) considered individuals as self-regulating rather than as being controlled by environmental forces. How people act

can often be better predicted by their self-efficacy beliefs and therefore by what they are capable of accomplishing. Bandura (1986) further argued that “educational practices should be gauged not only by the skills and knowledge they impart for present use but also by what they do to children’s beliefs about their capabilities, which affects how they approach the future” (p. 417).

Bandura (1977, 2004, 2006) asserted that self-efficacy is an important resource in an individual’s personal development and change. If a person wants to find success in a world filled with challenges, he or she needs to continually evaluate their capabilities, thoughts, and goals and make effective decisions to regulate their behavior appropriately (Bandura, 2001, 2006). Bandura (2006) further assumed that if a person does not believe he or she can create change, there will be little motivation to persist in realizing a particular goal.

Bandura (1981) also proposed that a person’s feelings of self-efficacy vary from one situation to another. Studies have supported Bandura’s view by showing that teachers’ feelings of self-efficacy depend on the subject and type of instructional activities teachers utilize in the classroom (Benz, Bradley, Alderman, & Flowers, 1992; Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992; Ross, Cousins, & Gaddalla, 1996). More importantly, studies have found that teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are not only related to teachers’ instructional practices but also to students’ academic progress (Pajares, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

Teachers’ self-efficacy has been recognized as a variable in individual practices and students’ outcomes (Graham et al., 2001); therefore, it is important to investigate if teachers’ self-efficacy affects first-grade students’ outcomes, specifically in the domain

of writing. Although there has been an increased focus on the importance of teacher self-efficacy, the construct continues to remain largely unexplained (Henson, 2002; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Some potential factors for this might be researchers' debates on whether teacher self-efficacy can actually be measured, if it is context specific, and how to validate a construct based on beliefs and feelings (Henson, 2002). The aim of this study was to provide a better understanding of and help validate the construct of teacher self-efficacy using multiple methods to analyze and assess this complex construct.

It is important to examine teachers' self-efficacy with young students, but it is equally important to examine how teachers' self-efficacy might affect students' self-efficacy and attitudes towards writing and how students' self-efficacy can potentially be connected to their students' writing behaviors. Students' self-efficacy about their capabilities and writing skills seem fundamental to their eventual success as writers. Since writing is a critical component of literacy, it is imperative that research studies focus more on examining what role writing self-efficacy may have on young students' writing achievements. In this study, students' writing self-efficacy was defined as students' judgments of their confidence that they possess various composition, grammar, usage, and mechanical skills in writing (Pajares, 2001). The operational definition of teachers' writing self-efficacy that was used for this study is teachers' individual beliefs in their capabilities to perform specific teaching tasks at a specified level of quality in respect to writing and its demands (Dellinger, Bobbett, Olivier, & Ellet, 2008).

Teachers

Teacher Self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1986), possessing the necessary skills and knowledge to

perform a task does not guarantee that the task will be performed effectively. Effective action is contingent on one's perceived self-efficacy, i.e., one's judgments that the knowledge and skills needed to accomplish the task can be organized successfully under various and changing circumstances. When teachers have confidence that they can perform the actions leading to student learning, their self-efficacy becomes a powerful construct; this is one of the few teacher characteristics that reliably predicts teacher practice and student outcomes (Ross et al., 1996; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Teachers who possess strong self-efficacy are shown to be (a) better organized (Allinder, 1994); (b) more willing to try new means to address their students' needs (Stein & Wang, 1988); (c) less critical of students when they make mistakes (Ashton & Webb, 1986); (d) more confident in their teaching (Guskey, 1984); (e) more likely to use student-centered learning (Rose & Medley, 1981); and (f) more likely to give guidance and feedback to struggling students (Massengill-Shaw, Dvorak, & Bates, 2007). Research has also demonstrated that students are less likely to be referred for special education services if their teacher possesses high self-efficacy (Podell & Soodak, 1993). Furthermore, teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to use positive strategies for classroom management (Emmer & Hickman, 1990), provide higher quality instruction to their students (Rubeck & Enochs, 1991), plan more (Allinder, 1994), and work longer and harder with struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Research has shown that teachers' sense of self-efficacy is of great importance in an early childhood classroom. However, teachers' sense of self-efficacy has, surprisingly, been largely ignored in research on young students' writing.

Role of Self-efficacy in Effective Instruction

Effective instruction in writing requires more than possessing knowledge and skills. Effective instruction is also contingent on teachers' confidence that they can affect student learning (Raudenbush et al., 1992). Teacher self-efficacy is an important construct to examine because it influences persistence, effort, goals, and the overall quality of instruction (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Moreover, teacher self-efficacy in writing can potentially have a powerful effect on students. Woolfolk Hoy, Hoy, and Davis (2009) proposed that teachers' self-efficacy decisions are the result of their personal judgments of the factors that make achieving a particular task, such as teaching writing, easy or difficult. According to Woolfolk Hoy et al. (2009), when teachers' self-efficacy leads to more persistence and effort, it can then lead to a teacher performing better and thus to higher self-efficacy. However, the reverse is also true: a teacher possessing lower self-efficacy can lead to less-effective teaching outcomes, decreased effort, and further diminished teacher self-efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000).

As previously mentioned, past research on the construct of teacher self-efficacy in writing has been recognized as an important variable accounting for individual differences in teachers' strategies for writing instruction, their assessments of students' writings, and how they plan and implement writing for their students (Graham et al., 2000; Pajares, 1996; Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006). Literature on teacher self-efficacy has demonstrated that teachers who possess high self-efficacy in their abilities to influence student learning and outcomes tend to be

more prepared to try new instructional strategies and are more likely to apply more challenging strategies to achieve their goals in their classrooms (Bruce, 2008).

As these studies have shown, teachers can have a powerful influence on students' motivation, learning, and achievement in writing. Therefore, it seems reasonable to examine teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about writing as an important variable in examining first-grade students' writing self-efficacy and writing attitudes. Furthermore, it seems plausible to examine how teachers' self-efficacy may play a role in their instructional decisions and assessments of students' writing performance as well as student writing outcomes.

Teacher Orientations and Beliefs

As the literature implies, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs appear to affect their teaching. When teachers believe they can implement and teach a particular lesson well, they often exhibit teaching behaviors that produce positive effects on their students' motivation to learn and academic achievement (Graham et al., 2001). However, according to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy beliefs are context-bound, while theoretical orientations are more stable across subject areas. Teachers' suppositions about how students learn and the best ways to teach appear to influence the instructional materials selected and the procedures implemented (Fitzgerald, 1999). Observations have shown that what teachers choose to teach and how they implement lessons are mainly shaped by their theoretical orientations (Graham et al., 2002; Lipson, Mosenthal, Daniels, & Woodside-Jiron, 2000). Teachers' beliefs and actions are complex because of factors such as (a) their knowledge of child development, writing skills acquisition, and diverse pedagogical strategies; (b) their values associated with literacy, which are shaped by

personal experiences and influential others; and (c) contextual variables, including students' abilities and available school resources (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

Unfortunately, there is a paucity of research that has simultaneously focused on teachers' theoretical orientations and teaching self-efficacy for writing instruction in early elementary classrooms.

Role of Teacher Self-efficacy on Student Achievement and Student Self-efficacy

Studies on student achievement have demonstrated that student achievement in other domains, such as science and math, is correlated with teacher self-efficacy (Coladarci & Brenton, 2001; Shell et al., 1995; Soodak & Podell, 1996; Woolfolk, 1998). Additional studies on teacher self-efficacy have also demonstrated that teacher self-efficacy can consistently predict learner outcomes (Ross et al., 1996; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). According to Woolfolk Hoy et al. (2009), if teachers have high self-efficacy, they may work harder and persevere longer with students who may be difficult to teach writing skills to because of their beliefs in their own skills and in their students' writing skills. Ross (1998) suggested that when students possess higher abilities and are well behaved and when teachers teach in their area of expertise, teacher self-efficacy in teaching a specific subject is higher. Conversely, if teachers possess low self-efficacy, i.e., in writing, they may be more critical of a student's mistakes, may work less with struggling students, and may refer students experiencing difficulty in writing for special education evaluations more often than teachers with high self-efficacy in writing (Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005). Teacher self-efficacy in writing is an important construct to investigate due to its potential influence on effective and high-quality instruction, on students' effort and persistence on writing tasks, and on students' writing outcomes.

Measuring Teacher Self-efficacy, Orientations, Beliefs, and Classroom Practices

Although the previously mentioned studies on teacher self-efficacy demonstrated the potential importance of the construct for students, it has been difficult for researchers during recent decades to examine the construct. The first teacher self-efficacy measures were grounded in social learning theory (Rotter, 1966). Research on teachers' self-efficacy increased when the RAND organization developed a scale based on Rotter's theoretical base of social learning theory. The RAND researchers asked teachers to answer two items. These two items were intended to assess teachers' beliefs about their abilities to surmount environmental factors, such as a child's home environment, and to assess teachers' beliefs about their personal abilities to teach students who were experiencing difficulties (Armor et al., 1976). Researchers were worried about the reliability of the RAND scale and decided to develop measures that were longer, more comprehensive, and more detailed. Although many researchers have designed teacher self-efficacy instruments, numerous issues with past and current measures for teacher self-efficacy still remain.

Some researchers have questioned the reliability and validity of existing teacher self-efficacy measures, disagreed over the conceptualization of the construct of teacher self-efficacy, and questioned the extent to which teacher self-efficacy can transfer across contexts (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Researchers do agree that teachers' self-efficacy is situation-specific. However, the appropriate level of specificity to be measured in teacher self-efficacy is less clear. For example, is teacher self-efficacy specific to teaching writing, more specific to teaching voice in writing, or more specific to teaching punctuation? Researchers have noted that the level of specificity is one of the

most problematic areas in motivational and cognitive theories that propose domain specificity (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Other issues associated with some of the measures include the failure to measure, analyze, and conceptualize the different aspects associated with the task of teaching (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001); multiple, differing variations in the operational definitions of the teacher self-efficacy construct (Denzine, Cooney, & McKenzie, 2005; Pajares, 1992; Tschannen Moran et al., 1998); and the failure to look at the context or situation-specific nature of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (Goddard et al., 2000; Pajaras, 1992).

Even with revised versions of teacher self-efficacy scales, a gap continues to exist in the research on these scales; this gap means that examinations of the domain-specific context of writing in an elementary classroom setting are missing. If measures of teacher self-efficacy are to be generalizable, the measuring instrument should include items focusing on teachers' assessments of the tasks and activities they are asked to perform in the classroom. It is also vital that a teacher self-efficacy measure contains items that can assess personal competence and examine tasks in terms of the constraints and resources in particular teaching contexts (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Strong measures must be utilized to help measure teacher self-efficacy beliefs and orientations regarding writing instruction to better understand these constructs.

This study utilized the Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW) (Graham et al., 2001). The TSW was used to measure teachers' sense of self-efficacy in writing instruction. The TSW is a 16-item scale based on Gibson and Demo's (1984) more general Teacher Efficacy Scale, which assessed personal and general teaching self-efficacy. This scale was utilized because of its internal consistency reliability, which

yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .84 for personal teaching self-efficacy and .69 for general teaching self-efficacy (Graham et al., 2001). The Writing Orientation Scale (WOS) (Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Fink, 2002) was utilized to assess teachers' beliefs about writing instruction. To gain information about the frequency of the specific writing activities and instructional activities teachers report using in their classrooms, the Teacher Survey of Classroom Writing Practices Scale (TSCWPS) (Cutler & Graham, 2008) was utilized. These scales were chosen because they were found to be strong measures for each of these constructs.

Students

Role of Attitudes in Writing

According to the literature, when writers determine their goals for writing, their attitudes and beliefs can affect the progress and success of their writing assignment (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Graham et al., 2007). Writing attitudes include emotional dispositions involving how the act of writing makes the student feel, with feelings ranging from happy to unhappy (Graham et al., 2007). Research studies have established the positive relationship between positive writing attitudes and writing success with primary-aged students (Graham et al., 2007; Kear et al., 2000; Zumbrunn, Bruning, Kauffman, & Hayes, 2010). Students' attitudes have been theorized to be along a range of extremes from positive to negative (Graham et al., 2007; Kear et al., 2000). Likert-type scales have often been used in research to measure students' writing attitudes (Graham et al., 2007; Kear et al., 2000).

In a study by McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995), students who displayed a positive attitude toward writing were more likely to write more often and expend more effort on writing tasks than their peers who held negative attitudes toward the same

writing assignments. One reason for this finding might be that writing attitudes affect cognitive processing (Graham, 2006). It is plausible that having a negative writing attitude is more cognitively demanding and therefore requires more cognitive resources than having a positive attitude (Perkun, 1992). This issue is important for researchers and early childhood educators to ponder because writing is a cognitively demanding process, and this issue may lead to less writing success (Hayes, 1996).

Studies have also shown that students' writing attitudes can influence writing self-efficacy. Researchers have shown a link between writing self-efficacy and writing performance (Jones, 2008; Pajares & Johnson, 1996; Pajares & Valiante, 1997; Shell et al., 1995). In a study examining the positive relationship between students' writing attitudes and writing self-efficacy beliefs, Zumbrunn et al. (2010) observed a positive and significant relationship between elementary students' writing attitudes and their writing self-efficacies. The study found that students who possessed more positive attitudes toward writing had higher self-efficacy beliefs than their peers who exhibited more negative attitudes toward writing.

The findings from these studies imply that writing attitudes can influence students' perceptions of writing competence and subsequent achievements (Kear et al., 2000; Knudson, 1995). A study by Graham et al. (2007) on writing attitudes and writing achievement in elementary students with average skills and abilities found that students who possess more positive writing attitudes have greater writing achievement scores than their peers with less favorable attitudes toward writing. In a similar study with first and third graders, Graham et al. (2007) found that writing attitudes significantly predict writing achievement. Although these studies demonstrate how students' writing attitudes

can predict writing achievement, there is a need to simultaneously examine how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and orientations towards writing instruction may or may not affect students' writing attitudes and writing self-efficacy. This study operationally defined students' writing attitudes as "an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy" (Graham et al., 2007, p. 518). This examination of students' writing attitudes as they relate to students' writing outcomes is important because of the lack of attention this construct has received in research literature on writing in early childhood classrooms (Graham et al., 2007).

Role of Self-efficacy in Writing

Over the past 35 years, research has generally focused on either the composing aspects of writing or on writing as a socio-cultural context (e.g., Graham, 2006; Prior, 2006; Schultz & Fecho, 2000). In the past 10 years, more research has started to focus on variables, such as self-efficacy, in the writing process (Klassen, 2002; Pajares, 2003). Research has shown that writers with high self-efficacy beliefs have greater writing achievement than their peers (Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Shell et al., 1995). Other studies have also found that writing performance is related to writing self-efficacy beliefs (McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985; Meier, McCarthy, & Schmeck, 1984; Pajares, 2003; Sell et al., 1989). Although numerous studies have demonstrated that self-efficacy predicts writing performance in older elementary students (Knudson, 1995; Madigan, Linton, & Johnston, 1996; Pajares, 2003), few studies were found showing that self-efficacy predicts writing performance in first-grade students.

Recent studies have continued to demonstrate that self-efficacy in writing is considered a reliable predictor of students' writing performance (Jones, 2008; Pajares &

Johnson, 1996; Pajares & Valiante, 1997). Research with college students established that writing self-efficacy beliefs correlate with students' writing performance and that writing self-efficacy is related to students' achievement goal orientations (Pajares, Britner, & Valiante, 2000; Pajares & Johnson, 1994), perceived value of writing (Shell et al., 1995), and students' use of strategies during the writing process (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). Results from these studies imply that self-efficacy can be the mediator between what students believe they can write and what they can actually write.

One issue demonstrated by studies with middle school students is that students' self-efficacy and confidence in writing decreases as students progress in school (Pajares & Viliante, 1999; Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver, Reuman, & Midgley, 1991). This growing lack of confidence in writing can affect students' writing achievement. As previously mentioned, writing has an important role because it is used across all areas of the academic curriculum. According to Pajares and Valiante (2001), students' lack of belief that they can accomplish specific academic tasks may explain why students' academic outcomes differ even though they might have the skills to accomplish the tasks. Bandura (1984) described self-efficacy as a mediating mechanism and posited that if students feel they possess certain abilities, such as writing skills, they are less apprehensive about writing. The students will be more resilient when faced with difficult tasks, be more able to sustain their efforts on the task, and develop a greater interest in writing (Bandura, 1984).

There has been recent interest in students' self-efficacy beliefs as possible contributors to academic motivation in writing. Researchers have sought to examine the possible connection between students' self-efficacy beliefs and students' motivation to

write. Studies have shown that self-efficacy can affect self-regulatory processes, such as the ability to employ cognitive monitoring, goal setting, and self-evaluation strategies (Zimmerman, 2000, 2006; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). In addition, Hacker, Keener, and Kircher (2009) suggested that writing can be viewed as applied metacognition: “Editing, drafting, idea generation, word production, translation, diagnosing and revision are used as control strategies of our own thoughts. The monitoring and control of our own thinking is metacognition. Writing is applied metacognition” (p. 161).

Students’ high self-efficacy can influence their academic persistence, which is necessary for high academic achievement (Pajares, 2009). Although self-efficacy appears to be an important determinant in academic attainment, students still need to possess knowledge and skills in the specified domain. Students must possess *both* high self-efficacy in writing and the knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish specific writing tasks (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

Writing

Writing Development

As previously mentioned, students need to possess knowledge and skills to become successful writers. Writing is a goal-directed, self-sustained intellectual activity that requires skilled organization of the writing environment; adherence to the restrictions imposed by the writing topic assigned by the teacher; the writer’s ability to set intentions; and the knowledge, processes, and skills connected to writing (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Writing is also considered a social activity comprising a conversation between writer and reader and is shaped by the social context in which the writing transpires. For example, if someone shares ideas through e-mails with friends, the

communication will differ immensely from shared ideas in a formal report (Nystrand, 2006). Young writers need to acquire beliefs both in the significance of writing and in their own ability to communicate efficiently using this challenging skill. To examine the possible connection self-efficacy might have with students' writing, it is important to explore how children's emergent writing develops, the complex and various tasks that are required in writing, and the environment in which children learn to write.

Emergent writing has been defined as the process through which "children begin to understand that writing is a form of communication and their marks on paper convey a message" (Mayer, 2007, p. 35). Emergent writing is also seen when a young child progresses along a developmental continuum and moves through stages, beginning with random marks and ending with conventional spelling (Gentry, 2005). Furthermore, research literature notes that young children's emergent writing skills include (a) having an optimistic attitude towards writing; (b) grasping the concepts and functions of writing; (c) representing ideas through scribbles, drawings, and fundamental letter formations; (d) copying print from the environment; and (e) connecting letters to sounds when experimenting with writing (Chan, Zi Juan, & Lai Foon, 2008; Mayer, 2007; Otto, 2008).

As previously mentioned, emergent writing skills develop along a continuum. Gentry (2005) created a five-stage writing scale describing how children's writing develops along a developmental continuum. Gentry's (2005) writing scale begins with State 0, which is *non-alphabetic* writing consisting of a young child's scribbles, drawings, and non-discernible marks. Stage 1 is *pre-alphabetic* writing, in which a young child shows some control of letter formation consisting of varied letter strings with no letter-sound correspondences. Stage 2 is *partial alphabetic* writing, which involves

writing a few letter–sound matches mixed with random letters (semi-phonetic spelling). The child still scribbles but intends for the scribbles to represent writing. Stage 3 is *full alphabetic* writing, in which a child uses a letter for each sound (phonetic spelling). Stage 4 consists of *consolidated alphabetic* writing, in which most words are spelled correctly (transitional spelling). After progressing through the four stages, conventional spelling continues to develop over years of word study and writing (Gentry, 2005). Spandel (2008) asserted that writing develops through continuous creation and recreation with the written language. Young children also learn about writing through implicit instruction from teachers and by observing others more skilled than themselves (Morrow, 2012).

Moreover, young children need to experience social settings in which they write, share their writings with others, and emulate another, more literate person (Morrow, 2012). In the early adolescent years, writing becomes more complex and demanding, requiring young children to plan, revise, and self-regulate the various processes (Graham & Harris, 2000). The perceived value of writing becomes obvious in late elementary school and increases into middle and high school (Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989). Understanding how motivational factors, such as self-efficacy, interact with writing is vital in understanding young writers and their development.

Writing is unlike other academic domains because of how its sub-skills come together. For example, in a domain such as mathematics or reading, students can rely significantly on automaticity, in which they increase their speed and accuracy as they learn to automatically follow a set of procedures (McCutchen, 1988). Automatized routines can be useful for some writing components, such as spelling and handwriting but might not be helpful for other aspects because some aspects of writing are more flexible.

A student's choice of words, how they structure their sentences, and how they organize their paragraphs must change according to the demands of the writing task (McCutchen, 1988). For example, a student may construct a note to a friend thanking them, they might need to write a complicated scientific report, or they may need to create an imaginary story for an assignment. According to McCutchen (1988), automatic routines or procedures need to be prevented due to these changing demands, that result in a high "cognitive cost" to the student writer. For example, to successfully decode information while reading, a student only needs to produce a single word and a single meaning. However, if a student is to spell correctly, they need to correctly sequence a number of letters, which requires the student to pull more information from their memory (Ehri, 2000). To be a successful writer, a student needs to multitask, i.e., maintain their focus on the numerous process and details of writing at one time. Writing is complicated and complex to teach and learn because of the many required skills that must be brought together.

According to Goodman (1986), the foundation of writing is in oral language. However, due to writing's form, function, and purpose, it is set apart (Goodman, 1986). For example, oral communication can depend on instantaneous verbal and nonverbal feedback, whereas the written language is extremely decontextualized (Sulzby, 1985, 1986). Bruning and Horn (2000) noted that writing offers many contextual clues to assist with the communication process. Writing requires a person to be more specific and have a better sense of a missing audience than does communication in an oral realm (Johnson, 1993).

Writing Process Challenges for Young Students and Connection to Self-efficacy

The literature implies that students must possess high self-efficacy and knowledge about writing (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). It is vital to look at the construct of writing, the complexity of the domain for young students, and how those complex factors might affect student self-efficacy and outcomes. Studies have shown that writing is possibly the most complex and challenging activity that children perform in school (Baker, Gersten, & Graham, 2003; Olinghouse & Santangelo, 2010). As young children begin to comprehend writing's unique systems, they must further build and improve on their competencies in the writing process and writing mechanics along with sub-skills in each of those areas. Writing mechanics include producing text, conventional spelling, and accurate grammar as well as creating and organizing information, which includes planning and editing.

As previously mentioned, writing can cause considerable cognitive processing demands due to students' need to plan, organize, and revise throughout the writing process (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 1996). Writers must also set writing goals and deal with any negative emotional responses that might arise (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 1996). Furthermore, young writers must learn to balance numerous tasks during the writing process, such as forming letters correctly, spelling correctly, choosing words to use, structuring each sentence, using grammar to generate ideas, planning, editing, and constantly evaluating their work (Graham & Harris, 2009).

Students, especially those who are young or struggling with writing, often lack the skills and metacognitive strategies necessary to manage the writing process (Bangert-Drowns et al., 2004; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 1996;

McCutchen, 2006). For example, it can be challenging for young students to handle the numerous attention-demanding skills and strategies required in the writing process (McCutchen, 1988). Coker and Lewis (2008) summarized the explicit challenges emergent writers face in addition to metacognitive demands. These challenges include (a) understanding how writing is a form of communication; (b) acquiring knowledge of the world and text genres; (c) understanding the conventions and concepts of print; (d) learning that the alphabet is used to denote speech sounds; and (e) writing well to express ideas fluently. In addition to these challenges, young students struggle with handwriting and spelling skills, which makes it difficult to attend to both the higher- and lower-order writing processes concurrently (Graham & Harris, 2009; Olinghouse, 2007; Olinghouse & Santanagelo, 2010). Graham and Harris (2009) reported that when students toggle back and forth between writing process tasks and mechanical concerns, students can forget ideas and fail to connect their ideas.

As children learn about the world around them, they gain personal experiences and knowledge and begin to realize that writing is a means of communicating and expressing their ideas; however, this understanding can be highly dependent on children's exposure to the uses and practices of writing (Purcell-Gates, 1996; Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991). Once young children understand the purposes of writing, they must then acquire the basic rules of writing. Regardless of their understanding of writing and its purposes, young children must also learn to transcribe their ideas in a fluid, automatic way. When young children learn to master basic handwriting, spelling, and grammar skills, they can begin to manage the cognitive and metacognitive demands of writing tasks. One issue raised by the research on writing is that deficiencies in writing fluency often lead to lower

quality writing (Graham, Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, & Whitaker, 1997).

A study by Kim and Lorschach (2005) specifically examined writing self-efficacy as an essential component of first-grade students' developmental writing skills. Students in kindergarten and first grade were studied to determine if students with higher writing self-efficacy had higher developmental writing skills than students with lower writing self-efficacy (Kim & Lorschach, 2005). The researchers reported that students with higher self-efficacy had higher levels of writing development, while students with low writing self-efficacy had weaker writing skills and avoided writing assignments. Although these results seem promising for writing research with kindergarten and first-grade students, the students' writing skills were not assessed at the onset of the study to ascertain the students' prior developmental levels in writing. Furthermore, it was difficult to determine if the writing abilities in the students with low and high self-efficacies differed because the researchers did not use standardized testing tools to ascertain the students' writing abilities at the beginning of the study.

As the literature has demonstrated, writing is a complex subject to learn because of the varying levels of skills students need to acquire to be successful writers. If self-efficacy can influence young students' academic achievements in writing, then a teacher's ability to support a child's self-efficacy becomes an important disposition. As mentioned earlier, the NAEP (2011) writing scores for various grade levels fell between 2002 and 2011, with 33% of students writing at or above proficiency for their grade levels in 2011. In addition, teachers are held more accountable each year for supporting students' writing development and for raising their students' levels of writing proficiency and achievement (Corkett, Hatt, & Benevides, 2011). The aim of this study was to

provide a better understanding of first-grade students' and teachers' characteristics and behaviors that may affect student achievement since it is vital for students to use written communication throughout their lives.

Measuring Students' Self-efficacy and Attitudes towards Writing

Researchers have used numerous methods to measure students' writing self-efficacy. The three most predominant methods are assessing students' confidence in their own skills, assessing their confidence in completing a specific writing task, and assessing their confidence that they can earn a specific grade (Pajares, 2006). The first method measures students' confidence that they have specific writing skills. Students rate items according to their confidence in their skills to apply correct punctuation and grammar when writing a paragraph or short story (Pajares, 2003, 2006). The second method measures students' confidence in their ability to complete a specific writing assignment or task, such as writing a short story (Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Shell et al., 1995). The third approach to measuring students' writing self-efficacy involves students rating their confidence in their ability to get an A, B, C, or D in their language arts class and comparing their confidence in this ability with their actual grades (Pajares, 2003; Pajares et al., 2000). Regardless of which of the three approaches are used to measure writing self-efficacy, it is important that the instrument utilized is administered before the outcomes the results will be compared to occur; in addition, the instrument should be administered as close as possible to when the outcomes occur (Pajares & Valiante, 2006).

An extensive search of the literature on writing self-efficacy measures showed that although these approaches to measuring writing self-efficacy have been widely used, they have mainly been utilized with older elementary students, middle school students,

and high school students. In addition, writing encompasses a wide array of skills, and students do not necessarily judge themselves the same across all areas of writing. Since writing encompasses numerous high- and low-level tasks, self-efficacy instruments must be reflective of this and include numerous items with varying difficulties to assess the context of writing at a specific academic level. The Writing Attitude Survey (WAS) (Kear et al., 2000) is designed to be administered to younger elementary students. The WAS will be utilized to assess young students' attitudes towards writing because of its high degree of reliability, with reliability coefficients ranging from .85 to .93 (Kear et al., 2000), and its incorporation of several questions that focus on self-efficacy.

Study Justification and Contributions

The connection between teachers' instruction skills, writing knowledge, and self-efficacy beliefs about writing has been largely overlooked in research on writing self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy appears to be a salient factor in understanding what constitutes effective instruction in the context of writing and how teachers' confidence can potentially affect student learning (Raudenbush et al., 1992). According to teacher self-efficacy studies, teachers who possess high self-efficacy are more organized than their counterparts (Allinder, 1994), make a more concerted effort to try new things to better meet their students' needs (Stein & Wang, 1988), engage in fewer favorable comments with students about their academic errors (Ashton & Webb, 1986), teach with a more positive attitude (Guskey, 1984), and are not as inclined to refer students who are exhibiting difficulties for special education evaluation (Podell & Soodak, 1993). Furthermore, teachers with high self-efficacy tend to exhibit a higher quality of instructional skills and engage more effectively with struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

There is a need for researchers to focus attention on the underlying sources of students' writing self-efficacy with younger students. For the last two decades, measurements used for older students' writing have shown little improvement in students' quality of writing (NAEP, 2008). In spite of this lack of significant improvement in students' writing skills, studies have demonstrated that when a student possesses a high sense of self-efficacy, their persistence and effort on a specific academic task increases and they become more resilient when faced with difficult academic tasks (Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Urdan, 2006; Schunk, 1995). Young students should see academically difficult and challenging tasks, such as writing, as skills to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. This researcher was interested in writing development and investigated how student self-efficacy is formed in young children, how students' self-efficacy and attitudes regarding writing affect classroom writing behaviors, and how writing self-efficacy can be developed in young students.

This study contributes to teachers' classroom practices and to the research literature on writing self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors through its examination of self-efficacy in writing, which could inform writing instruction in the classroom. The present study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in first-grade classrooms?
2. How do first-grade students' writing self-efficacy and attitudes about their own writing affect their classroom writing behaviors?
3. How do teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices align with their approach to the writing assignments given in their classrooms?

A multiple-method design was employed to address these questions. The researcher approached the design of the study through a post-positivist lens. Qualitative data was collected to search for possible patterns in the frequency of the data as it occurs throughout the study. Quantitative data was collected to further explain the writing self-efficacy construct. A teacher self-efficacy scale, teacher orientation scale, teacher writing practices scale, student self-efficacy scale, interviews, observations, student writing samples, and student writing portfolios were utilized as data collection strategies in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the measures, participants, procedures, and rationale for the method employed. The study design, data collection, guiding framework, and research questions employed for this study are discussed, followed by a description of the participants' demographics and characteristics and the process for informed consent. Next, the strategies used to establish trustworthiness will be reported. Finally, the research protocols and materials employed throughout the 10-week study are described and the treatment of the qualitative and quantitative data sources will be discussed.

Method

Design

A post-positivism theory guided this methodology. Post-positivism is a methodological framework that encourages the use of multiple methods. The multiple methods research design was chosen for the following reasons: (a) it allows for variation in data collection, which can lead to greater validity; (b) it can help answer the research questions from a number of perspectives; (c) it helps ensure that no gaps are present in the data collected; (d) it helps decrease the likelihood of pre-existing assumptions from the researcher; and (e) one methodology may not provide all the information required (Tashakkori & Tedlie, 2002). Furthermore, the post-positivism theory was used as the basis of the study's methods for the following reasons: (a) the theory's view that knowledge is obtained through directly or indirectly measurable experiences with participants that could be applied across a population; (b) the researcher is emotionally neutral and has minimal influence on the results; (c) the research report is written in the

third person; and (d) the research addresses the internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity of the scientific study (Patton, 2002; Ponterotto, 2005).

Data Collection

Data collection for this study began after IRB approval was obtained from the researcher's university. The study and data collection was completed over 10 weeks during the participating school's third semester during the spring of 2014.

The quantitative data collected included teacher and student questionnaires. Qualitative data was collected through interviews, observations, and students' written works to explain the writing self-efficacy construct, examine possible links between the data, and answer the research questions related to writing self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors. The qualitative data collection methods helped capture the complex connection between teachers' knowledge, the contextual demands of teaching writing to young students, and the teachers' values regarding writing instruction (Graham et al., 2001).

Guiding Framework and Research Questions

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) guided this research inquiry. Bandura's SCT posits that (1) learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction and (2) an individual's behavior is influenced by his or her environment. This research explored first-grade teachers' and students' writing self-efficacy not as an isolated event but within the social and educational context of writing in a first-grade classroom. Furthermore, this research examined students' self-efficacy in writing and its effect on

their writing behaviors within the environment of a first-grade classroom. The present study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in first grade classrooms?
2. How do first grade students' writing efficacy and attitude about their own writing affect their classroom writing behaviors?
3. How do teachers efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices align with their approach to the types of writing assignments given in their classrooms?

Table 1 presents the research questions, timeline, instruments used, and analysis methods for this study. Each research question is connected to the data sources used to examine that question. Multiple sources of data collection were needed for analysis. The Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW), the Writing Orientation Survey (WOS), and the Teacher Classroom Writing Practices Survey (TCWPS) were examined using descriptive statistics to determine each teacher's self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in their first-grade classroom. These measures were also utilized to determine how the findings from these measures aligned with the types of writing assignments given to students in their classrooms. Subsequent sections will explain each of the components in the table.

Field observations were important to answering the three research questions because it was vital not only to look at what teachers and students reported on the surveys but also to obtain an accurate picture of writing within the classroom environment. Students' writing was collected to respond to questions two and three because both questions examined student writing from the students' and teachers' perspectives. The

teacher survey instruments and teacher interviews were employed to answer questions one and three because both questions dealt with teachers' writing self-efficacy and reported classroom practices. These data collection methods provided the supporting data necessary to acquire a better and more complete understanding of teachers' orientations, beliefs, and classroom practices and their potential connection to students' self-efficacy and attitudes towards writing. As shown in Table 1, the data collection methods and analysis procedures for this research were both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

Table 1

Research Questions, Data Collection Dates, Instruments, and Analysis Methods

Research Questions	Quantity of Collected Data	Instrument Description	Analysis Method
1. What are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in first-grade classrooms?	Three surveys	Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW) Writing Orientation Scale (WOS) Teacher Survey of Classroom Writing Practices Survey (TCWPS)	Descriptive Statistics
	Two interviews 10 observation sessions	Teacher Interviews Observations of Writing Instruction in Classrooms Observation Instrument	Constant Comparative Method
2. How do first-grade students' writing self-efficacy and attitudes about their own writing affect their classroom writing behaviors?	One survey	Writing Attitudes Survey (WAS)	Descriptive Statistics
	10 observation sessions 42 writing portfolios (10 weeks of writing) and six year-long portfolios	Observations of Classroom Writing Behaviors Observation Instrument Student Writing Portfolios	Constant Comparative Method Content Analysis
3. How do teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices align with the types of assignments given in their classrooms?	Three surveys	Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW) Writing Orientation Scale (WOS) Teacher Classroom Writing Practices Survey (TCWPS)	Descriptive Statistics
	Two interviews 10 observation sessions	Teacher Interviews Observations of Writing Instruction in Classrooms Observation Instrument	Constant Comparative Method

Demographic Description of Participants and Participating School

A convenient sampling strategy was used as the selection criterion for participants. The teachers and students involved in the study were from two intact groups. The students included in the study were first graders (N = 42; age: M = 6 years, 8 months) enrolled in two classrooms at a private Catholic school in a large suburban district in the southeastern United States. The school's student body consisted of 52.4% female students and 47.6% male students. The ethnicities of the student population at the school were as follows: 2.8% Asian, 2.3% Hispanic, 5.0% Black, 75.3% White, and 4.0% two or more ethnicities. Both first-grade teachers possessed M.S. Ed degrees in early childhood education from an accredited university in the same city as the participating school. No student or teacher attrition occurred in the sample throughout the 10-week study.

Table 2 summarizes the teachers' self-reported demographics and characteristics from section I of the TCWPS.

Table 2

Self-Reported Demographics and Characteristics of First-grade Teachers on TCWPS

Teacher	G	Ethnicity	Education Level	Years Teaching	Students	Free Lunch	Special Ed	Approach to Writing
LeAnne	F	White	Master's	10	21	0	0	Traditional and Process
Elizabeth	F	White	Master's	7	21	0	0	Traditional and Process

Note: Participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Description of Writing Program at Participating School

The participating teachers reported that they used the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model of instruction developed by Spandel and Stiggins in 1990 at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NRWEL). The 6+1 Trait® Writing Model outlines how teachers can instruct students on specific criteria for writing (Spandel, 1995, 1997). The 6+1 Trait® Writing Model has been proven as an effective method to teach students how to use the specific criteria to consistently evaluate their own writing and how to improve their own perceptions of their writing skills (Spandel, 1997). The six traits in the program are ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions; the “+1” represents presentation (Spandel, 1997). The 6+1 Trait® Writing Model is a reliable reference to increase writers’ skills and confidence and help them through the challenging task of writing effectively. The seven basic traits of effective writing are defined as follows:

- *Ideas*: “the main message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with all the supporting details that enrich and develop that theme.”
- *Organization*: “the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the pattern and sequence, so long as it fits the central idea.”
- *Voice*: “the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to us and cares about the message.”
- *Word Choice*: “the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader.”
- *Sentence Fluency*: “the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye.”

- *Conventions*: “the mechanical correctness of the piece...includes five elements: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, and paragraphing.”
- *Presentation*: “combines both visual and textual elements...the way we exhibit or present our message on paper.” (Education Northwest, n.d.)

Informed Consent and Participant Protection

An informed consent letter was sent to the school’s principal and headmaster asking for their consent to conduct research at their school. After obtaining consent from the principal and headmaster, the researcher and the principal met with the teachers to inform them about the study and the voluntary nature of their participation in the study; in addition, informed consent was obtained from the teachers. Parents were sent a letter informing them about the self-efficacy research that would be conducted in their children’s first-grade classrooms. Informed consent forms and the parent letter can be found in Appendix A.

The researcher protected research participants’ identities through a variety of methods. The researcher assigned a number and letter to each of the students’ writing attitudes surveys and written work samples. All student surveys and written work were kept in a secured, locked cabinet in the researcher’s office. After all the data had been compiled and analyzed, all surveys and writing assessment rubrics were destroyed. The researcher included information about the confidentiality of teachers’ responses to interviews, classroom observations, and students’ scores on all the instruments used in the study. The same procedure used in the collection of student data was utilized to protect the teachers’ identities.

Treatment of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Quantitative Measures

Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing. The Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW) (Graham et al., 2001) was used to measure teachers' sense of self-efficacy in writing instruction. The TSW is a 16-item measure based on Gibson and Demo's (1984) more general Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), which assesses personal and general teaching self-efficacy. An initial factor analysis of the TES scale yielded two factors: *personal teaching self-efficacy* (assesses self-efficacy) and *teaching self-efficacy* (reflects outcome expectancy) (Graham et al., 2001). Graham et al. (2001) analyzed the TSW's internal consistency reliability; their results showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .84 for personal teaching self-efficacy and .69 for general teaching self-efficacy.

Writing Orientation Scale. The Writing Orientation Scale (WOS) (Graham Harris, MacArthur et al., 2002) was utilized to assess teachers' beliefs about writing instruction. The 13-item WOS instrument examines three areas of teachers' beliefs: (a) the role of incidental and informal teaching methods in writing; (b) the importance of accuracy in writing; and (c) the role of explicit writing instruction. The WOS uses a six-point Likert-type scale with scores ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) (Graham et al., 2002).

The Correct Writing factor contains five items and has an internal consistency reliability of .70 (Graham et al., 2002). The Correct Writing factor assesses perceptions about the role of accuracy in teaching writing (Graham et al., 2002).

The five items on the scale are as follows:

- A good way to begin writing instruction is to have children copy good role models for each particular type of writing.

- Before children begin a writing task, teachers should remind them to use correct spelling.
- Teachers should aim to produce writers who can write good compositions in one draft.
- Students should be able to label words according to grammatical function.
- Before they begin a writing task, children who speak a nonstandard dialect of English should be reminded to use correct English.

The Explicit Instruction factor contains four items. It has an internal consistency reliability of .64 (Graham et al., 2002). The Explicit Instruction factor assesses a teacher's perceptions regarding the following ideas:

- It is important for children to study words in order to learn their spelling.
- Formal instruction in writing is necessary to ensure the adequate development of all the skills used in writing.
- Children need to practice writing letters to learn how to form them correctly.
- It is important to teach children strategies for planning and revising.

The Natural Learning factor contains four items. It has an internal consistency reliability of .60 (Graham et al., 2002). This factor assesses teachers' perceptions about the role of less formal and incidental learning approaches to teach writing; it includes the following items:

- Instead of regular grammar lessons, it is best to teach grammar when a specific need for it emerges in a child's writing.
- With practice in writing and responding to written messages, children will gradually learn the conventions of adult writing.

- Students need to meet frequently in small groups to react and critique each other's writing.
- The act of composing is more important than the written work children produce.

Teacher Classroom Writing Practices Survey. To gain information about the frequency of the specific writing activities and instructional activities used in teachers' classrooms, the Teacher Classroom Writing Practices Survey (TCWPS) (Graham et al., 2001) was employed in the analyses. Researchers designed the TCWPS to learn more information about teachers themselves, examine the composition of teachers' classrooms, and assess teachers' writing practices, attitudes, and perceptions about writing and writing instruction (Cutler & Graham, 2008).

The TCWPS is a 41-item instrument that utilizes a seven-point Likert-type scale with the following values: 1 (never), 2 (several times a year), 3 (monthly), 4 (weekly), 5 (several times a week), 6 (daily), and 7 (several times a day). A factor analysis of the instrument revealed four factors. The first factor involved teaching writing processes and had an internal consistency reliability of .80. The second factor involved students working together and had an internal consistency reliability of .70. The third factor involved teaching spelling skills and had an internal consistency reliability of .64. The fourth factor involved teaching grammar and usage and had an internal consistency reliability of .64 (Graham et al., 2001). For this study, the researcher used an overall median score for the analysis of each section on the classroom practices survey.

Writing Attitude Survey. The 28-item Writing Attitude Survey (WAS) was designed to be used by teachers to (1) obtain initial indicators of students' attitudes and self-efficacy towards writing; (2) obtain pre- and post-measurement scores for students'

attitudes and self-efficacy towards writing; (3) obtain an attitudinal profile for a teacher's class; and (4) monitor the impact of the teacher/school's instructional writing program (Kear et al., 2000).

The WAS was utilized in this study to assess young students' attitudes towards writing. Each item begins with uniform wording (i.e., "How would you feel...") to establish young students' consistent expectations on the instrument (Kear et al., 2000). The attitude measurement uses the cartoon character Garfield the cat and a Likert scale in which point values are assigned to each image of Garfield; students are asked to circle the image of Garfield that most closely matches their feelings. For example, a score of 4 is given when a student circles the "very happy" Garfield, and a score of 1 is given when the "very upset" Garfield is circled. The value for each question is converted to a raw score out of 112 possible points, and the total score is then converted to ranges of "very happy" to "very upset" (Kear et al., 2000). The WAS has a high degree of reliability, with reliability coefficients ranging from .85 to .93 (Kear et al., 2000).

Quantitative Procedures

TESW, WOS, TCWPS, and WAS. The TESW, WOS, and TCWPS instruments were administered individually to teachers in their classrooms immediately following their interviews at the beginning of the study. The participating teachers took between 10 and 45 minutes to complete the surveys. Each teacher was given a \$25 gift card after the interviews and surveys were completed. For the TESW, TCWPS, and WOS, all factors on the scales were co-mingled on the surveys. The TESW, TCWPS, and WOS teacher surveys are located in Appendix B.

During the first week of the study, the researcher administered the WAS to students in their classrooms in the morning; it took about 45 minutes for the students to complete the survey. The researcher read from a script, designed by the researcher, that explained the WAS survey and provided directions for the students. The researcher read each question aloud to the students. The students' surveys were each assigned a pseudonym to protect the students' identities. After completing the survey, each student was given a mechanical pencil and large eraser for their participation. The student survey can be found in Appendix C.

Qualitative Measures

Students' writing portfolios. The researcher created and organized 42 writing portfolios that included all the writing work completed by the first-grade students during the 10-week study. In addition, three writing portfolios that included students' work from the month before the onset of the study were collected through random selection from both teachers' classrooms. The researcher wrote all the students' names from the first classroom on pieces of paper, put the pieces of paper in a jar, and pulled out three names; this procedure was repeated for the second classroom. In all, 18 writing samples were collected in the six writing portfolios. This random sampling of students' written work assisted in answering research question three, which focused on the types of written assignments given to students, and verified the teachers' reports of the types of assignments given to their first-grade students. The writing portfolios were collected to examine the connection between the students' writing attitudes and their classroom writing behaviors. Students' writing portfolios were also examined to determine the

occurrence and frequency of various types of written assignments given to students throughout the study.

Interviews. The researcher created a semi-structured interview instrument containing items based on the research questions and goals. The semi-structured interview format, also referred to as “in-depth interviews,” was utilized because it allowed follow-up interview questions that could help describe the participants’ experiences (Esterberg, 2002). The primary goal of these interviews was to identify the first-grade teachers’ instructional practices in the domain of writing and to examine the teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, and theoretical orientations towards teaching writing to young students. The interview questions can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Blueprint for Teacher Interview Questions

Interview Content Items	Number of Items	Questions
How Teacher Gives Feedback and Evaluates Students' Writing	2	"How do you give feedback on students writing?"; "How do you evaluate/assess students' writing?"
Challenging Aspects of Writing Instruction for Teacher	2	"What are some of the challenging aspects of teaching writing to young students?"; "What support (if any) and/or resources do you have for writing instruction in the classroom?"
Teacher's Methods for Writing	2	"How do you plan for teaching writing in your classroom?"; "What methods and strategies do you use to teach writing?"
Teacher's Opinions about Value of Students' Writing	2	"What place do you think writing should have in the first-grade curriculum?"; "How much time should be spent on writing and why?"
Teacher's Knowledge about Writing Development in Students	2	"How do you assess if a writing assignment is developmentally appropriate for a student?"; "How do you approach the types of assignments you give to your students in the classroom?"
Teacher's Beliefs about Characteristics of a Good Writing Teacher	2	"What are some characteristics of a good writing teacher for young students?"; "What characteristics can hinder a good writing teacher and why?"
Teacher's Beliefs about Student Writing Self-efficacy	2	"What do you think are some reasons why a student may or may not want to complete a writing task?"; "What makes a student feel or not feel successful with their writing?"
Teacher's Beliefs about Teacher Self-efficacy	2	"How can teachers build confidence in their abilities to teach writing?"; "Is teacher self-efficacy important in teaching writing? Why or why not?"

Observations. Observations targeting teachers' self-efficacy and students' writing attitudes and self-efficacy were employed for the following reasons: (1) participants may not discuss every issue related to the study topic during an interview; (2) participants may not be aware of their influence and interactions with others, such as their first-grade students; (3) they allow the researcher to capture and understand the context of

writing self-efficacy as it occurs in the natural classroom setting; and (4) they allow the researcher to capture and understand the context of the study rather than relying solely on the participants' conceptualizations (Patton, 2002). The observation instrument included items regarding the teacher's use of instructional strategies, feedback for each student, the teacher's knowledge of developmental approaches to writing, and engagement strategies utilized by students during the writing period. A blueprint outlining the observation form's contents and examples of the items observed can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Observation Blueprint Instrument

Teacher/Student Categories	Number of Items	Examples
<i>Teacher's instructional strategies for teaching writing to young students</i>	2	Teacher models the writing process, writes with students, and allows ample time and opportunities to write.
<i>Teacher's engagement with students' writing</i>	2	Teacher encourages students while writing, offers self-selection of topics, etc.
<i>Teacher's feedback on students' writing</i>	2	Teacher provides feedback through one-on-one conferencing.
<i>Teacher's content knowledge</i>	2	Teacher looks for idea development, purpose, organization, etc. in students' writing.
<i>Students' engagement with writing</i>	2	Students ask to share writing (in author's chair, with partner, etc.).
<i>Students' use of writing strategies</i>	2	Students work with partner or in a small group.

Qualitative Procedures

Students' writing portfolios. In addition to collecting the students' WAS surveys, photographs and photocopies of students' written work from both classrooms were collected throughout the 10-week study. During each writing lesson in each participating teacher's classroom, the researcher rotated around the room to each group of

students' tables to observe students' writing in progress; pieces of writing completed during these observations were placed in the students' writing portfolios. The writing samples chosen for analysis were illustrative examples developed through the triangulation of observations, teacher interviews, and teacher and student survey data; these samples are meant to provide deeper insight into writing self-efficacy. The students' work was either copied on the school's copy machine or photographed using the researcher's personal camera. All portfolios were assigned a pseudonym to protect the identities of the participants. The students were given fun stickers and writing pads at the end of the study.

Interviews. The researcher conducted each teacher interview at the participating teachers' school in each of their respective classrooms. LeAnne's (participant 1) interview was manually audiotaped to capture the accuracy of the participant's "voice." LeAnne's interview lasted approximately one and a half hours. Elizabeth's (participant 2) interview was also audiotaped and lasted for one hour and forty-five minutes.

The researcher's goal during the interviews was to hear the participants' thoughts regarding writing and writing instruction in their first-grade classrooms. The interviews used a variety of 16 open-ended questions. Hatch (2002) reported that open-ended questions allow for in-depth, rich responses. The questions focused on teachers' orientations to teaching writing, what methods and strategies they utilized to teach writing, their opinions and beliefs about young students' writing, their knowledge about teaching writing, their beliefs about what interests and motivates their students in relation to writing, their perceptions regarding challenges teaching writing to young students, how they evaluated students' writing. The interview protocol and semi-structured interview

questions can be found in Appendix D.

The researcher transcribed each interview verbatim within 48 hours. After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher contacted each participant regarding any questions about the accuracy of their words; the participants were asked to clarify the transcriptions of their interviews in these cases. This participant review helped the researcher ensure that the participants' voices were complete. To strengthen reliability in the interview coding, two doctoral students were employed. One doctoral student was a Gifted and Talented Specialist in a large, southeastern school district, and the other was an infant and toddler specialist. These research team members were utilized to ensure consensus coding in semi-structured consensus meetings.

Observations. The researcher developed an observation form (see Appendix E) and literacy checklist (see Appendix F) for use during each observation period. The observation form focused on specific items related to the construct of writing in the first grade and to the research questions. The literacy checklist was utilized during each observation session to keep track of all the materials that were available and/or utilized during each writing lesson in the participating teachers' classrooms. This checklist included items teachers should have in their classrooms to create a literacy-rich learning environment. This checklist of literacy-rich materials was based on over a decade of research (Au, Carroll, & Scheu, 1997; Calkins, 1994; Cunningham, 1995; Fletcher, Portalupi, & Portalupi, 1994; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Gentry, 1987; Graves, 1983; Harste, Short, & Burke, 1988; Harwayne, 1992; McCarner, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000; Morrow, 1997; Routman, 2005, 2008).

Classroom observations were scheduled in advance with each teacher by email in

the week following the interviews. The first observation was conducted at the beginning of the third quarter of the school year, and the last observation was conducted in the middle of the fourth quarter. All observations took place before noon because the teachers taught language arts in the morning. The observations were conducted in the participating teachers' classroom once a week for 10 weeks. Each observation in each classroom lasted approximately one hour.

Field notes were taken during each observation session to create a complete and accurate record of the classroom activities (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and to add supplemental evidence to the recorded and observational notes. The field notes were vital to developing a detailed, descriptive explanation of what occurred during every writing session in the first-grade classrooms and to conveying the context around the observational sessions. During each observation, the researcher took field notes while students worked on their assigned writing tasks. The field notes focused on the talk, interactions, and writing behaviors surrounding the teacher and her students; materials utilized by either the teacher or students during writing instruction; and how the writing environment was organized. Furthermore, the notes focused on capturing each instructor's teaching methods for writing and on how they implemented their writing lesson plans in their classrooms. The field notes were typed and stored in the researcher's office immediately after each observation. As with the interviews, the two doctoral students on the research team were utilized to ensure consensus coding in semi-structured consensus meetings.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Measures

The TESW, WOS, and TSCWPS were examined using descriptive statistics to determine the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in their first-grade classrooms. These measures were utilized to better understand how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices aligned with the types of writing assignments given to students in their classrooms. The WAS was examined using descriptive statistics to determine students' self-efficacy and attitudes for writing.

Qualitative Measures

A triangulation strategy was utilized to collect, analyze, and interpret the data (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Qualitative analysis began with the researcher listing key phrases and words from writing and self-efficacy literature as they related to the research questions; this provided insights for the research team on coding terminology and served as a coding key when the team members coded both interviews. Following the interview transcription, each member of the research team independently read each transcribed interview. The initial coding process took place in numerous stages over 10 weeks. During the coding process, every line and phrase of the interviews were examined to determine what was said and to label each phrase with a suitable code. The segments were then subjected to additional comparisons to determine what they had in common, how they differed, and in what context the interviewee made the comments. The units of analysis chosen were phrases, which constituted at least two or more words, from the teachers' statements in the interviews. During this process, the texts were unitized, highlighted, color-coded, and labeled into codes. After each member of the research team independently coded the interviews, they discussed refining codes and then agreed on

operational definitions of codes through structured consensus meetings. The research team members coded all data and differences and continued ongoing discussions until all three raters achieved uniform agreement on the final codes and resulting codebook.

Subsequent coding involved constantly comparing the first transcript with the second transcript to allow the emergence of categories and their components. Definitions and rules that operationalized and delineated categories and subcategories were specified in a coding and categorizing protocol. Only interview quotes focusing on the overarching categories and subcategories that emerged from the data were included in the analysis. All other teachers' statements were coded as "other" and were not incorporated into this analysis. "Other" phrases included "told my husband," "I forgot what the question was," and "I'm doing very well."

A final codebook was then produced to show the overarching categories and subcategories that emerged from the interviews. A 90% inter rater reliability agreement between coders was reached for the final codebook. The final codebook with codes, code definitions, and overarching categories can be seen in Appendix G.

As previously mentioned, participant review was employed to enhance the validity of the research study. The members of the research team independently coded all field notes from the observations. After independently coding the field notes, the research team had a consensus meeting in which field note codes were chunked together and added to existing codes and categories in the codebook. No new codes emerged from the field note data.

The categories and subcategories found in the interview data were then compared across the field notes from the observations. During the comparison between the

interview and observation data, the research team independently looked for similar and/or different patterns in the codes. To better understand how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices aligned with the types of writing assignments given to students in their classrooms, the researcher utilized a content analysis method to code the writing categories found in the first-grade students' writing portfolios.

Triangulation of Data Sources

All the quantitative and qualitative data sources were triangulated to increase the validity of the findings, to ensure that the findings accurately reflected the phenomenon of writing self-efficacy, to analyze the research questions from multiple perspectives, and to demonstrate that the findings were supported by the data. The data triangulation provided valuable information as well as a more complete picture of and deeper insights into the following areas of interest: (1) teachers' orientations, beliefs, and self-efficacy towards teaching writing; (2) students' self-efficacy and attitudes and the connection to students' classroom writing behaviors; and (3) teachers' approaches to writing tasks.

Strategies for Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established through several strategies. The researcher conducted a participant review strategy by soliciting feedback on the interview transcripts from the two participants. The researcher participated in reflexive journaling after each data collection to reduce bias and help the researcher organize her opinions and thoughts. Memos were employed for each data collection method to assist in the process of coding the research data. Credibility was established through memos, audit trails, and 10 weeks of prolonged observations. The transferability of the study was increased by creating a thick description of the study and the findings. The dependability of the study was established through the utilization of two research team members who assisted with

coding, the triangulation of all data sources, and the utilization of participant review. The additional members of the research team did not interact with the participants to avoid personal biases on the team (Hays & Singh, 2012).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study examined the connections between (1) teachers' writing orientations, beliefs, and writing practices, (2) students' writing attitudes and self-efficacy for writing, and (3) students' classroom writing behaviors. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were utilized to capture a detailed understanding of teacher and student self-efficacy in the construct of writing. The researcher utilized a multiple-methods design to obtain a more robust understanding of the research problem than a single approach could provide and to strengthen the overall research design; the strengths of one approach offset the weaknesses of the other approach, thus leading to more comprehensive and conclusive evidence than can be obtained with a single method.

In this chapter, the qualitative and quantitative findings from each data source are analyzed and presented according to the overarching categories and subcategories that developed when identifying the connections between the categories that emerged from the data. The observational data is explained and analyzed through collected field notes, classroom literacy checklists, interview quotes, and samples of students' work. In all, six overarching categories and 13 subcategories emerged from the data that addressed the three research questions. The overarching categories, subcategories, and definitions can be found in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Categories, Subcategories, and Definitions from Qualitative Data

Overarching Categories	Subcategory	Definitions
1. Self-efficacy Beliefs	1. Teachers' Beliefs 2. Students' Beliefs	Teachers' beliefs about their ability to teach writing Students' beliefs and judgments of their ability to write different tasks and of their possession of different writing skills
2. Motivation	1. Internal Motivation 2. External Motivation	Students' motivation and engagement with a specific writing topic Teachers' providing of external motivational prompts
3. Assessment	1. Teachers' Monitoring Writing 2. Students' Monitoring Writing	Continually assessing, both formally and informally, students' skill sets and needs Students' monitoring own writing
4. Instructional Practices	1. Teaching Approach 2. Teaching Writing Skills and Strategies 3. Supports for Writing	Instructional approaches Instructional practices for teaching writing skills and strategies How teachers support students writing
5. Environmental Influences	1. Print-rich Environment 2. Physical Set-up	Print-richness of classroom environment Physical set-up and design of the classroom
6. Challenges	1. Teachers' Challenges for Teaching Writing 2. Students' Challenges with Writing	Demanding aspects of teaching writing Demanding aspects of learning how to write

The sections below present examples from the teachers' interview data, observational data, survey data, and student writing for each of the six categories and the

13 subcategories to illustrate how the data informed this inquiry. Descriptive statistics are reported for all items on the questionnaires. Supporting data is analyzed and presented within the six categories and 13 subcategories to provide an understanding of the complexities of teachers' self-efficacy, teachers' orientations, teachers' classroom writing practices, students' self-efficacy, and writing behaviors in a first-grade classroom. The quotes are intended to demonstrate what the "talk" related to the specific categories or subcategories sounded like and to illustrate how the categories and subcategories were employed in the context of examining teacher self-efficacy, teacher orientations, teacher practices, student self-efficacy, and study writing.

Category 1: Self-efficacy Beliefs

The first category that emerged from the data was Self-efficacy Beliefs. In addition, numerous codes emerged from the data that led to two subcategories: Teacher Self-efficacy and Student Self-efficacy. The codes for self-efficacy beliefs were based on the participants' language in the interview data, such as "belief in yourself as a writer," "teachers have to believe in themselves," "be confident in the outcome you are looking for," and "how the teacher feels about writing." The following sections analyze teachers' and students' self-efficacy beliefs, which are found in both the quantitative and qualitative data. The data related to these beliefs was analyzed through quantitative and qualitative methods.

Subcategory 1: Teachers' Self-efficacy

Coding for this subcategory was developed using the participants' quotes from the interviews, such as "general sense of security" and "be confident." Findings from the observational data, interview data, teacher survey data, and students' work samples are analyzed and triangulated to examine this inquiry into self-efficacy, specifically in the

construct of writing in a first-grade classroom.

In response to a question during her interview about her beliefs regarding what self-efficacy for teaching writing means, LeAnne stated, “How the teacher feels about teaching writing will affect the results she will see in her students’ learning and ability to write” (Interview, February 9, 2014). She further expressed that she felt secure as a writing teacher and needed to ensure that she got her students “to a point where they feel comfortable to go ahead and give it a try” (Interview, February 9, 2014). LeAnne also discussed how important it was to be in a school where the administration had “faith and believes in us as teaching professionals” so she would feel “empowered to teach the way I want to teach our children” (Interview, February 9, 2014).

When Elizabeth was asked during the interview about teachers’ writing self-efficacy, she responded, “You have to believe in yourself as a writer. Believe in yourself as being able to teach it and to be confident to be able to get the outcome you are looking for” (Interview, February 10, 2014). Elizabeth went on to discuss how her high self-efficacy meant “seeing myself as a writer...if I see myself as a writer, then I can help my students see themselves as writers” (Interview, February 10, 2014).

These statements indicated that both teachers possessed high self-efficacy for teaching writing, were confident in their ability to teach writing to young children, and understood how a teacher’s self-efficacy beliefs could potentially affect student learning. The teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs were further examined and triangulated with the findings from their responses on the Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW).

The TSW is a 16-item questionnaire using a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) (Graham et al., 2001). The instrument consists

of two scales: Personal Teacher Self-efficacy and General Teacher Self-efficacy.

Teachers' scores for each of the TESW scales were computed by averaging the scores for each of the items included on that scale. A higher score represents a teacher's higher self-efficacy in that factor (Graham et al., 2001).

LeAnne's mean score for Personal Teacher Self-efficacy was 5.2 ($SD = .6$), and her mean score for General Teacher Self-Efficacy was 5.5 ($SD = .76$). LeAnne's responses to the items on the Personal Teacher Self-efficacy scale indicate that she was moderately positive about her self-efficacy to teach writing and affect change in her students. LeAnne's responses to the items on the General Teacher Self-efficacy scale show that she had a highly positive outcome self-efficacy about the extent to which students can be taught given environmental factors, such as family background.

Elizabeth's mean score for Personal Teacher Self-efficacy was 5.6 ($SD = .489$), and her mean score for General Teacher Self-efficacy was 4.8 ($SD = 1.77$). Elizabeth's responses to the items on the Personal Teacher Self-efficacy scale demonstrate that she had strong personal self-efficacy beliefs about her ability to teach writing and affect change in her students. Her responses to the items on the General Teacher Self-efficacy scale indicate that she also had slightly to moderately positive general teacher self-efficacy, which means that she somewhat believed that students can be taught given environmental factors. Both teachers' results from the TESW questionnaire are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Teacher Mean Scores on Teacher Efficacy Scales for Writing

Scale	Leanne	Elizabeth
General	5.50	4.80
Personal	5.20	5.60

Note: The six-point rating scale ranged from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (6).

Although both teachers reported having high self-efficacy in teaching writing, they were cognizant of what might occur if they, or another writing teacher, possessed low self-efficacy. During LeAnne's interview, she described how negative beliefs might negatively affect student learning. She also discussed why a teacher might not have high writing self-efficacy:

...if you are working under the constraints of "it has to be done this way"...if your (teaching) in a "box," and it has to be done a certain way, then there is going to be all of this pressure...or this kind of weight on the shoulder of the teacher to make sure that you get through this, this, and this and in a certain order and in a certain amount of time, then I think that it's going to put pressure (indirectly) on the students. Any kind of pressure like that is going to cause students not to perform to their highest individual level that they could. I do believe that how I feel about teaching writing will affect the results I will see in my students' learning and ability to write. (Interview, February 9, 2014)

As LeAnne's comments demonstrate, teacher self-efficacy can be negatively affected by undue pressures to teach a certain way or in a certain time period and can be positively affected if teachers are empowered to teach in their own way.

During her interview, when asked what might hinder writing self-efficacy, Elizabeth explained that if a teacher was too structured, only knew one path to teach writing, and could not "veer off the path" due to strict curriculum and administrative standards, he or she might begin to develop low self-efficacy in teaching writing (Interview, February 10, 2014). Echoing LeAnne's response, Elizabeth stated that she

was lucky to have freedom at her school to veer off the curriculum if the need arose because she had support from her administration, which allowed her to have high self-efficacy in teaching writing. She explained why she had high self-efficacy for teaching writing at her school:

I know I have a little bit more freedom. I still have a curriculum to follow, but I have freedom, so that allows me to relax a little more and enjoy teaching writing a little bit more...to know that I can take a day and do writing and it's okay. I can get to the other things and say "ok, we didn't get to such and such today, but we will do that tomorrow." But if the students are on totally on a roll (with writing), then why stop them? (Interview, February 10, 2014).

This statement shows how other components, such as the freedom to extend time on writing if students want to continue writing, might have a positive effect on student learning and on teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing.

Elizabeth also spoke in the interview about the importance of doing her own research on "best strategies" in teaching writing, which helped her teaching self-efficacy (Interview, February 10, 2014). She mentioned that she often looked at teachers' magazines, conducted Internet searches, explored a variety of teacher-based websites offering methods of teaching writing to young students, and collaborated with other teachers on how best to help her students. Elizabeth said she sought out other research-based methods because not all the students in her class learned the same way or were in need of the same type of instruction. In the interview, Elizabeth expressed her thoughts about the strategies she utilized to help students who may not acquire writing skills quickly:

You get a good idea of who grasps the concepts quickly, and who needs a little bit of assistance, and those who just really need to sit with you and go through the process with them. You will have your struggling writers and you might say to them, "let's take this a step further." You need to tailor your teaching to the child's level of writing. If a child needs more help, I talk to my colleagues. I go to

different people and say, “okay, this is what I’m seeing. I’ve tried this...it’s working, or it’s not working, or it’s not effective”...so we will talk about it. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This portion of Elizabeth’s interview demonstrates how a teacher’s writing self-efficacy can be positively affected through supportive means, such as utilizing colleagues at school who can help find more effective ways to teach students writing skills.

Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs were further described, measured, and triangulated with findings from the Writing Orientation Scale (WOS). The 13-item WOS questionnaire measures teachers’ beliefs and orientations about teaching writing. The WOS uses a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) (Graham et al., 2000). The WOS includes three subscales: Correct Writing, Explicit Instruction, and Natural Learning. All three scales were intermingled on the survey. Teachers’ scores for each WOS factor were computed by averaging the scores for each of the items included on that factor. A higher score indicates that the teacher places more emphasis on the importance of the construct measured by that particular factor (Graham et al., 2002).

LeAnne’s mean score on the Correct Writing factor was 2.4 (SD = 1.4). Elizabeth’s mean score on the Correct Writing factor was 5 (SD = 1.1). A higher score on the Correct Writing factor indicates that the teacher believes writing instruction should include reminders to students about correct spelling and grammar (Graham et al., 2002). A higher score on the Correct Writing factor also indicates that the teacher believes students should be able to write good compositions in one draft (Graham et al., 2002). The results of the item responses on the Correct Writing factor indicate that LeAnne believed less focus should be placed on correct writing instruction, such as spelling and

grammar. Elizabeth's responses on the Correct Writing factor demonstrate her belief that using correct spelling and grammar should be emphasized more in writing instruction.

Table 7 lists the teachers' Correct Writing factor results.

Table 7

Writing Orientation Scale (WOS) Correct Writing Factor and Teachers' Results

WOS Factor	Survey Questions	LeAnne	Elizabeth
Correct Writing	<i>Question 1:</i> A good way to begin writing instruction is to have children copy good models of each particular type of writing.	4	6
	<i>Question 5:</i> Before children begin a writing task, teachers should remind them to use correct spelling.	2	3
	<i>Question 7:</i> Being able to label words according to grammatical functions (e.g., nouns and verbs) is useful in proficient writing.	4	5
	<i>Question 11:</i> Teachers should aim at producing writers who can write good compositions in one draft.	1	6
	<i>Question 12:</i> Before they begin a writing task, children who speak a nonstandard dialect of English should be reminded to use correct English	1	5

Both LeAnne's and Elizabeth's mean scores on the Explicit Instruction factor were 6 (SD = 0.0). On the Explicit Instruction factor, a higher score indicates that a teacher strongly believes that writing instruction must be explicit and include studying spelling and learning revising strategies and conventions (Graham et al., 2002). The teachers' responses on the Explicit Instruction factor indicate that they both strongly believed in the explicit instruction of handwriting, planning, revising, learning strategies, and conventions. Table 8 shows both teachers' Explicit Writing factor results.

Table 8

Writing Orientation Scale (WOS) Explicit Instruction Factor and Teachers' Results

WOS Factor	Survey Questions	LeAnne	Elizabeth
Explicit Instruction	<i>Question 8:</i> It is important for children to study words in order to learn their spelling.	6	6
	<i>Question 9:</i> Formal instruction in writing is necessary to ensure adequate development of all the skills used in writing.	6	6
	<i>Question 10:</i> Children need to practice writing letters to learn how to form them correctly.	6	6
	<i>Question 13:</i> It is important to teach children strategies for planning and revising.	6	6

LeAnne's mean score on the Natural Learning factor was 4 (SD = 1.6).

Elizabeth's mean score on the Natural Learning factor was 4 (SD = 1.9). A higher score on the Natural Learning factor indicates that the teacher believes lessons should occur as the need arises (Graham et al., 2002). The teachers' responses on the Natural Learning factor demonstrate that both teachers moderately agreed with less formal and incidental learning methods of teaching writing, including student cooperation and sharing. See Table 9 for both teachers' Natural Learning factor results.

Table 9

Writing Orientation Scale (WOS) Natural Learning Factor and Teachers' Results

WOS Factor	Survey Questions	LeAnne	Elizabeth
Natural Learning	<i>Question 2:</i> Instead of regular grammar lessons, it is best to teach grammar when a specific need for it emerges in a child's writing.	3	1
	<i>Question 3:</i> Students need to meet frequently in small groups to react and critique each other's writing.	6	5
	<i>Question 4:</i> The act of composing is more important than the written work children produce.	2	4
	<i>Question 6:</i> With practice writing and responding to written messages, children will gradually learn the conventions of adult writing.	5	6

To further describe teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards teaching writing, section II of the Teacher Classroom Writing Practices Survey (TCWPS) was analyzed and triangulated with the findings from the narrative and observational data. The TCWPS is designed to assess teachers' attitudes towards writing, their attitudes towards teaching this skill, and their perceptions of their effectiveness in managing their writing classrooms and teaching their students to write (Cutler & Graham, 2008). The following sections will discuss results from section II of the TCWPS.

Section II of the TCWPS includes four questions using a six-point Likert-type scale with choices ranging from strongly agree (6) to strongly disagree (1). Teachers' scores were computed by averaging the scores for each of the items included in this section. A higher score indicates that the teacher places more emphasis on the importance of the construct measured in this section (Graham et al., 2002). LeAnne's mean score on section II of the TCWPS was 5 (SD =0.0), while Elizabeth's mean score was 6 (SD =0.0). LeAnne's responses on this section of the TCWPS indicate that she moderately to

strongly agreed that she could effectively teach writing and that she possessed a strong belief in her ability to teach writing to her students. Elizabeth's responses on section II of the TCWPS show that she was highly confident in her ability to be an effective writing teacher and that she had a strong, positive attitude towards teaching writing in her classroom. The TCWPS results for both teachers are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

TCWPS Section II: Teachers' Perceptions of Their Effectiveness in Teaching Writing and Their Attitudes about Writing

Survey Question	LeAnne	Elizabeth
I like to teach writing.	Moderately agree (5)	Strongly agree (6)
I effectively manage my classroom during writing instruction.	Strongly agree (5)	Strongly agree (6)
I like to write.	Moderately agree (5)	Strongly agree (6)
I am effective at teaching writing.	Moderately agree (5)	Strongly agree (6)

Note: Scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater agreement (Cutler & Graham, 2008).

The teachers' statements from the interview data further support the analysis of section II of the TCWPS. During her interview, LeAnne talked about the importance of looking at a child's writing for what is "there," such as the complete and interesting content of the story, rather than what it "looks" like in the drafting phase (Interview, February 9, 2014). She stated,

There are so many other things, other factors that come into play like letter formation, how they feel about their ability to keep words on the line...we can find a story with the words they've put on a page, even if it doesn't look like the traditional perfect writing in a story. So, you have to kind of be able to look past this at this age and show them, as the teacher in your own way, that "Look what you did! Look at that story that you told!" (Interview, February 9, 2014)

This statement illustrates LeAnne's positive attitude and confidence in her ability to teach writing to her students and supports the findings from LeAnne's responses on section II of the TCWPS.

When asked about what fostered her positive attitude and self-efficacy for teaching writing, Elizabeth responded:

Number one, you have to believe in yourself. You have to be able to...I'm constantly brainstorming...my brain never turns off. I'm always thinking about what we are going to do the next day, even though I know what we are going to do...I'm still thinking about it. I think that you have to believe that if you're excited, then the kids will be excited. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This quote supports the findings from Elizabeth's responses on section II of the TCWPS and illustrates her positive attitude towards teaching writing to young students.

Subcategory 2: Students' Self-efficacy

Codes were developed for the Students' Self-efficacy subcategory using the participants' words, such as "have children be part of it," "develop a relationship," and "they feel within your classroom environment." This section includes a detailed analysis and triangulation of the findings from the qualitative and quantitative data to help examine this subcategory.

The researcher began analyzing the Students' Self-efficacy subcategory using the Writing Attitude Survey (WAS). Each question on the instrument begins in a uniform manner (e.g., "How do you feel...") to give students a consistent expectation of what to expect for each question on the survey (Kear et al., 2000). The WAS utilizes a Likert scale that incorporates the cartoon character Garfield. Point values are assigned for each question from "very happy" Garfield (4 points) to "very upset" Garfield (1 point). The highest score possible was 112.

The researchers who created the WAS discussed how students' scores can be interpreted formally or informally depending on the administering individual's purpose (Kear et al., 2000). This researcher interpreted the survey informally by looking at each student's raw score in relation to the highest possible score. For example, if a student's raw score was approximately 70, then the score would fall between "somewhat happy" and "somewhat upset." The WAS final scores, student work, and observational data are analyzed and reported on in this section to provide an understanding of the Students' Self-efficacy subcategory.

For this study, 38 first-grade students completed the WAS survey; four students were absent the day the WAS was administered and were not able to complete the survey. The WAS responses indicate that approximately 90% of the students in both teachers' classes were between "very happy" and "somewhat happy," which means these students had fairly positive attitudes towards writing. Of all the students in the first grade, only six students reported being "upset"; this indicates that approximately 10% of all the first graders did not have positive attitudes towards writing. The WAS results from the students in both classrooms are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Students' WAS Results

Teacher	Student's Assigned Number	Raw Score: out of 112 possible points	Analytical Approach to Interpreting Scores: Informal
LeAnne	P1	84	Happy
LeAnne	P2	90	Very happy
LeAnne	P3	87	Happy
LeAnne	P4	97	Very happy
LeAnne	P5	85	Happy
LeAnne	P6	83	Happy
LeAnne	P7	91	Very happy
LeAnne	P8	55	Upset
LeAnne	P9	75	Somewhat happy
LeAnne	P10	62	Somewhat upset
LeAnne	P11	77	Somewhat happy
LeAnne	P12	85	Happy
LeAnne	P13	96	Very happy
LeAnne	P14	Absent	Absent
LeAnne	P15	97	Very happy
LeAnne	P16	Absent	Absent
LeAnne	P17	78	Somewhat happy
LeAnne	P18	76	Somewhat happy
LeAnne	P19	68	Somewhat happy
LeAnne	P20	96	Very happy
LeAnne	P21	69	Somewhat happy
Elizabeth	P1	81	Happy
Elizabeth	P2	52	Upset
Elizabeth	P3	67	Somewhat happy
Elizabeth	P4	84	Happy
Elizabeth	P5	74	Somewhat happy
Elizabeth	P6	88	Happy
Elizabeth	P7	73	Somewhat happy
Elizabeth	P8	91	Very happy
Elizabeth	P9	Absent	Absent
Elizabeth	P10	92	Very happy
Elizabeth	P11	52	Upset
Elizabeth	P12	111	Very happy
Elizabeth	P13	71	Somewhat happy
Elizabeth	P14	81	Happy
Elizabeth	P15	93	Very happy
Elizabeth	P16	79	Happy
Elizabeth	P17	59	Upset
Elizabeth	P18	57	Upset
Elizabeth	P19	Absent	Absent
Elizabeth	P20	74	Somewhat happy
Elizabeth	P21	77	Happy

One student in LeAnne's class, Zane, scored 96 of 112 possible points. This indicated that he was "very happy" about writing. During the classroom writing activity observation, the researcher noticed that Zane stayed focused throughout the writing lesson and smiled while he drew hearts above his classmates' pictures. Figure 2 shows an example of Zane's writing; this sample illustrates his positive attitude about his classroom and shows that his reported WAS score is consistent with his actual classroom writing behavior.



Figure 2. Zane's Writing about Beliefs.

Another student in LeAnne's class, Jake, scored 55 of 112 possible points on the WAS; this score is interpreted as "upset." Jake was one of two students who reported the lowest scores on the WAS. During the administration of the WAS, the researcher noticed that Jake was writing extra words next to the circled Garfield; he was informed that he did not need to add anything extra next to his answer. He responded, "I want to make sure you [the researcher] know how much I don't want to write" (observation, February 19, 2014). This page from Jake's WAS illustrates how upset Jake felt about writing (see

Figure 3). This score sheet demonstrates how Jake reporting being “very upset” on the survey, circling the Garfield character numerous times, and including extra words such as “No!” were consistent with the interpretation of his low scores on the WAS. Taken together, these factors indicate that he has a negative attitude toward writing.

25. How would you feel writing about something from another person's point of view?

26. How would you feel about checking your writing to make sure the words you have written are spelled correctly?

27. How would you feel if your classmates read something you wrote?

Figure 3. Jake's WAS Score Sheet.

Although Jake's WAS scores indicate that he possessed a negative attitude towards writing, he did provide some positive responses. Jake used the highest scores to indicate that he would like the following activities: (1) writing a letter to the author of his favorite book; (2) writing a letter to a store about something he could buy there; (3) writing to change someone's opinion; (4) writing a story instead of doing homework; and (5) writing about things that happen in his life. Unfortunately, during the 10 weeks of observations, the teacher did not offer him the opportunity to write about the things he wanted to write about. This example provides a better understanding of what might negatively affect a student's self-efficacy in writing, such as not being offered the chance to write about things that interest them.

A student in Elizabeth's class, Henry, also reported low scores on the WAS. Henry scored 57 of 112 possible points, which indicates that he was "upset" about writing. Like Jake, Henry tried to emphasize his lack of enjoyment in writing. During the administration of the survey, Henry circled his "upset" answers about different writing topics many times. When the researcher noticed Henry's extra circling on the WAS survey, she repeated the directions for him to ensure that he understood that he only needed to circle his answers one time. Henry then asked the researcher if he could continue to circle it more than once because he said he wanted the researcher to know how much he did not like writing (observation, February 19, 2014).

Like Jake, Henry reported that he *did* enjoy some writing activities, including the following: (1) writing a letter to a store asking about something he could buy there; (2) writing poetry; (3) keeping a diary; (4) being the author of a book; and (5) writing a story instead of doing homework. When the researcher shared these items with the classroom teacher at the end of the study, she responded, "Oh, we don't do diaries. Only the other first-grade classroom does. And, we did do one acrostic poem at the beginning of school so we didn't do that again" (observation, February 19, 2014).

During one observation, the researcher noted that Henry seemed to have fine motor issues that often caused his writing to be labored. He also appeared to be using an incorrect grip on his pencil. When this was brought to the teacher's attention at the end of the study, she responded that messy handwriting tends to be a "boy" thing and that he would grow out of it (observation, March 5, 2014). This observation provides an understanding of the issues that might make a student have a negative attitude towards writing, such as having issues with fine motor skills or an incorrect pencil grip.

One of Henry's WAS score sheets provides an example of what can affect a student's self-efficacy and attitude towards writing in a first-grade classroom (Figure 4). This score sheet indicates that Henry was "very upset" with writing and did not have a positive attitude towards writing. It also shows the writing activities he would have a positive attitude towards, such as writing a story instead of doing homework; this information could be utilized by the classroom teacher to help inform her writing instruction.





















10. How would you feel if you had a job as a writer for a newspaper or magazine?				
11. How would you feel about becoming an even better writer than you already are?				
12. How would you feel about writing a story instead of doing homework?				
13. How would you feel about writing a story instead of watching TV?				
14. How would you feel about something you did in school?				

Figure 4. Henry's WAS Score Sheet.

Another reason a student may not enjoy writing is that the student is tired. During one observation, Curtis, a student in Elizabeth's classroom, wrote about feeling very tired (observation, March 7, 2014). During this observation, Curtis repeatedly put his head down on his desk during writing instruction. The lesson was on the writing trait of word

choice and “feelings” words. He wrote his assignment while keeping his head on his desk. He also used an interesting word to describe how he felt. Curtis said he felt “brown” to describe how tired he was (observation, March 7, 2014). Weeks earlier, Elizabeth explained that she had spoken to the students about how sunny it was outside and told them the sun was bright like the color yellow. Curtis’s use of the word “brown” was his writing strategy of using different words to describe his feelings of tiredness (Figure 5). Elizabeth mentioned that this particular child had older siblings who played sports late into the evening, and she thought he was not getting enough sleep before having to work first thing in the morning on writing (observation, March 7, 2014).

Curtis scored 52 of a possible 112 points on the WAS. This low score indicates that Curtis was “upset” about writing. This example of Curtis’s writing provides a better understanding of the factors that might affect a student’s attitude towards writing, such as being overly tired during the writing lesson.

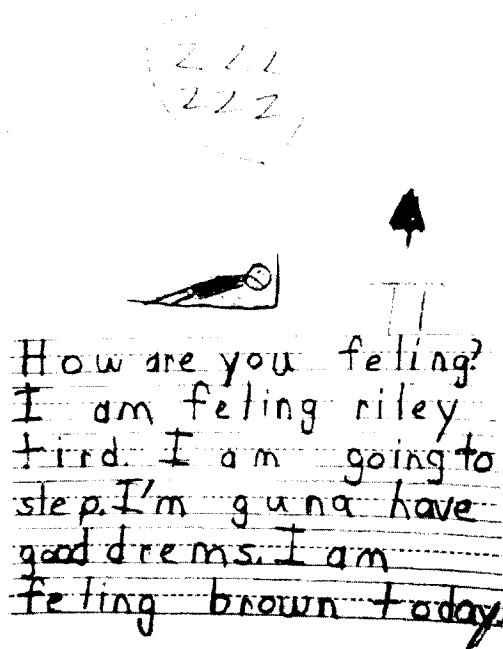


Figure 5. Curtis's Use of "Feelings" Words.

An interesting finding came from examining Wayne's scores. Wayne, a student in Elizabeth's classroom, scored 111 out of 112 points, representing the highest WAS score of all the first graders. During the administration of the WAS, Wayne circled all the "very happy" Garfield characters before the first question was asked (observation, February 19, 2014). The researcher gave him an unused WAS and repeated the instructions to wait until each question was asked before circling how he felt for that question. Again, he circled answers for all 28 questions before the researcher asked the first question. He stated, "I LOVE writing, so no matter what you ask, I'm going to say I LOVE writing" (observation, February 19, 2014). Then, he jumped out of his chair and hugged his teacher.

This observation provides an example of the factors that can foster or hinder students' writing self-efficacy. According to his teacher, writing was a hard skill for Wayne, and he had difficulty with his handwriting and fine motor skills (see Figure 6 for

an example of Wayne's handwriting). When considered together, the teacher's input and Wayne's actions indicate that although he had difficulty with his fine motor skills, he still loved writing. The researcher correlated his love of writing to his close relationship with his teacher, which was demonstrated when he jumped up to hug his teacher. Elizabeth mentioned that he hugged her all the time; in her opinion, he loved writing because he knew how much she loved writing (observation, February 19, 2014). However, another potential interpretation of Wayne's high score on the WAS is that he might not have fully understood the purpose of the survey.

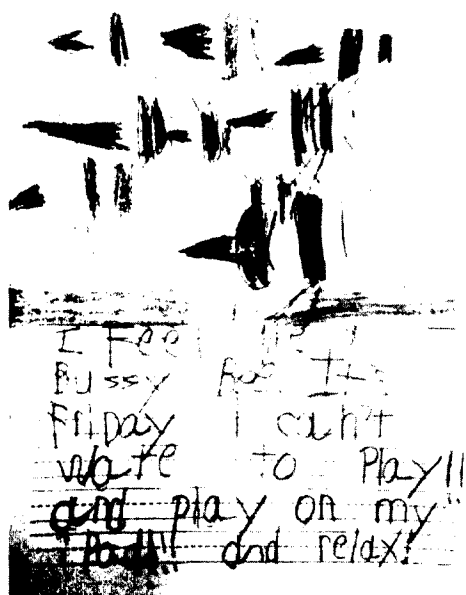


Figure 6. Wayne's Handwriting Sample.

One noteworthy aspect should be considered when analyzing the WAS results. During the survey administration in both classrooms, at least one student in each class talked about how hard it was to take the WAS. When the researcher asked why it was hard, a student in Elizabeth's class responded,

You only have choices for “very happy,” “happy,” “somewhat upset,” and “upset.” But I’m just nervous about some of those questions and that’s not one of the choices. Like, I’d be nervous to write to my favorite author because I don’t know her. (observation, February 19, 2014)

Another student in LeAnne’s class said they did not know how to respond to the question asking how they would feel about writing a report because he did not know what a report was. The student suggested that the survey should have a “not sure” or “I don’t know” answer for him to choose from (observation, February 19, 2014).

The issues mentioned by the students might have skewed the results and could lead to an inaccurate assessment of how they truly felt about writing. Furthermore, the authors of the WAS purported that the 28-item survey can be administered within 10 to 15 minutes (Kear et al., 2000), but the researcher found that it took almost three times as long to administer. The length of the survey might have made some of the students tired during its administration. For these reasons, the researcher chose to use an informal, rather than formal, analysis of the raw scores and to triangulate the findings from all the quantitative and qualitative data focusing on students’ self-efficacy; this triangulation strengthened the validity of this study.

Category 2: Motivation

This second overarching category of Motivation contains two subcategories: Internal Motivation and External Motivation. The findings for this category will be analyzed using interview data, observational data, and students’ work and will be further triangulated with findings from the TCWPS data.

Subcategory 1: Internal Motivation

The study participants’ statements in the interviews were used to develop the codes that led to the Internal Motivation subcategory; these statements include phrases

such as “they would choose” and “self-selected.” This subcategory was analyzed using interview data, observational data, and students’ work.

Share writing. To internally motivate their students to write, the teachers utilized the strategy of offering their students numerous opportunities to share their written works, especially when the written work was personally meaningful to the student. During one observation in LeAnne’s class, she asked the students to choose whom they would want to write a letter to that day (observation, March 10, 2014). One student, Lynda, wrote about when her mom went to Afghanistan and that she was sad because her mom was gone for a very long time (Figure 7). When she finished writing, she asked if she could read it to the class. Some students told her they were sorry she was so sad. This appeared to make Lynda happy that she shared her writing, and she smiled and went back to her desk.

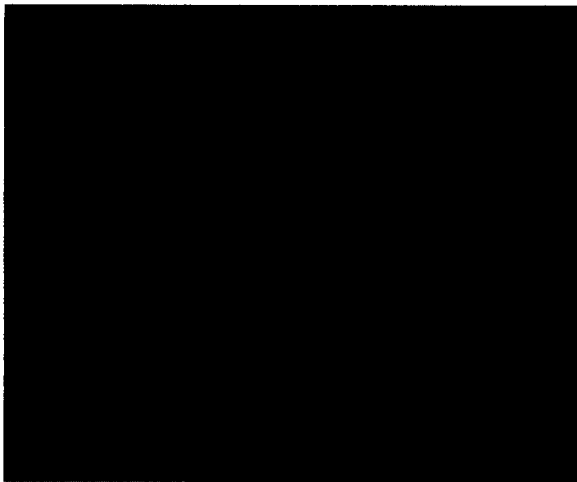


Figure 7. Lynda’s Shared Writing.

This writing sample shows a personal topic that the student was interested in writing about and sharing with the class; allowing students to write about a personal and meaningful event in their lives and then share their writing with the class can internally motivate a student to write.

When asked during her interview about students sharing their writing with the class, Elizabeth noted that she allotted time each day for students to share their work. She stated,

They only have to share if they want to...they don't have to. Some of them want me to read it and some kids want to read it on their own. We read stories at snack time because that's when everyone is focused. It's a perfect time and they really liked it. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This allotted time for sharing was observed one day after the writing lesson was over (observation, March 10, 2014). At snack time, the teacher asked the students to take out their snacks. Before she could say anything else, numerous students took out recent stories they had completed and started jumping up and down in excitement because they wanted to read their stories to the class. This example illustrates another motivational technique teachers can use. These students were internally motivated to share their stories with their peers without any prompting from the teacher.

Subcategory 2: External Motivation

The codes that helped develop the External Motivation subcategory include phrases such as “kids want me to read” and “get their imagination.” This subcategory was analyzed using interview and observational data.

During the interview, LeAnne shared her thoughts regarding motivation for writing and helping students enjoy writing in their classroom. She said,

I think that, first of all, making it fun and coming up with exciting activities to get their imagination in the right place. Making it fun and making it first-grade friendly will help get their attention. (Interview, February 9, 2014)

This statement illustrates what externally motivates students to want to write, such as when the teacher makes the work fun and assigns activities that capture students' imagination.

Another example of an externally motivating technique that LeAnne utilized in her classroom occurred one morning during an observation of letter writing. During this writing session, the students wrote about their feelings. One student, Jimmy, wrote a letter to his friend about being sad that his dog died. When the student read his letter to her, LeAnne said, "Wow! Amazing! That wording you used in your letter will really let your friend know how sad you are. Good letter" (observation, March 11, 2014). Jimmy happily went back to his seat and said to his revision partner, "She REALLY liked my letter!" (observation, March 10, 2014). This example illustrates another technique of externally motivating students to write; a teacher can motivate students to write by using encouraging words such as "wow" and "amazing" in response to the students' written works.

Elizabeth also noted how important motivation is in first graders' writing. She said she often had students bring in a favorite book, toy, or object from home that they wanted to write about in the writing center. During her interview, Elizabeth talked about a time when a student brought in a book that inspired a writing activity. She said,

One of my kids brought in a book and it was about animals. It was about animals that had one head and a different body. I said, "We can write about that!" They were very excited and went right into their writing centers to create their monsters and stories. They were very motivated to write! (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This statement shows that Elizabeth recognized that a student bringing in his favorite book about animals could motivate her students to want to write.

Writing centers. Another motivational technique that both teachers incorporated into their writing lessons was the use of writing centers. The writing centers served as an external motivator for their students. For example, in both classrooms, students were allowed to get a clipboard and a pillow and then sit anywhere in the room they wanted for a self-selected writing center as long as they stayed on task. They were allowed to move freely around the room to get pencils, papers, dictionaries, or anything else they needed to help them complete their writing task.

The students in both classes were also allowed to choose any other student they wished to work with during their writing center time. If students felt they needed a quiet space for their writing center, they took out an “office” for their desks, which was a manila folder they could open up and stand on the desks. Both teachers noted that they strongly believed in allowing their students to have free choice about where they wanted to write. When asked during the interview if the students had a set place in the classroom for their writing centers, Elizabeth explained why she let students write anywhere they wished. She said,

They do not have a specific writing center. They can write anywhere they want to write. This is probably something I learned probably five, six, or seven years ago from the second-grade teacher. I had gone into her room and her kids were just spread out everywhere. She said, “some kids do best on their stomachs, some do best at their desks, some do better sitting in a corner. You know, wherever...as long as they can focus, they can go anywhere.” I tell my kids “if you want to get your clipboards, you can take your writing anywhere in the room.” Then, they’re off to find a spot and they start writing. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This quote and observation of the teachers' rooms demonstrate that when a teacher lets students create a writing center anywhere in the classroom and choose their writing partner, the students can be motivated to want to write more.

Write at own pace. During the 10-week study, both teachers consistently allowed students to write at their own pace, which motivated students to want to write. For example, in LeAnne's class, Sam took a long time to think about what he wanted to write about (observation, February 17, 2014). LeAnne suggested that he first draw a picture of something he was interested in and then use the picture to get ideas for what he wanted to write about. By the end of the 45-minute lesson, most of the class had finished their writing, but Sam had only finished his picture and written one word. LeAnne complimented him on his drawing and told him not to worry about not finishing because they would come back to the writing assignment later in the week. Sam was happy that he could work on his story later. LeAnne said she wanted her children to enjoy writing and not to feel pressure to rush the thought processes behind writing. This observation shows how pacing according to students' needs can motivate students to enjoy writing more.

When asked during the interview about pacing writing lessons in her classroom, Elizabeth said,

You have to understand as a teacher that not all children learn or work at the same rate and that it is going to be difficult at times and you are going to really have to sit down and say, "ok, I've got someone who is really high in writing and finishes the writing task quickly. Then, I've got some students who are really struggling to finish the writing task," and I have to ask myself how I am going to work with them to get them to keep going on with their writing tasks. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

Elizabeth's statement demonstrates her understanding that children have different needs when they write and that by allowing students to work at their own rate and pace, she supported and motivated her students to want to keep writing.

To triangulate the findings from the narrative data, observational data, and students' work, the researcher used the TCWPS to support the findings within the overarching category of motivation. For this category, an item response analysis was employed for the fifth factor (Promoting Motivation) on the TCWPS. LeAnne's mean score on the Promoting Motivation factor was 4.5 (SD = 1.6). Elizabeth's mean score was 6.2 (SD = 1.2). A higher score means that the teacher believes writing instruction should include sharing writing with peers, modeling a love of writing, publishing students' works, reading the teacher's own writing, including writing centers, and allowing students to select topics (Cutler & Graham, 2008). LeAnne's responses on the Promoting Motivation factor indicate that she engaged in these practices several times a month. Elizabeth's responses indicate that she utilized these writing practices between several times a week and daily. Both teachers' results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

TCWPS: Factor Results for Both Teachers for Promoting Motivation

Teacher Classroom Writing Practice Factor	LeAnne's Scores	Elizabeth's Scores
Factor: Promoting Motivation		
• Share writing with peers	4	5
• Model enjoyment or love of writing	7	7
• Publishing	4	4
• Teacher reads own writing	2	7
• Writing centers	6	7
• Student selection of writing topic	4	7

Category 3: Assessment

The third overarching category that emerged from the data is the category of Assessment and its two subcategories: Teachers Monitoring Writing Progress and Students Monitoring Own Writing Progress. This section will discuss the findings for both subcategories, which were analyzed using interview, observational, and survey data as well as rubric samples from students' work.

Subcategory 1: Teachers Monitoring Writing Progress

The codes that helped develop this category were based on participants' interview statements, which included phrases such as "rubrics" and "portfolios." This subcategory was analyzed using interview data and observational data.

During the 10-week study, both teachers were observed using their students' writing and rubrics to monitor writing progress. For each writing activity included in a student's portfolio, both teachers attached writing rubrics evaluating specific aspects of the assigned writing task. In response to an interview question regarding how she evaluated students' writing in her classroom, Elizabeth responded, "I use rubrics to help me, so with each writing, the rubrics may change depending on what I'm teaching" (Interview, February 10, 2014).

Elizabeth reported that she utilized rubrics from the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model to assess her students' writing. She said she also evaluated and assessed students with daily observations. She reported that she sometimes customized the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model's rubric to ensure that it provided an accurate assessment of the particular traits the students were working on for a given writing task. For example, if she had not yet taught the writing trait of presentation skills, then she would not include it on the rubric.

She said,

I use the rubrics to guide me in my teaching. The rubrics give me a chance to know who grasps the concept quickly and who might need a bit more assistance and who may really need me to sit down with them and revisit some writing process skills. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

Elizabeth's statement that the rubrics helped her determine "who grasps the concepts quickly and who needs a bit more assistance" shows how rubrics can help teachers monitor their students' writing progress.

Figure 8 shows one of Elizabeth's student writing rubrics chosen from one of the randomly selected student portfolios from her classroom. The rubric illustrates how Elizabeth utilized rubrics to monitor her students' writing progress. This rubric helped Elizabeth evaluate a student's writing on a particular writing topic earlier in the year. The teacher used the rubric to assess the student on ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. This scored rubric shows that the student scored highly on this task, receiving 31 of a possible 35 points.

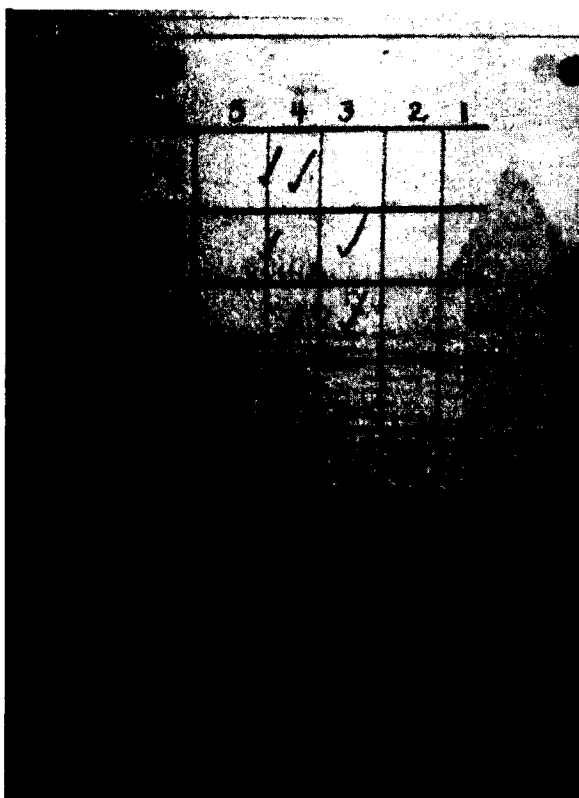


Figure 8. Elizabeth's Student Writing Rubric.

The rubric shown in Figure 9 illustrates how rubrics were utilized during the writing assessment process in LeAnne's classroom. This rubric was selected from a randomly selected student's portfolio in LeAnne's classroom. This primary scoring rubric allowed LeAnne to evaluate a student's writing in relation to the "ideas" writing trait.

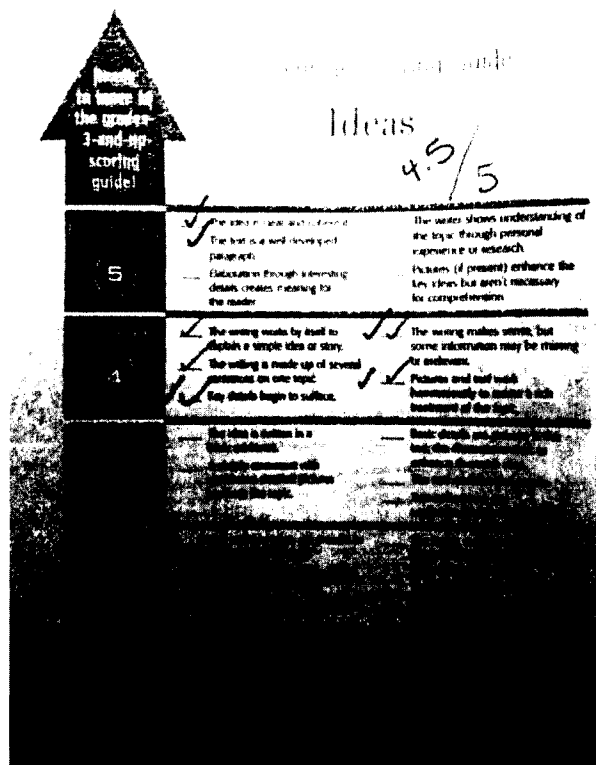


Figure 9. LeAnne's Writing Rubric.

In this example, LeAnne gave the student a score of 4.5 of a possible 5 points for this particular writing task. During her interview, LeAnne said she used this rubric when teaching lessons to specifically help her students in areas where they exhibited weaker writing skills to “get them stronger in that area” (Interview, February 9, 2014).

Subcategory 2: Students Monitoring Own Writing Progress

The codes used to develop this subcategory were based on the participants' statements, which included phrases such as “working with a friend” and “talk to a friend.” This subcategory was analyzed using interview data and observational data.

As previously mentioned, LeAnne discussed how she utilized rubrics to evaluate her students' writing. In addition, LeAnne incorporated rubrics to help her students monitor their own writing progress. In response to an interview question regarding how

she utilized rubrics in her classroom as an evaluation and assessment tool, she responded,

We use rubrics to evaluate. So, depending on what it is we want to focus on assessing at a that time, then we will make the students aware so that they know what to expect and to know what we are working on. (Interview, February 9, 2014)

Elizabeth also incorporated methods for students to monitor their own writing. She incorporated the TAG technique, in which “T” means “tell someone,” “A” means “ask someone a question about their writing,” and “G” means “give someone a compliment about their writing” (Interview, February 10, 2014). Elizabeth used this technique during one observation when the students were revising their writing (observation, March 11, 2014). The students chose their own revision partners and then practiced the TAG technique, which helped them discover any mistakes in their written work.

The researcher used the TCWPS to triangulate and support the findings from the interview data and observational data. For this category, an item response analysis was employed for the sixth factor (Assessment) of the TCWPS. LeAnne’s mean score on the Assessment factor was 3.25 (SD = 0.43), while Elizabeth’s mean score was 6 (SD = 1.23). A higher score indicates that the teacher believes writing instruction should involve teachers and students monitoring the writing process, include writing portfolios, and use writing rubrics for writing tasks (Cutler & Graham, 2008). LeAnne’s responses show that she engaged in these practices monthly. Elizabeth’s responses indicate that she utilized these practices on a daily basis. Both teachers’ results are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

TCWPS: Assessment Factor Results for Both Teachers

Teacher Classroom Writing Practice Factor	LeAnne's Scores	Elizabeth's Scores
Factor 6: Assessment		
• Teacher monitors writing process	3	7
• Student monitors writing process	3	7
• Writing portfolios	4	4
• Use of rubrics	3	6

Category 4: Instructional Practices

The codes for the Instructional Practices category were based on participants' interview statements, such as "you will model for them what it looks like," "write an example with them," "start off by brainstorming," and "teach through the writing process." This section includes findings on three subcategories that emerged from the data: Teaching Approach, Supports Students' Writing, and Teaching Writing Skills and Strategies. This category and the three subcategories are analyzed using interview quotes, observational data, teacher surveys, and student work.

The TCWPS was administered to each of the teachers in their classrooms immediately following their individual interviews. The TCWPS comprises four sections:

- Section I: Teachers provide descriptive information on educational level, gender, ethnicity, class size, and years spent teaching.
- Section II: Four questions, which use a six-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, assess teachers' attitudes towards writing and teaching this skill and their perceptions regarding their effectiveness to manage the writing classroom and teach writing.
- Section III: Teachers report how much time is spent teaching writing and how much time they spend teaching skills and writing processes.

- Section IV: Questions are 41 Likert-type items focusing on a specific activity or instructional procedure and how often the practices are applied.

These sections include analyses of the teachers' responses for each factor on the TCWPS to describe the subcategories that emerged from the data. The first subcategory, Teaching Approach, was analyzed using the responses from section I and section III on the TCWPS and through interview quotes, observational data, and students' work. The second subcategory, Supports Students' Writing, was analyzed using responses from section IV on the TCWPS and was triangulated with findings from the narrative data, observational data, and students' work. The third subcategory, Teaching Skills and Strategies, was analyzed by examining all the responses from the following TCWPS factors: Teaching Basic Writing Skills, Teaching Writing Process, and General Instructional Procedures.

Subcategory 1: Teaching Approach

The first subcategory that emerged from the data was Teaching Approach, which focuses on teaching writing in first-grade classrooms. This subcategory was developed by coding the participants' interview statements, which included language such as "just work on your ideas today," "just illustrate today," and "I know my plan could change as I'm teaching for various reasons." This subcategory was further analyzed using a constant comparison of the narrative data and observational data. The following section includes analyses of section I of the TCWPS, which supports this subcategory, and section III of the TCWPS, which assesses the writing activities that teachers assign throughout the year.

The participating teachers completed section I of the TCWPS, which provided information about themselves; the make-up of their classrooms; their perceptions and attitudes about writing and writing instruction; and their writing practices in their current classrooms. Both teachers reported that they used a combination of process and traditional approaches to teaching writing in their classrooms. This combined approach was observed in LeAnne's classroom when she worked on a writing task with a student named Adam (observation, February 19, 2014). The students' writing task that day involved writing about how they would feel about riding on a roller coaster. The class had just read the book *Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee, which described feelings related to riding on a roller coaster. Since Adam was not interested in writing about roller coasters, LeAnne allowed him to write about a more pressing feeling he had, which was related to the changes he was going through in his home life. When Adam asked how much he had to write for the writing task that day, LeAnne responded by saying that writing or composing is "not about using up all of the paper. It's about painting a picture with your words to express your feelings. When you've expressed all of your feelings, then you are done writing" (observation, February 19, 2014). Adam began writing with a renewed focus on the writing task for the day. He wrote about being unhappy that his mom got remarried and made him change his last name. He also wrote about his new stepparent being "mean" to him and that he wanted his old last name back (observation, February 19, 2014). LeAnne stated that when she allowed children to write about other things rather than writing about the assigned task, she learned more about her students, including what they liked and did not like and what might cause them to not focus on the lesson, as was the case with Adam (observation, February 19, 2014).

This episode illustrated LeAnne's combined approach to teaching. The process approach LeAnne used was to emphasize for Adam the process of expressing his feelings. She also utilized a traditional approach to teaching writing by encouraging Adam to use his "feelings" words, which are part of the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model's curriculum.

During her interview, Elizabeth expressed her belief in letting children write about things that are meaningful to them, which is part of the process approach to writing. Elizabeth said,

I don't tell the kids, "This is what you are going to write about." I'll just say, "Here's our big idea...it's winter...what do you want to write about?" instead of saying, "Ok, it's winter. You're going to write about building a snowman right now and you're going to tell me the steps and then you're done." I let them take off (with their writing) because watching their imaginations is great. Or, the ones who might not want to do it, if you tell them they have to write it a certain way or write a certain thing, then there is no fun in it. They are not excited. For the kid who is not excited, and you give them an option of "what's something you do want to write about?" then all of a sudden, it's like, "Wow! I have the power to decide for myself." Then, they think about it then decide on what to write. I'll say to them, "If this topic [their own choice of topic] interests you, then go with it and let's see what happens!" (Interview, February 10, 2014)

When Elizabeth asked her students what they wanted to write about, she used the process approach by allowing her students to choose a topic of interest that was meaningful to them.

Elizabeth's process approach, in which she allowed students to write about what they were interested in, was observed during one writing session when Clarissa became upset and did not want to write about that day's writing task, which involved writing about feelings related to riding on a roller coaster (observation, March 10, 2014). Elizabeth asked Clarissa what she wanted to write about instead of writing about roller coasters. Clarissa said she was feeling sad and happy at the same time and that she

wanted to write about an upcoming visit from her cousins. Clarissa wrote that she was sad her cousin was sick but was happy at the same time because her cousin was coming to visit her (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Clarissa's Writing about Feelings.

Clarissa's writing sample demonstrates Elizabeth's combined approach to teaching writing in the classroom. By allowing Clarissa to write about another topic that she was interested in, thus letting her write for real and authentic reasons, the teacher utilized the process approach to teaching writing. Elizabeth also used a traditional approach to teaching writing in that she still taught Clarissa how to include "feelings" words in her writing.

The researcher analyzed section III of the TCWPS to further describe the teachers' approaches to teaching writing and the types of assignments they assigned and to triangulate the findings with the qualitative data for this subcategory. On section III of the TCWPS, the teachers were asked to indicate which writing activities students would

work on during the academic year. This list contained 21 options ranging from *worksheets* to *writing to inform*. Both teachers reported utilizing the same 16 writing activities in each of their respective classrooms for the academic year:

- stories;
- drawing a picture and writing something to go with it;
- writing letters to another person;
- journal writing;
- completing worksheets;
- writing to persuade;
- lists;
- books;
- copying text;
- brochures;
- personal narratives;
- writing in response to material read;
- poems;
- writing to inform;
- brochures; and
- thank-you notes.

During the 10-week study, the following writing activities were seen either during the classroom writing lessons, hanging on the wall of the classrooms, or in the students' writing portfolios. Of the 16 reported writing activities, 12 were found or observed in

both teachers' classrooms during the study: stories; drawing a picture and writing something to go with it; writing a letter; journal writing; writing worksheets; lists; personal narratives; writing in response to material read; brochures; thank-you notes; making lists; and writing to inform. The researcher collected a random sample of three students' writing portfolios from each of the teachers' classrooms to analyze the types of writing tasks assigned before the beginning of the study. Only two samples of writing were in each student's writing portfolio at the beginning of the study. LeAnne and Elizabeth each sent home everything in the writing portfolios every two to four weeks, so there were only one or two pieces of writing in the portfolios at any given time. This data collection method informed the research question regarding the types of writing assignments teachers assign to their first-grade students.

The three randomly selected student portfolios examined from LeAnne's class were from Kirk, Solana, and Karissa. The figures below show one writing assignment from each of the three students. Figure 11 shows Kirk's personal narrative about his enjoyment of skateboarding. Figure 12 shows Solana's drawing of a picture and her writing about being happy when she is swimming. Figure 13 shows Karissa's writing about how she felt the first time she went to a skate park. These writing samples show three writing activities (personal narrative, drawing with writing, writing about feelings) and confirm that LeAnne's reported assigned writing activities from the TCWPS were consistent with the observed assignments given to her students during writing instruction.

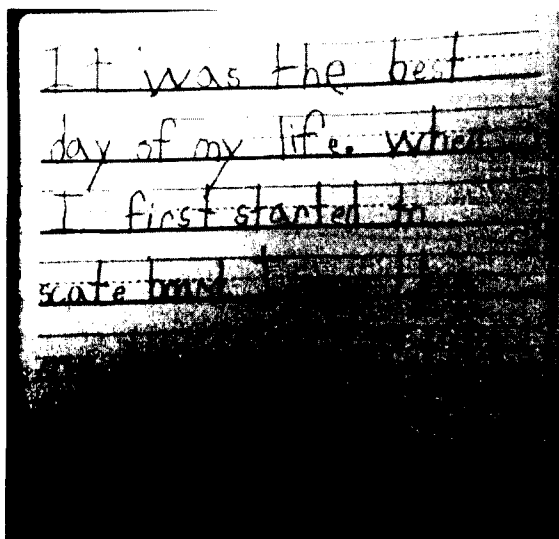


Figure 11. Kirk's Personal Narrative.

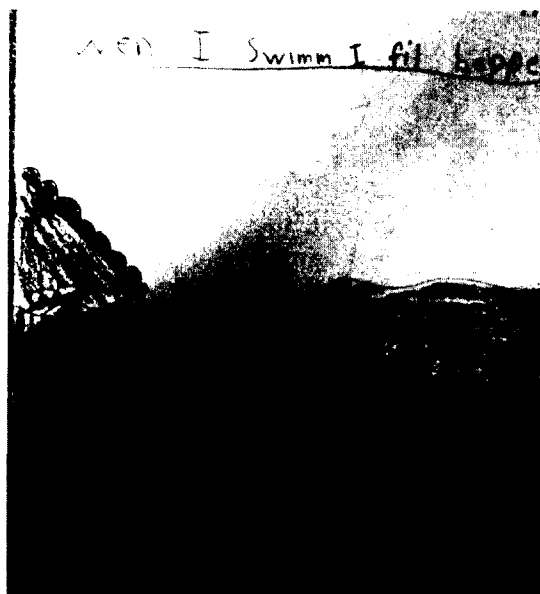


Figure 12. Solana's Drawing with Writing.

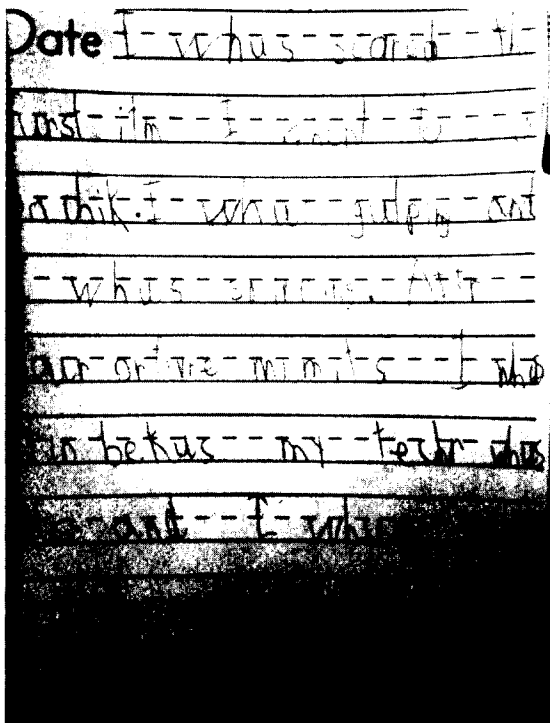


Figure 13. Karissa's Writing about Feelings.

The three randomly selected student portfolios from Elizabeth's class were from Kyle, Jasmine, and Lana. These figures show one writing assignment from each of these students. Figure 14 shows Kyle's response to reading about segregation in which he compares the plain-bellied Sneetches characters from the Dr. Seuss book *The Sneetches and Other Stories* to black people during the era of segregation. Figure 15 shows Jasmine's response to the writing prompt "when I am 100 years old..." in which she writes about rocking in her rocking chair, eating in a wheelchair, going on a ramp, and playing with her great-grandchildren. Figure 16 shows Lana's apology letter to a leprechaun named Lucky for always blaming tricks on him. These samples show three writing activities (response to reading, writing prompt, letter) and confirm Elizabeth's reported classroom writing activities. Due to the limited scope of the study, the researcher was not able to confirm that all 16 activities listed by the teachers occurred over the

course of a year in their classrooms.

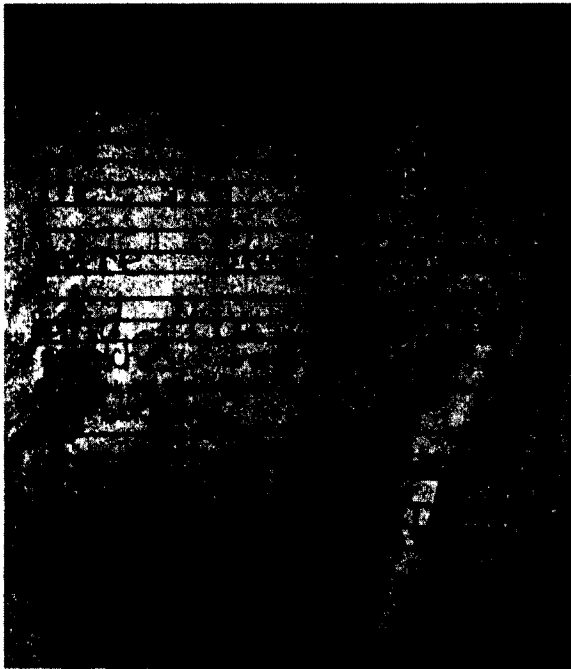


Figure 14. Kyle's Response to Reading.

When I'm 100 Years Old . . .



when I'm 100 years old
I will be in a rocking chair
I will rock in my rocking
chair reading, watching, knitting,
and my grand kids will be with
my great great great grand children
I would have a lot of fun
At dinner time I would sit
in my wheel chair
and go down a special ramp

Figure 15. Jasmine's Response to Writing Prompt.

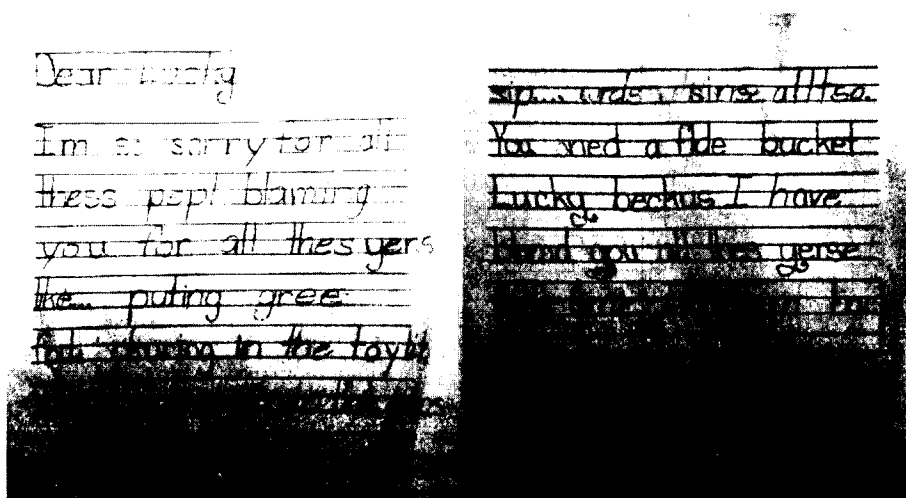


Figure 16. Lana's Letter to a Leprechaun.

Subcategory 2: Supports Students' Writing

The codes developed for this subcategory were based on participants' phrases from the interviews such as "graphic organizer," "just do your best," "you're there to help them," and "invented spelling." This subcategory was analyzed using interview quotes, observational data, teacher surveys, and student work. This section presents a detailed description of section IV of the TCWPS and an analysis of the teachers' responses for the Supports Students' Writing factor. The findings for this factor are triangulated using interview data, observational data, and students' works.

Section IV of the TCWPS contains 41 Likert-type items. These items focus on specific activities or instructional procedures, and teachers are asked to indicate how often these practices are utilized using an eight-point scale: 1 (never), 2 (several times a year) 3 (monthly), 4 (several times a month), 5 (weekly), 6 (several times a week), 7 (daily), and 8 (several times a day). A higher score indicates that an activity or procedure occurs more often in the classroom (Cutler & Graham, 2008). The following factors were analyzed for this study and were intermingled on the scale: Supports Students Writing,

Teaching Basic Writing Skills, Teaching Writing Process, General Instructional Procedures, Promoting Motivation, and Assessment. Three of the factors on the scale (Computers and Diction, Home Environment, and Extending Writing to Content Areas) were not included in the analysis because they were not related to the focus of this inquiry.

Of the questions, 11 ask how often teachers, students, or both engage in particular activities that support the development of students' writing products (coefficient alpha .78) (Cutler & Graham, 2008). These items focus on teacher and student conferences, student-to-student conferences, advanced planning strategies, using graphic organizers, revising, students helping other students, writing at the student's own pace, invented spelling, using writing prompts, dictation instruction, and using computers for writing. Six items focus on how often teachers directly teach the following basic writing skills (coefficient alpha .84): handwriting, grammar, spelling, sentence construction, capitalization, and punctuation (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Four items assess how often writing processes were directly taught (coefficient alpha .85), including modeling writing strategies, teaching text organization, teaching planning strategies, and teaching revising strategies (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Three items assess general instructional procedures (coefficient alpha .62), such as re-teaching skills, teaching mini-lessons, and setting multiple goals for writing lessons (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Six items focus on motivational activities and procedures (coefficient alpha .70), such as giving students a choice of writing topics, sharing students' writing with peers, publishing students' work, students working independently at the classroom writing center, teachers demonstrating their passion for writing, and teachers sharing their own writing with students (Cutler &

Graham, 2008). Four items measure how often the following assessment practices are used (coefficient alpha .75): teachers monitoring students' writing progress, students' self-monitoring, and using rubrics and writing portfolios (Cutler & Graham, 2008).

For this survey, the teachers' scores on each factor on the survey were computed by averaging the scores for each of the items included in that factor. A higher score indicates that the teacher emphasized the importance of the construct measured by that particular factor (Cutler & Graham, 2008).

Supports students' writing with graphic organizers. Both teachers employed the strategy of incorporating graphic organizers during writing instruction to support students' writing. Both teachers reported using graphic organizers such as bubble maps, four squares, y-charts, Venn diagrams, and compare and contrast charts. The teachers stated that they chose the type of graphic organizer based on the writing concept they would be teaching in a specific lesson.

During the introduction of each new 6+1 writing trait, LeAnne gave each student a graphic organizer and had the students write down the main idea of the lesson in the center bubble of the graphic organizer. Then, she brainstormed words that could go with the main idea with the students. On one occasion, LeAnne introduced "zippy" verbs that could be used in writing. To introduce "zippy" verbs as good word choices, LeAnne read the book *If You're a Monster and You Know It* by Rebecca Emberley and Ed Emberley (observation, March 6, 2014). After reading the book, the students put the word "monsters" in the center of the graphic organizer. The students then brainstormed a list of all the things the monsters did in the story. Their list included words such as "snort," "giggle," "wiggle," "slap," "clap," "smack," "fight," and "twitch." After the students

completed their graphic organizers, they created their own monsters and wrote stories about all the “zippy” things their monsters could do.

Elizabeth also utilized various graphic organizers, such as semantic webs and bubble maps, to help students organize their ideas and thoughts before beginning any writing assignment. Elizabeth recounted an occasion when she used a graphic organizer to write a funny story about how to dress an animal.

Just recently, we finished a writing about “animals should definitely not wear.” We brainstormed tons of animals... “pretend you are in a zoo,” “pretend you are at a farm,” “pretend you are in the ocean”... we just came up with all sorts of animals. They would choose an animal and then they would be thinking about something silly their animal could wear and what would happen if they wore it. I then stuck their illustrations of their animals onto a graphic organizer. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

Elizabeth explained that after the students finished filling in their graphic organizers for what their animal should not wear, they wrote their stories. Figure 17 shows the writing outcome for Annabelle, who was given a graphic organizer to help organize her thoughts when writing a story about a silly monkey who should not wear princess dresses.

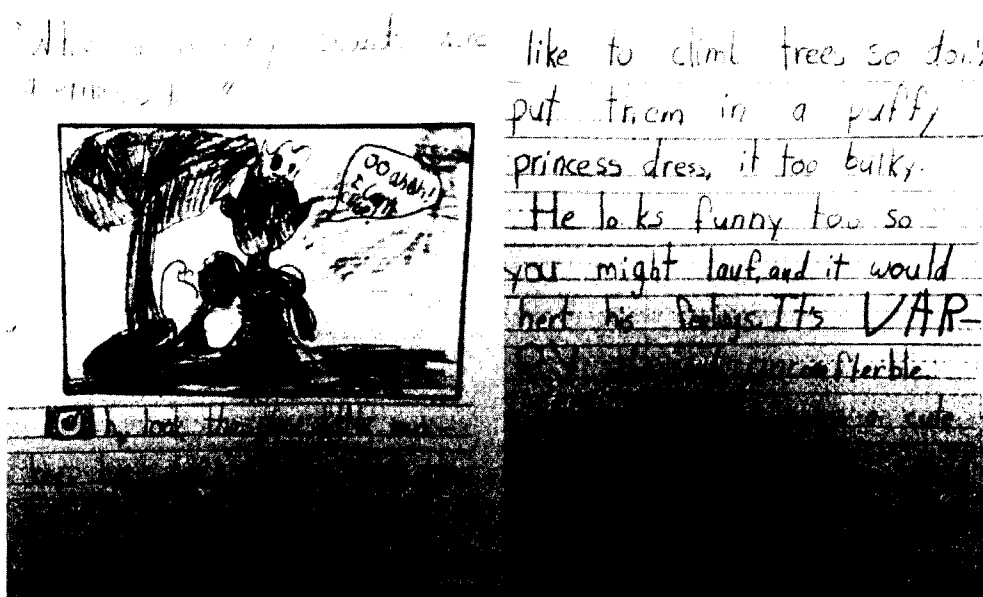


Figure 17. Annabelle's Silly Animal Story.

Figure 17, Elizabeth's interview statement, and the observation from LeAnne's classroom show how a teacher's use of a graphic organizer can help a student focus their thought processes and can lead to a published work, such as this silly animal story.

Supports students' writing with literature. An observation in Elizabeth's classroom revealed another strategy (the use of literature) she incorporated in her lesson to support student writing (observation, March 13, 2014). Earlier that week, Elizabeth read her students the book *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids* by Carol McCloud. The book was about adding happiness (filling a person's bucket) to a person's life instead of taking away happiness (emptying a person's bucket) from someone's life. Elizabeth reported that she used literature on a weekly basis because it sparked the students' imaginations, acted as a springboard for talking about specific writing components she wanted the students to focus on (e.g., "zippy" verbs), and kept the students motivated and interested in writing. Figure 18 illustrates Larry's incorporation of a literary theme (i.e., filling someone's bucket) into his empathetic letter

to Lucky. Larry's letter expresses his sorrow about blaming Lucky for certain acts, such as putting green food coloring in the toilet.



Figure 18. Larry's Letter to Lucky after Conferencing with Teacher.

Supports students' writing with teacher conferences. In addition to using literature as a support, the teachers in both classes incorporated teacher-led conferences that supported students' writing. During one observed conference, LeAnne asked one of her students to read his writing to her (observation, March 13, 2014). After he finished reading it, LeAnne noticed that he had not used any punctuation marks. She read his story back to him without pausing, and the student noticed that he had written a long, run-on sentence. LeAnne then sat down to conference with him and worked on putting the correct punctuation in his writing. This example illustrates the types of supports that are available to students in the teachers' classrooms for writing, such as one-to-one student conferences with the teacher.

When asked during her interview about conferencing with her students, Elizabeth replied:

I conference with them daily, some students more than others, depending on their needs. I take their writing home with me to read. This gives me a chance to read it when I can. I sit down and focus on what they have written and write notes and stick it to them. I use sticky notes to tell them what they have done well, ask any questions I may have, and to give suggestions. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This statement illustrates some of the different strategies teachers employ to support students' writing. Elizabeth's use of sticky notes to communicate with the students about their writing is one such strategy for supporting student writing.

Elizabeth had a conference with Larry on the empathetic elements he wanted to put in his letter to Lucky the leprechaun (observation, March 13, 2014). As Elizabeth brainstormed with Larry on what he could say to apologize to Lucky for always blaming him for playing tricks and how that blame might make Lucky feel, Larry suddenly had an idea for extending his writing. He said, "I know! I can tell Lucky that I was sorry for emptying his bucket and I would tell him I would start to fill his bucket again by building him a house that doesn't have a trap!" The teacher said, "Excellent idea Larry! That sounds like a good idea to put in the body of your paragraph in your letter" (observation, March 13, 2014).

This observation shows how Elizabeth's use of the strategy of brainstorming conference during a conference with a student helped the student learn how to include more empathetic elements in his paper. The teacher utilized another support, giving explicit feedback, when she told the student that his idea for information to put in his letter was good.

Supports students' writing with planning. Planning is another way in which the two teachers supported students' writing. Within this subcategory, teachers utilized the following five components in their planning processes: (1) author audience and purposes for writing; (2) activating prior knowledge; (3) considering vocabulary and language use; (4) organizing ideas; and (5) ongoing planning. Each teacher's incorporation of these planning aspects to support students' writing will be discussed below.

Author audience and purposes for writing. During a lesson on writing for authentic audiences, LeAnne discussed making a brochure with information on the city where the school was located; this brochure would be put in the school's front office for prospective parents from out of town (observation, March 13, 2014). She had the students brainstorm places in their area and their suggestions for places to go. The students immediately worked together to determine the best, most exciting places to visit in their area and collaborated on the drawings for the brochure.

During one observation period, Elizabeth had her students write to authentic audiences (observation, February 19, 2014). The students chose who they wanted to write to and told Elizabeth the purpose of the letter. One student, Karen, was excited about an upcoming school event in which she would be performing on stage. She told Elizabeth she wanted to write to her grandparents (the audience) to invite them to the event (the purpose) (Figure 19).

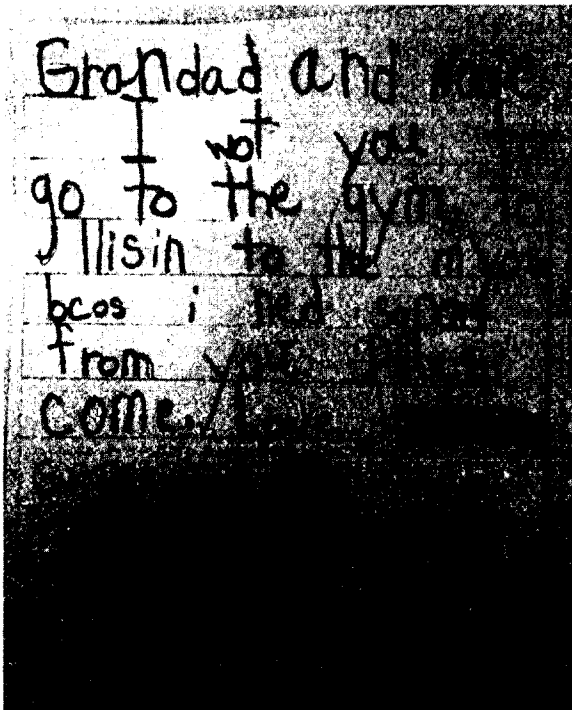


Figure 19. Karen's Authentic Letter Writing.

Activate prior knowledge. Another strategy utilized by the teachers to support students' writing involved helping the students activate their prior knowledge on a particular topic. During one observation, LeAnne activated her students' knowledge to support her students' writing (observation, March 11, 2014). As discussed earlier, LeAnne read the book *If You're a Monster and You Know It* by Rebecca Emberley and Ed Emberley to teach her students about using "zippy" verbs in their writing. To prepare them for the "zippy" words she wanted them to listen for in the book, she took out the book *The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything* by Linda Williams, which she had previously read shared with the class. The students brainstormed about all the "zippy" words from the story they remembered. When they finished brainstorming, she read the book about monsters; the students quickly noticed the "zippy" verbs in the book since LeAnne had activated their previous knowledge about "zippy" verbs.

Elizabeth also utilized this strategy to support her students' writing (observation, February 19, 2014). Elizabeth planned to read a book about Martin Luther King and then have the students write three important facts they learned about Martin Luther King; these facts would be utilized in an informative writing task later in the week. To activate the students' previous knowledge about segregation, she took out the book *If a Bus Could Talk: The Story of Rosa Parks* by Faith Ringgold. The students immediately began discussing everything they learned about Rosa Parks and listed her contributions to the world. Elizabeth wrote down everything the students mentioned on the board. She reminded them of their informative writing assignment on Rosa Park's contributions, which occurred the previous week, and the process of taking notes for their future informative writing piece on Martin Luther King.

Vocabulary and language use. Both teachers incorporated the use of vocabulary and language to help their students write more effectively. During one observation, LeAnne discussed how to come up with "feelings" words. She asked the students to think of words that described how they would feel if they were going on a roller coaster for the first time (observation, February 10, 2014). The students mentioned words such as "hallucinating," "lightheaded," and "nauseous." After LeAnne wrote the vocabulary words on the board, she asked the students to tell the class, in their own words, what each word on the board meant. After the vocabulary lesson on "feelings" words, the students wrote about how they would feel, and they were encouraged to use the words from the class's brainstorming list.

When Sydney, a student in LeAnne's class, began writing about how she would feel riding a roller coaster for the first time, she got up from her desk and went down the

list of vocabulary words to find the exact vocabulary word that would describe her feelings. She used words in her rough draft such as “frightened,” “happy,” “surprised,” “scared,” and “joyful” (Figure 20). LeAnne explained to Sarah that “joyful” and “happy” meant the same thing and “scared” and “frightened” meant the same thing. She shared Sydney’s writing with the class and said,

You guys can use different vocabulary words that mean the same thing, like Sydney did in her writing here with “joyful” and “happy” and with “scared” and “frightened.” You can reach in the vocabulary “bag” in your head to use different words in your writing to make your writing more interesting. (observation, February 10, 2014)

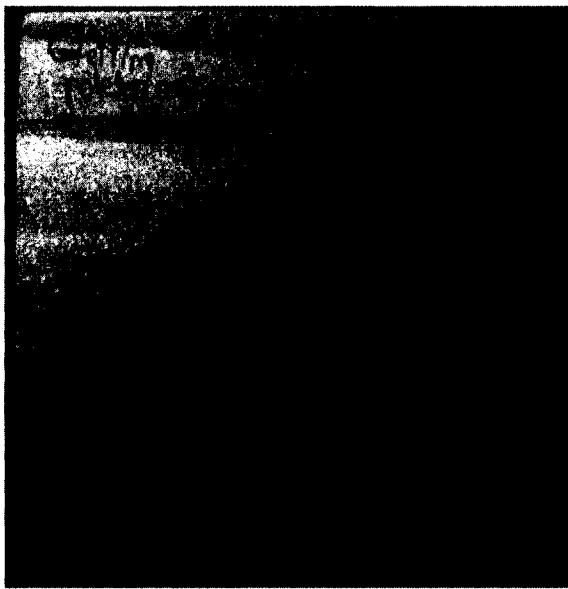


Figure 20. Sydney’s Vocabulary Usage in Writing.

In this example, Sarah wrote that she was “frighed” (frightened) by a roller coaster and that it made her happy, which demonstrates how the teachers’ instruction on vocabulary helped this student on her writing task.

During her interview, Elizabeth mentioned different instructional strategies, such as word studies and language use to support students’ writing. Elizabeth described how

she used her instruction on word studies to increase her students' language use in their writing, which will make their writing more exciting and interesting. Elizabeth said,

For word study, we do what I call "Elmo words" in which it is just like word ladders in which I give them clues as to what the word might be. I incorporate vocabulary words, antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, etc. Each student keeps a word wall book that they've created. It contains sight words, color words, senses and feelings words... whatever kind of words. Then, when they begin writing and they get stuck on what kind of word they want to put in their writing, I'll say, "Let's go to your word wall book and find a word. This book is here for you as a resource to find the words you need for your writing." It even contains a table of contents so they can find the category of words such as feelings words, senses words, etc. pretty quickly. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

Organize ideas. Both teachers had their students keep reflection journals in their desks that were utilized not only to reflect on their learning but also to help organize their thoughts before writing. In both classrooms, the students were observed adding reflections about what they were learning in class, events that occurred at school, or other school experiences on which they wanted to reflect.

One student, Sydney, wanted to understand how she connected in her relationships to others and to God (observation, March 5, 2014). LeAnne said this child attended mass each week and often wanted to write reflections about her time at mass. LeAnne reminded Sydney that she could use her reflection journal to organize her thoughts. The student drew a concept map in her reflection journal to organize her ideas in pictorial form and included all the components she could think of that related to how she connected to God. She drew lines from the main bubble in the middle of the concept map, which contained the word "relationships." Each time she thought of a new connection, she added it to her graphic organizer (Figure 21).



Figure 21. Sydney's Organization of Ideas.

Ongoing planning. Both teachers utilized ongoing planning to support the students' writing. In both classrooms, students were given five different colored pencils, which represented different editing marks that were utilized when the students revised either their own papers or a partner's paper. For example, one student in LeAnne's class forgot to put periods at the end of all her sentences. Her editing partner took out the green pencil, which represented punctuation, and showed the student where all the periods needed to be by putting a small green dot at the end of each sentence. Both teachers kept a "to be finished" basket for students' writing; the students kept writing pieces that needed more work in these baskets.

Supports students' writing with writing prompts. Another technique for supporting students' writing that both teachers used was writing prompts. In one writing lesson in LeAnne's class, she read the book *Chimps Don't Wear Glasses* by Laura Numeroff (observation, March 7, 2014). This led to a lengthy discussion with the class about how funny different animals would look if they wore certain types of clothes. The

students decided they wanted to “dress” an animal, so LeAnne gave them a writing prompt to describe how to dress a turkey; she thought it would be a fun play on words, i.e., you can dress a turkey on Thanksgiving (e.g., with cranberry sauce, spices, etc.) or you can dress a turkey with clothes. Figure 22 shows Lana’s writing describing how she would “dress” her turkey by putting it in a pretty skirt and party hat.

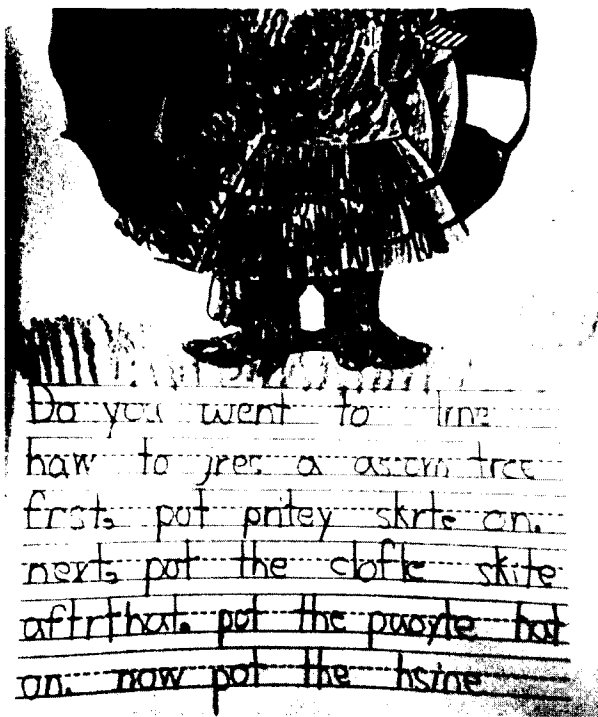


Figure 22. Lana’s Writing about How to Dress a Turkey.

During one observation in Elizabeth’s classroom, she gave her students the prompt to write about things they liked to do, such as playing a favorite sport or game (observation, March 5, 2014). During the prewriting discussion with the class, the students mentioned that they wanted to write instead about favorite places they had visited; Elizabeth thought this collective idea was good. She said, “You know what? Go back to your seat and write about your favorite place...anywhere...no matter what it is.

Think about your favorite place and just write about it” (observation, March 5, 2014). This observation shows how the teacher supported students’ writing by using a class-initiated writing prompt.

Supports students’ writing with peer help and peer conferences. Another strategy both teachers used to support students’ writing was peer conferences and peer partnering within the classroom. During one observation, LeAnne let her students choose another student; each student then read their completed paper to the student they chose (observation, March 6, 2014). The partnering student then talked to the author of the paper and told the author several things he or she liked about it. Then, the partnering student looked at the author’s paper and discussed anything that was unclear or that needed additional information. The reader shared this information with the writer by asking questions such as, “What did you mean here?” and “Can you tell me more about this?” Then, the writer used these exchanges to decide how to revise the paper.

Elizabeth also allowed her students to choose their peer conferencing partner every time a conference was held. Elizabeth began each observed peer conferencing session by telling the students, “Make sure to give two positive comments or two compliments when you meet with your partners” (observation, February 19, 2014). She also reminded the students to help their partner extend their writing by suggesting other things their peer might want to add to their writing to make it more interesting or more complete.

Supports students’ writing with invented spelling. Another strategy that emerged from the data was the use of invented spelling techniques when students work on their writing tasks. LeAnne stated during her interview that she was more concerned

with the students' ideas during the drafting and prewriting stage and only really focused on accurate spelling during the final editing and presentation phase of the process (Interview, February 9, 2014).

Elizabeth also believed in focusing less on spelling in the beginning stages of writing. In response to an interview question regarding her belief in students using correct spelling, Elizabeth explained,

Sometimes my students will want to come up to me and say, "How do you spell such and such" and I'll say "Right now, all I want you to do is write. I'm not worried about punctuation. I'm not worried about capitalization...I'm not worried about spelling...just sound it out and get your thoughts down on paper." That's all I want because I'm so afraid that if they are so focused on how to spell every single word, they are just going to forget what they want to write about. I say, "When we go back to revisions and editing, that's when we will focus on those things." (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This statement demonstrates Elizabeth's fear that students would become too focused on how to spell correctly and forget what they were going to write about, which might hinder the writing process for the students.

The Support Student Writing section of the TCWPS was used to triangulate the findings from the interview data, observational data, and students' work for this subcategory. For this subcategory, an item response analysis was employed for the first factor (Support Student Writing) of the TCWPS. LeAnne's mean score on the Supports Students' Writing factor was 4.7 (SD =1.77); Elizabeth's mean score was 5.2 (SD =1.799). A higher score indicates that the teacher believes writing instruction should include reminders to students regarding correct spelling and grammar (Cutler & Graham, 2002). LeAnne's responses for this factor indicate that she engaged in these practices between several times a month and weekly. Elizabeth's responses on this factor show that she utilized these writing practices weekly or several times a week. Table 14 shows both

teachers' results on the Supports Students' Writing factor.

Table 14

TCWPS: Supports Students' Writing Factor Results for Both Teachers

Teacher Classroom Writing Practice Factor	LeAnne's Scores	Elizabeth's Scores
Factor 1: Supports Students' Writing		
• Graphic organizers	6	7
• Teacher conferences	3	6
• Planning	5	6
• Writing prompts	5	6
• Revising	4	6
• Helping peers with writing	4	7
• Peer conferences		
• Computers	3	4
• Dictation	2	2
• Write at own pace	2	2
• Inventive spelling	6	4
	8	7

Subcategory 3: Teaching Writing Skills and Strategies

The codes used to develop this subcategory were based on participants' phrases from the interviews, such as "vocabulary," "synonyms," "punctuation," and "form words." This subcategory was analyzed using interview quotes, observational data, teacher surveys, and students' work. This section includes a detailed description of the participating school's writing program and an analysis of section IV of the TCWPS, which relates to teachers' classroom practices. The factors included in the TCWPS analysis for this subcategory are Teach Basic Writing Skills, Teaching Writing Process, and General Instructional Procedures.

During the 10 weeks of observations, LeAnne always referred the students to the particular trait they would be working on during that day's writing lesson by pointing it

out on the 6+1 Trait® writing poster. The 6+1 Trait® writing poster hung prominently on the front board as a reference point for the students and as a reminder of the particular trait they were studying. LeAnne also reported using the writing program's rubrics to assess writing. When asked during the interview how she utilized rubrics in her classroom, she responded, "We use rubrics to evaluate...we will teach lessons specifically to help them get stronger in that area and then assess it through a rubric-style assessment" (Interview, February 9, 2014). The rubrics are a vital instructional component of the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model at her school.

Elizabeth also described during the interview how she used the components of the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model to teach writing. She stated,

I just start off by brainstorming. We follow the 6+1 Trait® Writing program that models the writing process. I go step-by-step so they understand what it is they are to do. I teach them conventions, presentation, ideas, organization, voice, and word choice. Those are the things I look at teaching, and I include other things like "what is a paragraph?" (Interview, February 10, 2014)

Teaching basic writing skills. The TCWPS factor Teaching Basic Writing Skills supported the subcategory Teaching Writing Skills and Strategies. This subsection describes how teachers incorporate developmental spelling into their instruction and how they teach students grammar, punctuation, handwriting, and sentence construction skills to help them acquire the necessary skills to become proficient writers. This subsection concludes with an item analysis of the TCWPS factor Teaching Basic Writing Skills for each teacher.

Developmental spelling instruction. Both teachers incorporated developmental spelling instruction as a writing strategy. For example, in one observation of developmental spelling instruction, LeAnne gave her students a sorting activity in which

the students sorted the words by short vowels, long vowels, and digraphs (observation, March 10, 2014). LeAnne had six different spelling groups in her classroom because her students were at different spelling levels. She explained that when a student mastered a certain spelling level, she immediately moved them up to the next spelling level and gave them a new word sort.

During one writing lesson on feelings, a student named Carson asked LeAnne how to spell “died.” LeAnne utilized developmental spelling instruction and said, “Let’s sound it out together. What sound and letter do you hear at the beginning of died?” Carson responded, “D.” Then, LeAnne asked, “What letters do you think go with the middle sound you hear in died?” Carson responded, “I hear an i and a y sound.” Then, LeAnne asked, “What sound and letter do you hear at the end of died?” Carson said, “D.” Shelly responded, “Good job Carson!” (observation, March 11, 2014). Figure 23 shows Carson’s use of invented spelling words, such as “cajis” (“cages”), “falt” (“felt”), and “diyd” (“died”). LeAnne explained that since she had not yet taught the lesson on “ie,” she wanted to support the student’s developmental spelling skills by incorporating invented spelling. She said that as long as a child can read his or her invented spelling, she let them use that spelling until it was time to either teach that particular sound or revise the writing.

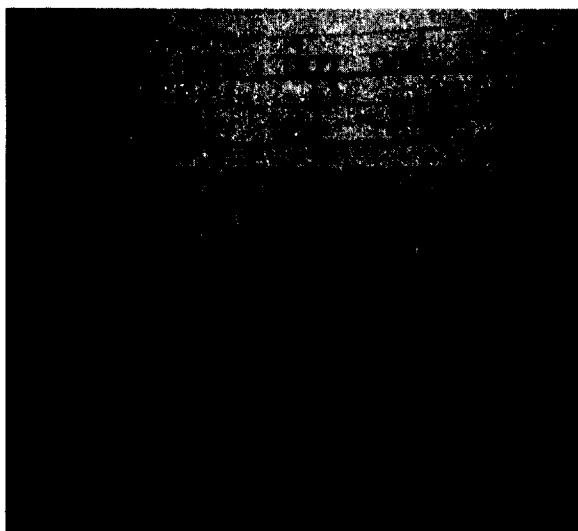


Figure 23. Carson's Writing with Invented Spelling.

During an observation in Elizabeth's classroom, she wanted to review short vowels with students who still had difficulty with those vowels. During the lesson, she drew a table on the board, wrote the vowels "i," "e," and "u" at the beginning of each row of the table, and listed the following words as the headings for the short-vowel columns: "pig," "bed," and "tub" (observation March 11, 2014). Each student was then given the chance to write a short vowel word under each short-vowel column; at the end of the lesson, each student was able to do the activity quickly and accurately. According to Schlagal's (2013) research on developmental spelling, this type of short-vowel word study assists children with automatic word recognition, enhances their sensitivity to letter and sound relationships, and promotes the accurate spelling of short-vowel word patterns.

Grammar, punctuation, and handwriting. In addition to teaching developmental spelling, both teachers instructed their students on basic writing skills such as grammar, punctuation, and handwriting throughout their lessons. For example, LeAnne was often observed conferencing with her students during the revision phase of their writing and pointing out the correct form of grammar usage, reminding them to

make sure they looked for correct punctuation when editing their work, and showing them how to write neatly on their final work. Elizabeth was also observed emphasizing correct grammar, punctuation, and handwriting during the editing phase. As each student in Elizabeth's class finished their letter to Lucky the leprechaun, she reinforced her previous instruction on basic grammar, punctuation, and handwriting and emphasized the use of those skills (observation, March 13, 2014). She also had the students refer to the revision process poster at the front of the room. When Angelina reached the revision process phase of her writing, she went to the poster and began adding the editing marks needed to help her revise her paper. Figure 24 shows Angelina's revision and editing marks, including the “^” symbol, which represents adding a word, and adding extra space to write the word “you” on the second page.

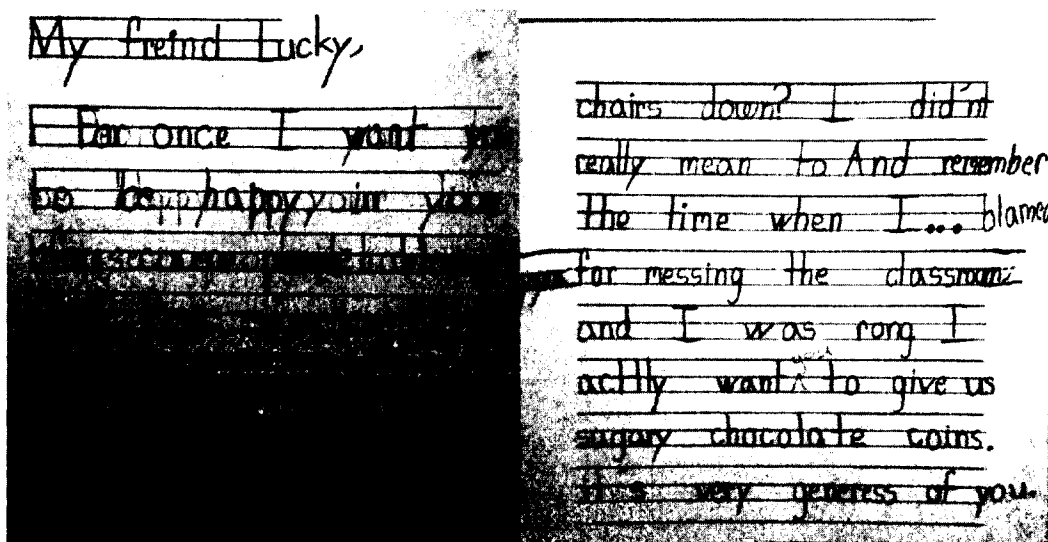


Figure 24. Amber's Writing in Revision Process.

Sentence construction skills. The teachers also taught their students how to strengthen their sentence construction skills. During the 10-week study, LeAnne and Elizabeth were both observed working with their students on combining sentences to make the students' writing more interesting. For example, during one writing lesson, LeAnne taught the students how to combine sentences. She gave them the task of writing about a monster they had drawn. LeAnne also created her own drawing of a monster, which she named Twiggy (observation, March 11, 2014). She wrote the following sentences on the board: "My monster's name is Twiggy. He can stomp. He can roar" (observation, March 11, 2014). She then showed the students how to combine the sentences and wrote, "My monster's name is Twiggy and he can stomp and he can roar." Then, the students practiced five more sentence combinations on the board as a class before they applied what they had learned to their own writing.

During a lesson on how to combine sentences in writing, Elizabeth also taught her students how to construct better sentences by combining sentences. During one observation, Elizabeth asked a student, Angelina, if she wanted to dictate a few sentences about George Washington Carver since the class had just read a book about him (observation, February 17, 2014). Angelina gave Elizabeth these sentences to write on the board: "George Washington was a famous scientist. He was an inventor. He found different ways to use peanuts." Then, Elizabeth asked Angelina if she could combine those sentences into one sentence. Angelina replied, "George Washington Carver was a famous scientist and inventor who came up with different ways to use peanuts." Elizabeth asked a few other students to do this in front of the class; then, when she felt the students had a complete grasp of how to combine sentences, she let them go to their writing

centers to begin their writing task.

The researcher employed the TCWPS to triangulate the findings from the interview data, observational data, and students' work and to support the findings for this subcategory. For the Teaching Writing Skills and Strategies subcategory, an item response analysis was employed for the second factor (Teach Basic Writing Skills) of the TCWPS. LeAnne's mean score on the Teaching Basic Writing Skills factor was 6.166 (SD = 1.067). Elizabeth's mean score was 6.833 (SD = 0.372). A higher score on the Teaching Basic Writing Skills factor indicates that the teacher believes writing instruction should include direct instruction on grammar skills, handwriting skills, and sentence construction skills (Cutler & Graham, 2008). LeAnne's responses on the Teaching Basic Writing Skills factor indicate that she engaged in these practices between several times a week and daily. Elizabeth's responses indicate that she utilized these writing practices several times a week to daily. Both teachers' results are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

TCWPS: Teach Basic Writing Skills Factor Results for Both Teachers

Teacher Classroom Writing Practice Factor	LeAnne's Scores	Elizabeth's Scores
Factor 2: Teach Basic Writing Skills		
• Spelling skills	6	7
• Capitalization skills	7	7
• Grammar skills	6	7
• Punctuation skills	7	7
• Handwriting skills	4	6
• Sentence construction skills	7	7

Teaching writing process through modeling. Another strategy the teachers employed to teach their students writing strategies and basic skills was modeling the

writing process for their students. During one observation, LeAnne verbally modeled the “voice” writing trait, which the students were working on that day. LeAnne began modeling by saying,

I am going to show you how I would approach my own feelings and the thoughts that would go through my head and I am going to talk you through my thought processes. The first thing I want to do is to think about how going on a roller coaster would make me feel. I would feel excited! So, I would write down on my web organizer “excited,” with the words “feels about roller coasters” in the middle of the web (observation, February 10, 2014).

When LeAnne talked during her interview about modeling for her students, she said,

I think that most first graders want to please and so...they want to do it the right way that they think is the right way to do it, and so, as a teacher, you will model for them, kind of what it should look like. (Interview, February 9, 2014)

This statement illustrates the importance of modeling for young children so they can feel successful in the writing process.

During her interview, Elizabeth said she modeled the writing process for her students every day. She stated,

For example, when they are working on a paragraph, I model the topic sentence after we have brainstormed all of the ways to write a topic sentence for what we are writing. After I have written (on the board) a topic sentence for each of their ideas, we read through them a couple of times, and then I have them try writing a topic sentence on their own. Then, I model again for them how to do the supporting sentences and closing sentence. I always do modeling for anything we are learning. I do the same thing for letters and poetry too. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This quote illustrates the actions that teachers incorporate into modeling for young students, including modeling the “topic sentence” and the “supporting sentences.”

The researcher employed the TCWPS to help triangulate the findings from the interview data, observational data, and students’ work and to support the findings for this subcategory. For this subcategory, an item response analysis was employed for the third

factor (Teaching Writing Processes) on the TCWPS. LeAnne's mean score on the Teaching Writing Processes factor was 4 (SD = 0), while Elizabeth's mean score was 6.75 (SD =0.432). A higher score indicates that the teacher believes writing instruction should include modeling strategies, teaching text organization skills, and teaching strategies for planning and revising (Cutler & Graham, 2008). LeAnne's responses on the Teaching Writing Processes factor indicate that she engaged in these practices several times a month to weekly. Elizabeth's responses indicate that she used these writing practices weekly or sometimes several times a week. Both teachers' results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16

TCWPS: Teaching Writing Process Factor Results for Both Teachers

Teacher Classroom Writing Practice Factor	LeAnne's Scores	Elizabeth's Scores
Factor 3: Teaching Writing Process		
• Model writing strategies	4	7
• Text organizational skills	4	7
• Strategies for planning	4	7
• Strategies for revising	4	6

General instructional procedures. Another factor on the TCWPS that helped support the subcategory of Teaching Writing Skills and Strategies involves teachers' general instructional procedures, including mini-lessons, teaching through multiple goal lessons, and re-teaching writing skills. During one observation, LeAnne initiated a mini-lesson with her class about the characteristics of good persuasive writing. While the students generated ideas, LeAnne wrote them on the board and wrote a label for each persuasive element. Then, LeAnne had the students co-write as a class a strong, persuasive essay and then talked about the characteristics that made it so convincing.

When the students had listed all the characteristics of their persuasive essay, they began to write their own persuasive essays to convince other students not to trap Lucky the Leprechaun (observation, March 13, 2014). After everyone finished writing, the students shared their writing with either their partner, their teacher, or with the class at the front of the room. As each student shared their persuasive writing, the other students gave positive feedback and/or suggestions on how the persuasive essays could be made better and stronger.

During her interview, Elizabeth discussed how important the brainstorming process was to writing instruction and understanding the writing process. She stated,

When teaching the writing process, you need to be prepared ahead of time. You have to brainstorm how to teach about a particular topic in writing and how to connect it to what they already know about a topic. Then, you have to brainstorm with your students to see what they already know about a topic. Then, you have to teach them how to go about the writing task and then how to suggest how to continue to make their writing better. But, it all has to start with allowing the brainstorming process and it's important to take the time to do that because that's the starting place for getting their ideas and for understanding what it is you are about to have them do on the writing task. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This statement demonstrates how important knowledge is to the writing process and how it relates to teachers' writing instruction. For example, Elizabeth's statement that she "brainstorms" to help her students "connect it to what they already know" shows that she understood the importance of connecting students' previous knowledge about a topic to help her students make their writing better.

Teacher lesson planning for mini-lessons, multiple goals, and re-teaching of skills. The next area that emerged from the data for how teachers support their students' writing involved teachers' lesson planning for mini-lessons, for multiple goals, and for re-teaching previously taught writing skills. Both teachers taught with multiple goals for

writing during their lessons. During one writing lesson, LeAnne mentioned that her teaching plan and overall goal for the day was to teach the students about “big ideas” in writing. She also said she was planning to focus on reinforcing other grammar and conventions skills with her students (observation, February 25, 2014). LeAnne emphasized the “big ideas” students could utilize in their writing, such as the “big idea” of writing about winter. Throughout this lesson, she discussed how the students could use adjectives, such as “cold” and “blustery,” to describe winter.

In a lesson in Elizabeth’s classroom, she mentioned that her main goal for the day was to teach the students how to begin their writing with a “bold beginning” (observation March 12, 2014). While instructing the students on her main goal of ‘bold beginnings,’ she also included information on how to write contractions and how to use good word choices to strengthen the “voice” in their writing. When one student could not remember what “voice” meant, Elizabeth took a few minutes to review and reteach some words to her class that emphasized “voice” in writing.

The researcher employed the TCWPS to help triangulate the findings from the interview data, observational data, and students’ work and to support the findings for this subcategory. For this subcategory, an item response analysis was employed for the fourth factor (General Instructional Procedures) on the TCWPS. LeAnne’s mean score on the General Instructional Procedures factor was 6 (SD = 1.633). Elizabeth’s mean score was 7.333 (SD = 0.471). A higher score indicates that the teacher believes writing instruction should include mini lessons, multi-goal lessons, and re-teaching lessons (Cutler & Graham, 2008). LeAnne’s responses on the General Instructional Procedures factor indicate that she engaged in these practices several times week. Elizabeth’s responses

indicate that she utilized these writing practices daily to several times a day. Both teachers' results are shown in Table 17.

Table 17

TCWPS: General Instructional Procedures Factor Results for Both Teachers

Teacher Classroom Writing Practice Factor	LeAnne's Scores	Elizabeth's Scores
Factor 4: General Instructional Procedures		
• Mini lessons	6	8
• Multi-goal lessons	8	7
• Reteach skills	4	7

Category 5: Environmental Influences

The fifth overarching category that emerged from the data is Environmental Influences, which includes two subcategories: Print-rich Learning Environment and Physical Set-up of the Classroom. The codes that helped develop this category were based on the participants' statements during the interviews, which included phrases such as "belief in yourself as a writer," "teachers have to believe in themselves," and "how the teacher feels about writing." This category and its two subcategories are analyzed using interview data and observational data.

Subcategory 1: Print-rich Learning Environment

The first subcategory that emerged from the interview and observational data is that of the Print-rich Learning Environment. This subcategory emerged from codes based on participants' statements in the interviews, such as "we use books to help teaching different writing concepts," "they can refer to charts on the wall," and "students can look at the 6+1 Writing Traits chart." This section presents findings from the interview data and observational data.

During the first observation in LeAnne's classroom, she explained her thought

process and rationale for how she set up her classroom by saying,

I think it's important that a classroom needs to be filled with a lot of print-rich materials that support children's literacy development, so I make sure to have the classroom filled with books, literacy charts, and anything type of materials that would provide support for the kids in my classroom...I also try to make sure that my kids have access to many manipulatives that they can choose from to use during our writing block such as art supplies, fiction and not fiction books, clipboards for revision time, and even different literacy games. (observation, February 10, 2014)

When Elizabeth was asked after the first observational session in her classroom about her plan and design for her classroom, she explained,

I believe it is important to have a variety of tools available to my students to use during writing such as colored pencils, markers, and things like that. I also make sure to have a variety of books on hand in my classroom library that students have access to that will help them in their writing. (observation, February 10, 2014)

During the 10 observation sessions in each teacher's classroom, the researcher kept a 25-item literacy checklist of all the writing materials and writing resources available to the students during the writing block. During observations, all the items on the checklist were used in Elizabeth's classroom. Although three of the items on the checklist (poetry, individual whiteboards, computers) were not used in LeAnne's classroom during the observations, they may have been utilized in the classroom at other times when the researcher was not present. Table 18 provides a checklist of writing materials and writing resources that were observed in the teachers' classrooms during the study.

Table 18

Types of Writing Materials and Writing Resources Observed in Teachers' Classrooms

Writing Materials in Classroom	Observed Materials in LeAnne's Classroom	Observed Materials in Elizabeth's Classroom
Paper	x	x
Pencils (black/white/colored)	x	x
Markers/highlighters	x	x
Crayons/staplers/scissors	x	x
Grade-level chart paper	x	x
Grade-level writing paper	x	x
Writing portfolios	x	x
Reflection journals	x	x
Print-rich learning environment	x	x
• Big books	x	x
• Classroom library w/magazines	Not observed	x
• Poetry	x	x
• Trade books	x	x
• Textbooks	x	x
Writing charts on walls for resource	x	x
• Proofreading and editing checklists	x	x
• 6+1 Trait® writing poster	x x	x x
• Other teacher-made charts		
Word walls	x	x
Letter and word sorts		
Dictionaries	x	x
Thesauruses	x	x
Pointers for rereading writing on board	x	x
Individual slates/white boards	Not observed	x
Students' written work displayed	x	x
Technology		
• Listening center	x	x
• Computers	Not observed	x

Subcategory 2: Physical Set-Up of the Classroom

The second subcategory that emerged from the data from the overarching Environmental Influences category was the Physical Set-up of the Classroom. This subcategory resulted from codes based on participants' language during the interviews and observations, such as "they can write anywhere they want to write" and "as long as they can focus, they can go anywhere."

On the first day of observations, both teachers had displays on the walls outside their classrooms of writing from every student in their classes with each child's name under their writing. Both teachers had large tables in the back of their classrooms holding writing paper (draft and final), clipboards, and colored pencils and highlighters, which were used during the editing phase of the writing process. In both classrooms, students' writing portfolios were located in one-inch binders that were easily visible from each student's cubby; in addition, students kept reflection journals inside their desks. Both teachers had classroom libraries containing fiction in different genres, non-fiction, poetry, trade books, and textbooks. Large, oversized chart paper and chart stands were located in both classrooms and were filled with previously created graphic organizers. An "author's chair" was located in both classrooms; students could sit in these chairs while they shared their written works. Both teachers displayed similar resource charts including the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model poster, proofreading and editing marks posters, and writing process charts.

Both LeAnne and Elizabeth had literacy-rich learning environments. They both provided their students with numerous opportunities to engage with print resources around the room, which facilitated their students' increasing skills in understanding the

functions and purposes of print. Both teachers' classrooms contained whole-class sharing and learning areas for students; writing and publishing areas; silent and supported writing areas; listening and computer areas; and display and storage areas for writing materials. Both teachers also arranged their physical environments in an inviting manner that allowed students to learn from their teachers, peers, and learning environment. In addition, both teachers incorporated student-driven word walls and age-appropriate literacy items (e.g., books, clipboards, pencils, bookmarks).

Category 6: Challenges

The last category that emerged from the data is Challenges. Two subcategories emerged from the overarching category of Challenges: Teachers' Challenges for Teaching Writing and Students' Writing Challenges. The codes that led to this subcategory were based on the participants' language in the interviews, such as "really hard to conference with our students one-on-one," "writing in the afternoon," "really tired," and "struggles with handwriting and fine motor skills." These subcategories were analyzed using narrative data and observational data.

Subcategory 1: Teachers' Challenges for Teaching Writing

Throughout the study, the teachers faced the challenge of allowing enough time for students to complete a given writing task. For example, during an observation session in LeAnne's classroom, the students only had 15 minutes available for writing instruction (observation, March 5, 2014). The students were asked to write a reflection about what they had just learned during a school-wide assembly; however, by the time some students had taken out their reflection journals and pencils, it was time to stop the writing task and go to music class. One student, Jake, expressed his frustration that he did not have time to write even one sentence in his journal. He slammed his reflection book closed and yelled,

“I never have time to finish!” The teacher explained how frustrating it was to have the students stop writing before they were ready:

I get frustrated seeing how upset the kids get when they can't finish writing. Unfortunately, when our schedule is off because of something else going on in the school that takes away from our work, we might only have a few minutes to try to write. (observation March 5, 2014)

Elizabeth also viewed lack of time as a challenge to teaching writing in her classroom. During the second observation in Elizabeth's classroom, the students only had 15 minutes to complete a writing task because the school's schedule that day had changed. Elizabeth had just begun talking about how to write good topic sentences and the students were giving her good topic sentences, which she was writing on the board. When the students finished giving her their suggested topic sentences for a story, Elizabeth sent them back to their desks to begin writing. However, before most students made it back to their desks, the Spanish teacher came in and said she needed to do a make-up lesson for Spanish at that time because the students had missed a Spanish lesson the previous week because of a snow day. Elizabeth said,

I'll have to start this lesson all over again tomorrow because they didn't have a chance to practice writing even one topic sentence on their own, and I know they will probably need me to re-teach them what a topic sentence is (observation, February 18, 2014).

These observations illustrate the challenges teachers face trying to find time to get through a writing lesson and writing tasks. Table 19 provides the observed times that teachers had for writing in their classrooms during the 10-week study; these observed times validate the finding that a lack of time is a challenge teachers face.

Table 19

Observation (Obs) of Writing Time in Each Classroom by Minutes

Teacher	Obs 1	Obs 2	Obs 3	Obs 4	Obs 5	Obs 6	Obs 7	Obs 8	Obs 9	Obs 10
LeAnne	60	30	30	15	60	45	60	30	45	30
Elizabeth	60	15	45	30	60	30	45	45	60	30

LeAnne reported on the TCWPS that her students spent approximately 150 minutes each week writing and that her students wrote at least three days a week. Over a 10-week period, LeAnne averaged 40.5 minutes per day on writing. Since this study only involved observing writing once a week, the data was extrapolated to represent how much time students spent on writing when they wrote three days a week. The extrapolated data for LeAnne's students showed that her students wrote approximately 120 minutes a week, which is close to her reported figure of 150 minutes a week spent on writing.

Elizabeth reported on the TCWPS that her students spent approximately 100 minutes per week writing and that her students wrote at least three days a week. Over the 10-week period, Elizabeth averaged 42 minutes per day on writing. This data was extrapolated to determine the amount of time students spent writing when they wrote three times a week. The extrapolated data showed that Elizabeth's students spent about 126 minutes each week on writing, which supports her report of the amount of time per week students spent on writing in her classroom. Although Graham and Perin (2007b) found that teachers should be writing an hour or more a day, the amount of instructional time the teachers could dedicate to writing was limited because of major snowstorms that occurred during the 10-week study. The teachers lost five instructional days during the 10-week study because of the weather; therefore, they had to modify and shorten the

instruction for all the academic subjects to catch up with their pacing guides.

This subcategory was further triangulated using section III of the TCWPS.

Section III asks teachers how much time their students spend writing each week. It also asks teachers how much time they spend teaching specific skills and processes (i.e., revising planning, spelling, grammar, and handwriting). Teachers are also asked to estimate what percentage of their instructional time was given to individualized, small-group, and whole-group instruction. This section also asks teachers if they utilize a commercial program to teach various aspects of writing, to identify the program if they use one, and to describe their approach to teaching writing (i.e., process writing, traditional skills instruction, a combination of the two, or another type of approach). Table 20 shows the first-grade teachers' responses regarding their time spent teaching various skills and how much time was given to individual, small-group, and whole-group instruction. Because of the short span of the study, data was not collected during the observations on how much time the teachers spent teaching specific skills or how much time was spent on whole-group, small-group, or individual instruction.

Table 20

Section III of TCWPS: Reported Estimates of Time for Writing Instruction and Student Writing

Teacher	Question 1: During an average week, how many minutes do your children spend writing?	Question 2: During an average week, how many minutes do you spend teaching each of the following?	Question 3: How much of your instructional time involves whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction?
LeAnne	150 minutes	Spelling: 60 minutes Handwriting: 30 minutes Revising Strategies: 45 minutes Grammar/Usage: 45 minutes Planning Strategies: 45 minutes	Whole Group: 50 minutes Small Group: 30 minutes Individual: 20 minutes
Elizabeth	100 minutes	Spelling: 100 minutes Handwriting: 50 minutes Revising Strategies: 30 minutes Grammar/Usage: 75 minutes Planning Strategies: 50 minutes	Whole Group: 75 minutes Small Group: 15 minutes Individual: 10 minutes

Subcategory 2: Students' Writing Challenges

The second subcategory that emerged from the data is Students' Writing Challenges. The codes used to develop this subcategory were based on participants' statements in the interviews, which included phrases such as "not up for the challenge," "different areas that certain kids need," "writing is challenging for most first-grade students," and "might be tired." This subcategory is analyzed using interview data and observational data.

Both teachers mentioned that it could be challenging to work with so many students who were on different writing levels and who possessed different writing skills. During her interview, Elizabeth discussed how she addressed her students' different writing challenges and writing needs. When asked how she worked with her students on writing, she responded,

Some kids can work independently just with checking in, whereas I usually have a group with me at the table who are the ones who, you know, that are asking me questions like, “I don’t know what to do here” or “I can’t think of something” or, whatever it might be, so I can work with them. I am constantly working with them. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

This illustrates the teacher’s need to not only spend time giving some students independent writing work but also to split her time with students who require much more support on their writing.

During LeAnne’s interview, she mentioned that conferencing is sometimes a challenge because it is hard to meet with all 21 of her students each week and focus on their differing levels of writing needs. She stated,

We try really hard to conference with our students one-on-one while other kids are writing. I go around and point out different things to each student. I find that personally challenging to keep track of and know which students I’ve talked to. It’s kind of like reading...they are at so many different levels of the writing process...to try to hit all of the different areas that certain kids need can seem like an overwhelming task. But, I find that if you just use your time wisely as a teacher, and have an organized plan for how it’s going to look, then you can make your way around and help kids out the best that you can. (Interview, February 9, 2014)

This provides a teacher’s perspective on the challenges students face in her classroom, such as being on different skill levels, and how challenging it can be to meet these various needs to support students’ writing.

Another potential challenge to students’ writing is that a child might be too tired to engage in the complex, cognitive task of writing. Elizabeth said that sometimes a student would come to school too tired to want to write. She said she had one particular student who came in very tired each day and that she could tell that sometimes the student just wanted to put her head on her desk and go to sleep. She described this student as a good writer who was always motivated to want to write, but she said the student could reach a higher level of writing if she was not so tired each day.

Summary

This chapter described the six overarching categories and 13 subcategories that emerged from the qualitative data. Similar patterns for both participating teachers were seen in the overarching categories; these patterns indicate that both teachers shared similar instructional practices, self-efficacy beliefs, challenges, and assessment practices.

Findings from the two teachers' interviews suggest that both teachers had high self-efficacies for teaching writing to their first-grade students. The teachers' statements described their classroom writing practices, their self-efficacy beliefs towards writing, the types of writing activities employed in their classrooms, the various methods used to assess students' writing, the motivational techniques utilized to promote students' enjoyment of writing, and the challenges they faced when teaching writing to young students. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that the teachers felt confident in supporting their students' writing self-efficacy and in supporting the development of their students' writing skills.

Classroom observations further revealed that both teachers employed strong, research-based classroom writing practices in their teaching. The observation data revealed that the teachers utilized similar instruction for basic skills, motivational techniques during writing instruction, and assessment techniques in their respective classrooms. These patterns were present throughout the interview data, observational data, survey data, and students' work.

Quantitative methods (WOS, TESW, TCWPS, and WAS) were employed to triangulate the data, which increased the credibility and validity of the findings. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the survey instruments. The WOS was employed to better understand the teachers' writing orientations. The WOS contained

three factors: Correct Writing, Explicit Instruction, and Natural Learning. Both teachers believed strongly in explicit instruction on handwriting, spelling, planning, revising, learning strategies, and conventions. In addition, both teachers moderately agreed on less formal and incidental learning methods of teaching of writing, including student cooperation and sharing. However, LeAnne believed that less focus should be placed on correct writing instruction, such as spelling and grammar, while Elizabeth believed that more emphasis should be placed on using correct spelling and grammar in writing instruction.

The TESW was incorporated into the analysis to determine teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing. The TESW contained two factors: Personal Teaching Self-efficacy and General Teaching Self-efficacy. The findings for the teachers' reported self-efficacy, classroom writing practices, and the types of writing activities assigned to students were similar. Both LeAnne and Elizabeth had strong personal self-efficacy beliefs about their abilities to teach writing and affect change in their students. Elizabeth's responses indicated slightly to moderately positive general teacher self-efficacy, while LeAnne exhibited very positive general teacher self-efficacy.

Data gathered from the students' WAS instruments suggested that students in first grade at the participating school felt fairly positive about writing overall and had good attitudes toward writing at their grade level. The students' WAS scores were aligned with the students' observed classroom writing behaviors.

The TCWPS was utilized to identify teachers' classroom practices. The data revealed that the teachers' reported classroom practices did occur in their respective classrooms. LeAnne engaged in practices to support student writing between several

times a month and weekly, while Elizabeth utilized these writing practices weekly and sometimes several times a week. The teachers supported students' writing through a variety of means, such as utilizing graphic organizers, engaging in student conferences, teaching students how to plan and revise, offering students writing prompts to spark their imagination, having students engage a peer for help, having peers engage in student-to-student conferencing, and using technology.

Furthermore, LeAnne and Elizabeth reported on the TCPWS that they engaged in practices to teach basic writing skills between several times a week and daily; these practices included teaching basic writing skills such as spelling, capitalization, grammar, punctuation, handwriting, and sentence construction skills. LeAnne engaged in practices to teach writing processes several times a month to weekly. Elizabeth utilized these writing practices weekly and sometimes several times a week. Both teachers utilized a multitude of modeling, planning, editing, and revising strategies to teach their students about the writing process.

Additionally, LeAnne reported that she practiced general instructional procedures several times week, while Elizabeth reported that she engaged in these writing practices between daily and several times a day. Both teachers used mini and multi-goal lessons in their classrooms and retaught skills during their writing instruction. LeAnne promoted her students' motivation several times a month, and Elizabeth did so several times a week to daily. These findings indicate that both teachers believed in motivating their students in the classroom and used practices such as having students share their writing, modeling their own love of writing, helping students publish their written works, and creating motivating activities in the writing center.

On the TCWPS section on assessment, LeAnne reported that she engaged in assessment practices monthly, while Elizabeth reported utilizing these practices on a daily basis. These findings demonstrate that both teachers believed in monitoring their students' writing and the importance of having students monitor their own writing. Furthermore, both teachers used rubrics and students' writing portfolios to help assess students' work.

The quantitative and qualitative data revealed that students' self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors could be negatively affected by numerous issues, such as a lack of fine motor skills, sleepiness during the writing lessons in the morning, or writing tasks or activities that do not appeal to them.

Although many reasons were found for why a student's self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors might be negatively affected in the classroom, some items emerged from the data revealing how teachers could foster students' self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors. These practices include providing writing tasks that appeal to students, getting students excited about writing, and building a strong relationship with students.

Chapter 5 will discuss the categories and connections that emerged from the data in further detail by further employing the quantitative and qualitative data. The findings will then be related to the research literature on writing self-efficacy. Chapter 5 will conclude with a discussion of the implications for future action and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore (1) teachers' writing self-efficacy, writing orientations, and classroom practices; (2) first-grade students' writing attitudes and self-efficacy and their classroom writing behaviors; and (3) the alignment of teachers' assigned writing tasks to their writing orientations and self-efficacy beliefs. This study used a multiple methods design, which builds upon existing studies that relied on questionnaires (e.g., Cutler & Graham, 2008). Writing self-efficacy was explored using teachers' statements and instructional practices; students' writing self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors; and students' written works in first-grade classrooms. Teachers' writing self-efficacy, orientations, and instructional practices were examined through persistent observations, surveys, and teacher interviews. In addition, students' writing self-efficacy and writing behaviors were examined using persistent observations, students' written works, and students' survey data. This methodological approach allowed the encapsulation of first-grade students' attitudes towards writing, students' writing behaviors, and teachers' approaches, beliefs, orientations, and practices in writing instruction as they occurred during the writing instruction portion of the academic day.

Three primary research questions guided this study. First, what are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in first-grade classrooms? Second, how do first-grade students' writing self-efficacy and attitudes about their own writing affect their classroom writing behaviors? Third, how do teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices align with their approaches to the types of writing assignments given in their classrooms? The results of this study were analyzed using

descriptive analyses based on results from the Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (TESW), the Writing Orientation Scale (WOS), the Teacher Classroom Writing Practices Scale (TCWPS), and the Writing Attitude Survey (WAS). In addition, the TSW, WOS, TCWPS, and WAS findings were further examined and triangulated with the findings from 10 one-hour observations in two first-grade classrooms, teachers' interviews, and samples of students' written works. The triangulation of the observational data was important in the analyses because it allowed a comparison of the data from the teachers' interviews and the questionnaire responses to actual practices in their classrooms. Six overarching categories were identified through the analysis: (1) Self-efficacy Beliefs; (2) Motivation; (3) Assessment; (4) Instructional Practices; (5) Environmental Influences; and (6) Challenges. The six overarching categories were evident within the quantitative and qualitative data.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the conceptual framework that guided this study. This chapter then presents discussions of the six categories in relation to their connectedness and importance to students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors; the discussions are organized according to the three research questions. These findings are interpreted in reference to prior research and are considered in terms of their implications for future writing instruction with young students. This chapter concludes with a brief summary, a discussion of the study's limitations, implications for practice, and suggestions for future research.

Major Findings

Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986) was employed as the conceptual framework for this study because of the theory's focus on the vital role self-efficacy has on a person's behavior in a social setting. Bandura (1986) postulated that self-efficacy

beliefs are the foundation for motivation, happiness, and personal achievement because unless people believe their actions can create the results they desire, they have little incentive to act or persist in a difficult task. Bandura (1986) also posited that nearly all learning resulting from direct experience can occur through the explicit observation of other people's behavior, such as educators or other peers, and its consequences for those behaviors. Educators are important figures in children's lives and are vital sources of knowledge that add to what and how young students think about different academic constructs, such as writing. The social cognitive theory provided a lens on teachers' and students' self-efficacy that highlighted this construct in the social setting of a first-grade classroom.

The following sections summarize the quantitative and qualitative findings in relation to the three research questions in this study. These findings relate to each teachers' writing orientations and beliefs, motivational strategies, assessment practices, instructional practices, environmental supports, and writing challenges. Discussions of these factors' importance and connectedness to students' self-efficacy beliefs and classroom writing behaviors are presented.

Research Question 1: What are Teachers' Self-efficacy Beliefs, Orientations, and Writing Practices in First-grade Classrooms?

Teachers' Self-efficacy Beliefs

The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the first factor that is seemingly connected to students' self-efficacy beliefs and writing behaviors is teachers' writing self-efficacy beliefs. Previous research on self-efficacy demonstrated that teachers' beliefs can strongly influence teachers' practices and student outcomes

(Pajares, 1992, 2003). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs can facilitate their perceptions, assessments, and classroom actions and can predict students' behaviors, self-efficacy beliefs, and performance (Graham et al., 2001).

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs have also been linked to the quality and types of classroom practices they apply and to students' achievement motivation (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Moreover, Bandura (1986) posited that although a person may have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform a task (such as teaching writing), he or she may not necessarily perform a task successfully. Rather, a person's self-efficacy, or personal decision that the skills and knowledge needed to perform a certain task can be executed successfully under fluctuating and unpredictable circumstances, is more important for achieving success (Bandura, 1986).

The findings demonstrated that both participating teachers had high senses of personal and general teaching self-efficacy. The analysis of both teachers' item responses on the Personal Teacher Efficacy scale indicated that they both had moderately positive attitudes regarding their efficacy in teaching writing and affecting change in their students. The analysis of both teachers' item responses on the General Teacher Efficacy scale revealed that both teachers had highly positive outcome self-efficacy regarding the extent to which students can be taught given environmental factors, such as family backgrounds. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the teachers were both fairly confident about their abilities to overcome factors that might hinder their students' progress as writers.

Connection of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. The results of this study revealed that these teachers' high self-efficacies for teaching writing are connected to their

students' self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors. This finding is supported by research demonstrating that a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs wield a strong influence on students' outcomes (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Pajares, 1992; Bruning & Horn, 2000). Both teachers' reported scores on the TESS were validated and confirmed through interview quotes and through persistent observations in their respective classrooms.

LeAnne's confidence in teaching and meeting the various developmental levels of the students' writing was observed. For example, during one writing lesson, a student had difficulty understanding the difference between verbs and nouns. LeAnne was confident in her ability to support this student's needs. She immediately began working with this student by asking him to stand up and act out the words she said. She began with words such as "stomp," "snort," and "growl," and the student acted out the words. When she got to words such as "warts" and "eyes," the child quickly realized that he could not act out those words. After this quick mini-lesson, the student could correctly identify verbs and nouns and offered some other examples of verbs to be written on the board.

Like LeAnne, Elizabeth also demonstrated confidence in her ability to teach writing to students who struggled with writing. In her interview, Elizabeth explained that she spent time during writing instruction helping her struggling writers. She said she knew "who grasps the concepts quickly" and "those who just really need to sit with you and go through the (writing) process" (Interview, February 10, 2014).

Elizabeth's reported high self-efficacy for teaching writing was further verified through persistent observations. During these observations, Elizabeth utilized a diverse amount of scaffolding techniques (e.g., instruction, modeling, feedback, questioning) to support her students' individual and whole-group learning of various strategies, skills,

and writing processes. Each time a student seemed to struggle with a particular writing concept, Elizabeth quickly assessed the student's needs and implemented a strategy to help the struggling student. After each of these scaffolding supports, the students quickly returned to their writing task and showed more confidence in finishing their work. This study demonstrates the important role of teachers' self-efficacy in student learning. This study also demonstrates how teachers with high self-efficacy, such as the teachers in this study, can positively affect students' confidence and persistence in writing tasks.

Teachers' Writing Orientations

Another factor seemingly connected to students' self-efficacy and students' classroom writing behaviors are teachers' writing orientations. The WOS instrument was employed to further measure first-grade teachers' beliefs about writing instruction. The analysis results for the item responses on the Correct Writing factor indicated that LeAnne believed less focus should be placed on correct writing instruction, such as spelling and grammar. Elizabeth's item response analysis on the Correct Writing factor revealed that she believed using correct spelling should be emphasized more and that grammar should be included in writing instruction. The item response analysis for the Explicit Instruction factor for both teachers indicated that both teachers believed strongly in the explicit instruction of handwriting, spelling, planning, revising, learning strategies, and conventions. The item analysis for the Natural Learning factor revealed that both teachers moderately agreed on less formal and incidental learning methods of teaching writing, including student cooperation and sharing. Both participating teachers had positive attitudes about the effect of natural learning methods and were more likely to be confident about their own abilities to teach writing to young children. Neither teacher

believed in a controlling approach to teaching writing.

The analysis of the Natural Learning factor revealed similar results to the natural process approach reported by Hillock (1984) in his analyses of effective writing practices. According to Hillcock, the teacher is more typically seen as a facilitator of learning in the natural process approach; this approach emphasizes that writing is learned by doing rather than by studying and by having students share their writing with real audiences.

Within this approach to teaching writing, both teachers shared some other advocates' beliefs regarding the natural process mode, such as focusing on students' interactions and feedback from peers. However, the teachers deviated from the naturalist approach by providing a very teacher-structured learning environment for their students incorporating explicit instructional procedures, such as scaffolding and modeling (Cutler & Graham, 2008). These teachers' orientations to teaching writing are attuned with previous research. Baumann et al. (1998) showed that 89% of elementary educators believed in a balanced, varied teaching approach to reading instruction.

Connection of teachers' writing orientations. An analysis of the data revealed that a teacher's high self-efficacy and orientation of providing a more guided and less direct approach to teaching writing are connected to students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors. This assumption underscores previous research demonstrating that teachers with higher senses of self-efficacy had a less controlling approach to teaching (Enochs et al., 1995; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Both teachers' reported orientations to teaching young students writing were confirmed through narrative and observational data.

During her interview, LeAnne made her writing orientations apparent. For

example, she stated that she felt she taught “the writing process” and that after her students had a good understanding of the writing process, which comprises “prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing,” she could help her students make their writing “exciting” (Interview, February 9, 2014). This statement supports her reported belief that teachers should teach writing strategies explicitly. Her belief in explicitly teaching writing strategies was also apparent during the observations in which she explicitly taught her students a variety of writing traits, such as revising and editing, to support their writing development.

LeAnne’s reported belief that her students should also be taught through less formal methods, including teaching a lesson on a specific skill as the need arises, was also apparent during the persistent observations. For instance, during one observation, LeAnne taught about words that express feelings. She had students share how they would feel about going on a roller coaster. The students shared their “feelings” words for going on a roller coaster, such as “nauseous,” “sick,” and “lightheaded.” One student said, “Busch Gardens.” Since the need arose to teach a grammar concept other than “feelings” words, LeAnne seized the opportunity. She explained that “Busch Gardens” was a place; therefore, it was a noun and not a “feelings” word. She proceeded to do a mini-lesson for the whole class on nouns so the students could understand the difference between “feelings” words and nouns.

As with LeAnne, Elizabeth’s reported writing orientations were validated and confirmed through both narrative and observational data. For example, during observations in Elizabeth’s class, she often did not emphasize the role of correctness in her students’ writing, which is consistent with her reported WOS scores. Elizabeth’s

limited correction of students' work, including her strong belief in explicit instruction, was also evident in her interview when she stated,

I'll say "Right now, all I want you to do is write. I'm not worried about punctuation.... I'm not worried about spelling...just sound it out and get your thoughts down on paper." That's all I want because I'm so afraid that if they are so focused on how to spell every single word, they are just going to forget what they want to write about. (Interview, February 10, 2014)

The only time Elizabeth emphasized correctness during the observations was in the revision phase of the writing process. At those times, Elizabeth gave her students an editing checklist and reminded them to utilize the writing rules and traits posters displayed on the walls. LeAnne's and Elizabeth's writing orientations of believing in explicitly teaching writing skills and strategies and their belief that students should be taught writing through less formal methods are important factors for educators and researchers to consider when examining the best practices for writing instruction that support young children's self-efficacy for writing.

Teachers' Instructional Practices

Another factor that appeared to be connected to students' self-efficacy beliefs and writing behaviors is a teacher's instructional practices. This study's findings regarding the first-grade teachers' instructional practices were supported by Gerde, Bingham, and Wasik's (2012) research on best practices for writing instruction with young children. Persistent observations found that both teachers in this study used 11 of Gerde, Bingham, and Wasik's (2012) 12 best instructional practices for writing. The only instruction practice that was not observed in either teacher's classroom was "making writing a way to connect with families"; however, both teachers reported including this instructional practice at various points throughout the year. These findings are consistent with several

research studies on effective instructional practices for teaching writing to young students (Coker & Lewis, 2008; Goldberg, Russell, & Cook, 2003; Graham & Perin, 2006; Graham & Perin, 2007a; Saddler, 2007).

On the TCWPS, both teachers reported a combined approach to writing instruction incorporating instructional procedures from the process writing approach, which focuses on the act of writing, and the traditional approach, which focuses on writing skills (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). These combined teaching practices are supported by research. According to the literature, these two approaches are the most common in writing instruction for young children in the United States (Applebee & Langer, 2006; Graham et al., 2002). Both teachers were observed implementing both approaches to teaching writing in their classrooms.

Connection of teachers' instructional practices. This study's finding that the teachers' employed best instructional practices appears to be connected to students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors is supported by writing literature and research, including Graham and Perin's (2007a) view that a variety of instructional procedures improve the quality of student writing. Troia and Graham (2003) posited that the quality of a teacher's instructional practices is one of the most important predictors in writing achievement. Furthermore, Graham and Harris (2000) showed that excellent writing teachers alter their instructional methods, employ a variety of materials, and modify their expectations to further improve students' performance in writing.

These teachers' decision to focus less on correctness in the drafting phase with young children and their belief in explicitly teaching specific writing strategies and various writing skills as they arise are connected to students' self-efficacy beliefs and

writing behaviors. For example, students in both classes appeared to be more confident during writing instruction when they knew they could utilize the invented spelling strategy. Because the teachers focused less on exact spelling during the drafting phase, the students could focus on the content of their writing without halting the writing process to check for correct spelling.

During one observation, LeAnne began her writing lesson by explaining that writers need to think of their “audience,” which is part of the process approach. Then, as her students wrote, she worked with individual students who needed assistance on sentence structures and grammar usage. LeAnne’s attention to teaching specific writing skills shows a more traditional approach to teaching writing, which validates her reported traditional approach to instruction.

During the observations in Elizabeth’s classroom, her students frequently appeared confident while working on various writing tasks. When students asked how to spell a word, Elizabeth would often encourage them to use invented spelling; this made the students more comfortable with staying on task with their writing, and they continued writing more easily because they knew they could worry about correct spelling during the revision phase. The use of invented spelling as an instructional method to support students’ writing and confidence in writing is supported by research (Tolchinsky, 2001). This belief and practice of focusing less on the correctness of spelling, which is part of the process approach to writing, is further supported by research demonstrating that the way in which a teacher teaches writing as perceived by a student in the classroom can affect that student’s attitude and self-efficacy for writing (Boscolo & Gelati, 2013).

Both teachers also concentrated on providing numerous opportunities for their

students to write for authentic audiences. They were both observed creating an encouraging writing environment for their students and facilitating opportunities in their classrooms for student interactions focused around writing. Furthermore, they both emphasized that students had a personal responsibility for writing and focused on constant planning and revising. Neither teacher attempted to teach grammar skills as a separate or isolated construct. Both teachers taught their students that revision occurs at every stage of the writing process. These instructional practices are supported by research showing that young students can benefit from a metacognitive understanding of revising rather than learning steps in a process (Myhill & Jones, 2007).

Each teacher engaged in these types of instructional practices in their respective classrooms. Students in both classrooms appeared to grasp the purpose of revising at each stage of the process and independently used their writing rubrics as a checklist and guide to monitor their own writing progress. This underscores the importance of teachers' instructional practices, which future writing researchers and educators of young children should consider.

Organization and Design of Classroom Environment

Another factor that appears to be connected to students' self-efficacy beliefs and writing behaviors is a teacher's organization and design of the classroom environment. Catron and Allen (2007) postulated that a well-planned and organized environment can improve students' development through learning and play and can help teachers implement their literacy objectives and goals. Catron and Allen (2007) also posited that the manner in which the physical environment is planned and arranged affects how children feel. For example, students can become upset if they do not have an organized,

purposefully designed environment to call their own (Clayton & Forton, 2001). Both teachers had organized, well-planned classrooms that included labeled baskets for literacy materials, thus providing a supportive, engaging learning environment for their students.

Connection of organization and design of classroom environment. This study's finding that students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors are seemingly connected to their classroom environment is supported by existing research. For example, numerous studies have focused on the types, variety, and quantity of literacy materials found in classrooms and found that these components have behavioral consequences, both internal and external to the classroom, for young students developing literacy skills (Neuman & Celano, 2001; Neuman & Roskos, 1990, 1992, 1997; Roskos & Neuman, 2001; Wolfersberger, Reutzel, Sudweeks, & Fawson, 2004). These teachers utilized best practices for setting up a print-rich environment to support the development of their students' writing skills. During observations, students in both classrooms utilized numerous aspects of their literacy environment during their writing tasks, including consulting reference books, reviewing anchor charts for grammar, and using revising pencils. Students in both classes also appeared confident in their participation within the learning environment; they seemed to fully understand the purposes of all of the items in the learning environment and used items within the environment without assistance from their teacher.

Several studies have shown the important role of a classroom's physical set-up and the instructional activities based on that set-up in promoting student literacy success (Krolak, 2005; Reutzel & Wolfersberger, 1996). Both teachers' classrooms contained

whole-class sharing and learning areas for students; writing and publishing areas; silent and supported writing areas; listening and computer areas; and display and storage areas for writing materials. Both teachers used furniture, such as bookcases and tables, to establish boundaries for each learning area in the classroom. The traffic patterns that led to each area in the teachers' classrooms were free of clutter and allowed students to move freely between the learning spaces. Both teachers arranged their physical environment in a way that was inviting to their students and allowed learning from teachers, peers, and the learning environment.

During the interview, the teachers were asked to describe their views on setting up a learning environment for writing. LeAnne responded that during writing, her students could "write anywhere they want to write" (Interview, February 9, 2014). Elizabeth responded, "as long as they can focus, they can go anywhere" (Interview, February 10, 2014). These responses were triangulated with the observational data to verify their responses. Both teachers' classrooms contained pillows, beanbag chairs, and throw rugs, thus providing students with a comfortable writing environment. The finding that the environment, including the organization and design of the classroom, is connected to students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors is supported by the research. It is important to make the physical environment organized and comfortable to influence how children feel, act, and behave and to support students' cognitive development (Catron & Allen, 2007).

Both teachers' print-rich environments and the purposeful set-up of the physical environment are research-based environmental components necessary to facilitating positive literacy behaviors, such as the construct of writing, and student learning (Roskos

& Neuman, 1994). Both teachers provided their students numerous opportunities to engage with print resources around the room and helped their students build their understanding of the functions and purposes of print. By providing an organized and purposeful classroom design, the teachers supported their students' literacy growth (Neuman & Roskos, 1997).

Students in both classrooms appeared confident in navigating the learning environment within their respective classrooms. They knew where to find literacy tools such as editing pencils and reference books they needed for their writing tasks. Furthermore, the students seemed to enjoy the freedom of choosing where they would write for the day. This study highlights the importance of designing an organized, supportive, purposefully designed classroom environment, which future writing researchers and educators of young children should consider when supporting students' writing development.

Teachers' Assessment Practices

Another factor that appears to be connected to students' self-efficacy and writing behavior is a teacher's assessment practices. Researchers in writing instruction have shown that a teacher's ability to examine students' writing is the basis of effective writing instruction (Gentry, 2006; Hoyt, 2000; Routman, 2005). Research has also shown that writing instruction for struggling students should involve a systematic plan measuring a student's ability to respond to intervention (Allington, 2006; Dorn & Schubert, 2008; Johnson, 2010; Lose, 2007; Reeves, 2009, 2010; Viadero, 2010). Assessment is an important part of writing instruction because it allows teachers to verify if their writing program is working or needs to be adjusted and to see which children need extra help

(Graham & Perin, 2007a, 2007b). Assessment is also vital to fostering a supportive writing environment (Graham & Harris, 2013).

Connection of assessment practices. Both teachers were observed monitoring their students' progress through conferences and writing traits rubrics and offering students ample opportunities to monitor their own writing progress during the 10-week study. For instance, when LeAnne's and Elizabeth's students had difficulty on a particular writing task, both teachers assessed their students' skills and adjusted their classroom instruction to meet the needs of the class or to meet the needs of just one student. Both teachers helped their students by re-teaching previously taught skills, engaging in constructive feedback on writing tasks, or using a child's background knowledge to help solve a particular writing challenge.

During observations in each teacher's classroom, students utilized writing rubrics that helped them see the areas in which they were strong and which areas they needed to strengthen. These findings are supported by research literature, which has shown that students are better at evaluating their own progress when teachers facilitate knowledge of various writing skills through techniques such as feedback and employing specific instruction on writing strategies (Pass, Van Merriënboer, & Van Gog, 2012). Both teachers' reported assessment practices on the TCWPS were confirmed through narrative and observational data and through students' writing sample rubrics in the writing portfolios.

On the TCWPS, LeAnne reported that she engaged in assessment at least once a month. LeAnne stated in her interview that she employed a rubric to evaluate her students' writing to "let her students know what it is that we are working on" and to help

her students “get stronger” in a particular area of writing (Interview, February 9, 2014). These results indicate that a teacher’s method of conducting best practice assessments with young students, such as LeAnne’s use of rubrics for each individual student, is connected to students’ self-efficacy and writing behaviors. The connection of a teacher’s use and beliefs about writing assessments to students’ self-efficacy and writing behaviors is supported by literature stating that if a teacher evaluates writing as an individual skill, a student’s attitude and self-efficacy in writing might be elevated because of a self-perception of competence; in addition, the student may become more interested in writing (Boscolo & Gelati, 2013).

LeAnne also employed student portfolios in which her students could see and be made aware of advancements in their writing skills. This teacher’s use of students’ writing portfolios for assessment and its connection to students’ self-efficacy and writing behaviors is also supported by research. Calfee (2000) posited that documenting a student’s writing development through writing portfolios motivates a student to write because they can narrate in their own words their satisfaction and frustrations with various writing activities in the portfolios.

On the TCWPS, Elizabeth reported that she utilized a variety of writing assessments on a daily basis. Her reported use of rubrics as an assessment tool was apparent during her interview. When asked how she evaluated writing in her class, she discussed using rubrics to assess particular writing traits she worked on with her class. She said her “rubrics may change, depending on what I’m teaching” (Interview, February 10, 2014). During the observations, Elizabeth and her students utilized rubrics to monitor writing. For example, one student used a rubric for the 6+1 Writing Trait of “bold

beginnings.” He had written his story but forgot to write a bold beginning. He added, “Crash! I wonder what that was?” to the beginning of his story.

LeAnne and Elizabeth both reported and were observed utilizing writing rubrics from the 6+1 Writing Traits program after students had completed the revision phase of their writing. The teachers’ use of best assessment practices, such as writing rubrics, is supported by research. Researchers suggest that one way of assessing various writing is to evaluate each one separately using a rating scale (Graham & Perin, 2007a, 2007b). Teachers score each particular writing trait on a scale from 1 to 6, with higher scores representing stronger performance and lower scores representing weaker performance on a particular writing task. Both teachers utilized the 6+1 Writing Traits rubrics and scored their students on a scale from 1 to 6, as suggested by the authors of the writing program. According to Calfee and Miller (2013), these types of rubrics are considered best practices in writing assessment to prepare students for more accomplished writing.

The findings of this study indicated that when a teacher involves students in evaluating their own writing, as both teachers did with the writing rubrics, they provide their students with the necessary tools to increase their students’ self-perceptions of competence and motivation for writing. Students in both classes appeared to be confident at independently utilizing the rubrics to monitor their own writing. In addition, each time a student received oral feedback from their respective teacher, they immediately incorporated the teacher’s feedback into their writing. These teachers used age-appropriate rubrics and utilized a variety of other assessment practices, such as students’ writing portfolios, thus underscoring the importance of assessment practices.

Research Question 2: How do First-grade Students' Writing Self-efficacy and Attitudes about their own Writing Affect their Classroom Writing Behaviors?

Research has demonstrated that students assign a value to writing tasks to interpret the writing task as engaging, a repetitive and dreary activity, a less important subject, or a more or less relevant activity for future school experiences and life (Boscolo & Gelati, 2013). Moreover, Bruning and Horn (2000) postulated that students develop a specific set of beliefs about the role and purposes of writing in school. These attitudes and beliefs about writing influence their approaches to specific writing tasks and the degree to which they are willing to engage in the task (Bruning & Horn, 2000).

Motivation

Motivation is another factor that appears to be connected to students' writing self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors. Research literature has demonstrated that students are more apt to like writing if the classroom environment is an encouraging, motivating, enjoyable place to work (Graham & Perin, 2007a). For example, if a student wants to share his or her writing, the first feedback from their classmates and teachers should be comments regarding the best aspects of their piece of writing (Graham & Perin, 2007a). Prior research also examined exceptional elementary school literacy teachers and found that these teachers' classrooms included literacy activities and procedures designed to promote writing motivation (Pressley et al., 2005, 2006). In addition, some research has suggested that writing motivation can affect writing development (Graham, 2006b; Graham, Berninger, & Fan, 2007). A teacher's important role in promoting young students stems from two factors: (1) a student's beliefs can influence their attitude towards writing; and (2) a teacher's beliefs about writing can influence the manner in

which he or she plans the setting for writing and instructional practices (Boscolo & Gelati, 2013).

Both teachers reported on the TCWPS that they engaged in various types of motivational practices in their respective classrooms. Their reported motivational practices were confirmed through narrative and observational data, and these motivational practices seemed to support students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors.

Connection of motivation. This study demonstrated that a teacher's use of motivation techniques is seemingly connected to students' self-efficacy beliefs and writing behaviors. This assumption is supported by research and writing literature (Boscolo & Gelati, 2013; Pressley et al., 2005, 2006). Throughout the study, both teachers motivated their students to write by showing excitement for their students' writing, no matter whether the writing was in a rough draft or published form. These findings are supported by literature on writing development and motivation, which has suggested the importance of teachers rejoicing in writing successes with their students (Mason, Harris, & Graham, 2011). It is important for teachers to share their enthusiasm with their young students because their students are then more likely to be more motivated to write (Graham & Perin, 2007b).

Both teachers also engaged in the motivational technique of providing feedback to their students on a daily basis. The students in both classes always appeared to be excited when their teachers gave them positive feedback or shared their writing with the class. This excitement's potential effect on students' self-efficacy and writing behavior is supported by research. According to Zimmerman (2000), "Self-efficacy beliefs have also shown convergent validity in influencing such key indices of academic motivation as

choice of activities, level of effort, persistence, and emotional reactions” (p. 86). The idea that motivation is connected to students’ self-efficacy and writing behaviors is further supported by Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive theory, which purports that students with a high self-efficacy will participate more readily in school, work harder and persist longer on a given task, and have fewer negative emotional reactions when they face difficulties than will students who question their capabilities.

On the TCWPS, LeAnne reported that she believed writing instruction should include engaging in motivational practices several times a month. During the observations in her classroom, LeAnne encouraged her students share their writing with their peers, created writing centers based on students’ interests, and allowed her students to select their own topics. Furthermore, she frequently pointed out all or a specific part of her students’ writing and excitedly shared their writing with the class. The enthusiastic manner in which LeAnne shared students’ work appeared to motivate the students to want to continue working on their individual writing tasks. For instance, after LeAnne read a student’s work, many others would quickly and excitedly ask if their writing could also be shared with the class.

As with LeAnne, Elizabeth reported a belief in the importance of utilizing motivational techniques during writing instruction. Elizabeth believed students should be motivated to write on a weekly to daily basis. Elizabeth’s reported scores were corroborated through her interview quotes and observational data. For example, when discussing what made her students excited and motivated to want to write, she stated, “You give them the option of ‘what’s something you *do* want to write about?’, and all of a sudden, it’s like, ‘Wow! I have the power to decide for myself.’ Then, they want to

write about it” (Interview, February 10, 2014). During each observation, Elizabeth motivated her students by modeling her own love of writing, publishing her students’ works, and letting her students select writing topics based on their interests. Elizabeth also employed research-based motivational practices, such as having students share their writing with peers during snack time and offering at least one compliment about each other’s writing (Graham & Perrin, 2007a).

Throughout the study, both teachers displayed students’ works on a daily basis on the inside walls of the classroom or on the bulletin boards located in the hallway. On one occasion, LeAnne encouraged her students to display written notes from home on their desks and remarked that it was important for her students to see that all types of writing should be celebrated. These findings demonstrate that both teachers’ students were excited to share their writing with their teachers and their peers, which is supported by literature on literacy motivational techniques (Mason, Harris, & Graham, 2011).

During the observations, students in both teachers’ classrooms were motivated to work on their writing tasks. They became excited when their teacher displayed their work on the inside and outside walls of the classroom. The students also became excited when they were allowed to write about topics they were interested in. Moreover, they persisted in their writing tasks and often asked if they could continue working after their teachers announced it was time to begin working on other academic areas. This study demonstrates the importance of Elizabeth and LeAnne’s use of motivational techniques to support their students’ learning, which educators and future researchers should consider.

Writing Challenges

Another factor that appears to be connected to students' self-efficacy beliefs and writing behaviors is a teacher's ability to deal with the multitude of writing challenges teachers and young students face in the classroom. Both teachers reported various developmental issues and time constraint issues that posed challenges for teaching their students how to write effectively. The teachers' reported challenges of seeing a multitude of different developmental concerns and issues with time constraints are both supported by research.

According to Levine (1998), seven major developmental issues can affect writing: (1) attention (fatigue, getting started on writing process); (2) spatial ordering (poor use of lines on paper); (3) sequential ordering (poor letter formation and uneven spacing); (4) memory (misspelled words or grammar and punctuation errors); (5) language (poor vocabulary, grammar, or phrasing); (6) higher-order cognition (difficulty generating or organizing ideas); and (7) graphomotor problems (difficulty with pencil grip).

Connection of writing challenges due to developmental issues. An analysis of the multiple observations, narrative data, and samples of students' works, revealed that various developmental issues and challenges related to time constraints were apparent in both teachers' classrooms. These issues and challenges appeared to be connected to students' self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors. In LeAnne's class, students would sometimes have difficulty beginning the writing process because they could not generate ideas for a writing task. During one observation, a student had difficulty beginning his writing task after he had missed a few days of writing instruction. He expressed that he felt that he was behind his peers and could not generate ideas for that

day's writing task, and he became visibly upset. LeAnne stated that when a student feels behind, they often cannot think of writing ideas and tend to lose focus quickly. At that point, she had to help the student get back on track. LeAnne's challenges for teaching writing to young students were also apparent in her interview. She stated that she saw "so many different levels of writing abilities" in her classroom, which made teaching writing seem like an "overwhelming task" (Interview, February 9, 2014).

Elizabeth also reported similar challenges with teaching writing to young students. She expressed that her students sometimes had difficulty in beginning writing because they were too tired first thing in the morning, which is when she taught writing. In addition to being too tired, fine motor issues were a challenge for some students in Elizabeth's classroom. During one observation, a student in Elizabeth's class demonstrated difficulty with his pencil grip and had difficulties staying within the lines on the paper during the writing tasks. Elizabeth mentioned that because this student had fine motor difficulties and had to work so hard when writing, it was often challenging for him to complete his writing tasks.

These developmental challenges seem to be connected to students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors. This assumption is supported by research on writing development. According to the research, if students have any writing challenges or if they fail to develop a specific writing skill, they may be unable to write quickly and effectively and may not excel in writing because the writing skills required increase throughout the year (Levine, 1993). This study demonstrates the importance of teachers understanding young students' potential challenges with writing because the challenges can not only affect a child's motivation for writing but also may interfere with them learning the writing

process.

Connection of writing challenges due to time constraints. In addition to students facing challenges with the various developmental and physical aspects of writing, both teachers also stated that time constraints were a challenge in writing instruction. The data revealed that time was one of the most challenging aspects of teaching writing due to the school's scheduling issues and missed school because of inclement weather. Although both teachers' engagement in best practices for writing instruction was a positive finding, daily writing instruction did not occur in their classrooms. The teachers' lack of daily writing instruction is consistent with literature on writing instruction. Pressley et al. (2007) stated, "Children's writing improves through instruction and practice, occurring daily over years in an instructionally effective school" (p. 25). Harwayne (2001) also purported that to reach the goal of improving student writing, "we need big blocks of uninterrupted time" for students to write (p. 79).

Throughout the observations, allowing sufficient time for students to complete a given writing task was an issue for both the teachers and the students. During one writing session in LeAnne's classroom, the students only had 15 minutes available for writing instruction. The students were asked to write a reflection about what they had just learned in a school-wide assembly; however, by the time some of them had taken out their reflection journals and pencils, it was time to stop the writing task and go to music class. One student expressed his frustration that he did not have time to write even one sentence in his journal. He slammed his reflection book closed and yelled, "I never have time to finish!" The teacher explained how frustrating it was to have the students stop writing before they were ready. She stated,

I get frustrated seeing how upset the kids get when they can't finish writing. Unfortunately, when our schedule is off because of something else going on in the school that takes away from our work, we might only have a few minutes to try to write. (observation, March 5, 2014)

As with LeAnne, Elizabeth also found a lack of time to be a challenge in teaching writing. During one observation in Elizabeth's classroom, the students only had 15 minutes to complete a writing task because the school schedule had changed for that day. Elizabeth had just begun talking about how to write a good topic sentence, and the students were giving her good topic sentences to write on the board. When the students finished giving suggested topic sentences for a story, Elizabeth sent them to their desks to begin writing. However, before most students made it back to their desks, the Spanish teacher came in and said she needed to do a make-up lesson for Spanish at that moment because the students had missed a Spanish session due to a snow day the previous week. Elizabeth said,

I'll have to start this lesson all over again tomorrow because they didn't have a chance to practice writing even one topic sentence on their own and I know they will probably need me to re-teach them what a topic sentence is (observation, February 18, 2014).

Overall, 90% of the students in both teachers' classes reported having positive attitudes toward writing on the WAS. These high scores appear to be because of the teachers' positive self-efficacy beliefs and writing orientations, which include deciding how and when writing strategies should be taught and supporting students' positive self-efficacy and attitudes towards writing; these orientations made writing a more positive experience for their students.

Although most of the first-grade students surveyed reported being "very happy" to "somewhat happy" about writing, about 10% reported a negative attitude and low self-

efficacy toward writing. This indicates some potential missed opportunities for raising these students' attitudes and self-efficacy in writing. During the course of the study, neither teacher incorporated what these low-scoring students did report wanting to write about, such as writing in a diary or writing a letter to a toy store. This study demonstrates how some of the students' challenges, such as developmental issues (e.g., graphomotor and attention concerns) or not being able to write about topics of interest, could negatively affect students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors.

Research Question 3: How do Teachers' Self-efficacy Beliefs, Orientations, and Writing Practices Align with their Approaches to the Types of Writing Assignments Given in their Classrooms?

Teachers' Beliefs, Orientations, and Instructional Approaches to Writing Tasks

In the context of literacy, both theory (Fitzgerald, 1999) and research (Fisher & Hiebert, 1990) indicate that teachers' classroom practices are influenced by their theoretical orientations (assumptions and beliefs) towards literacy instruction. Knowledge of teachers' theoretical orientations and self-efficacy beliefs in their instructional practices are vital components in understanding the process of teaching and how these factors connect to students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors.

Connection of beliefs and orientations with approaches to assigning writing tasks. The data revealed that teachers' beliefs, orientations, and instructional approaches are aligned with the writing tasks they assign their students. When the first-grade teachers reported on the TCWPS the best descriptions of their approach to writing instruction, both teachers reported that they used a combined process and traditional approach to teach writing in their classrooms.

This combined approach to teaching writing was observed in LeAnne's classroom when she worked on a writing task with one student. The writing task for the day was to write about feelings related to going on a roller coaster. The class had just read the book *Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee, which describes feelings of going on a roller coaster. When one student was not interested in writing about this topic, LeAnne allowed him to write about a more pressing feeling he had, which was related to changes he was experiencing in his home life. When the student asked "how much" he had to write for the writing task that day, LeAnne responded by saying that writing or composing is "not about using up all of the paper. It's about painting a picture with your words to express your feelings. When you've expressed all of your feelings, then you are done writing" (observation, February 19, 2014). The student began writing with a renewed focus on the writing task. He wrote about being unhappy that his mom got remarried and made him change his last name; he wrote that his new stepparent was "mean" to him and that he wanted his old last name back. LeAnne stated that when she allowed children to write about other things instead of writing about the assigned task, she learned more about her students, such as what they liked and did not like and what might cause them to lose focus on the lesson, as was the case with this student.

Elizabeth was also observed assigning writing tasks aligned with her belief that students should write about what interests them. Elizabeth's process approach was observed when a student was upset and did not want to write about the given writing task, which was to write about how the students would feel about going on a roller coaster. Elizabeth's writing lesson was based on *Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee, which LeAnne had used earlier in the week. Elizabeth asked the student what she wanted to write about

instead of writing about her feelings about going on a roller coaster. The student said she was feeling sad and happy at the same time and wanted to write about an upcoming visit from her cousin. The student wrote about being sad that her cousin was sick but being happy at the same time that her cousin was coming to visit.

Both teachers were also observed engaging in a holistic approach to writing. They were seen engaging in authentic writing tasks with their students, in which they instructed students on how to write in a real-world context. Additionally, the teachers had their students engage in writing personal reflections on a particular topic, respond to a piece of literature in writing, and write letters. Because students come to the classroom with diverse needs and on different writing levels, teachers must use a variety of instructional approaches to help students achieve success in writing (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

Both teachers were also observed providing their students with a variety of developmentally appropriate assignments during their instruction. The National Association of Education for Young Children (2012) defines a developmentally appropriate practice as a “teacher meeting young children where they are (by stage of development), both as individuals and as part of a group; and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals” (“Developmentally Appropriate Practice,” n.d., para. 2). Each teacher provided their students with assignments that were mainly based on the students’ interests.

Newhell et al. (2013) described appropriate assignments as those chosen according to what students are prepared to do and at the students’ level of knowledge and skill. The teachers were observed on numerous occasions teaching explicit writing

strategies by modeling the technique to provide an example before the students were expected to utilize the strategies on their own. Both teachers began their lessons with a mini-lesson that included either reading or talking about a particular piece of literature; these mini-lessons were meant to support and/or inform the young authors. The teachers built on and extended previous lessons on a particular topic and then collected information on a large piece of chart paper. Students in both classrooms collaboratively talked about different topics they were interested in that were related to the overall discussion. Then, the teachers allowed the students to begin writing and rotated around the room to give suggestions for composition, encouragement, and other important feedback on the students' work and to generally encourage the students as needed. This study demonstrates how teachers' beliefs and orientations for teaching writing to young students affect the types of writing tasks they assign to their students, which can affect a student's self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors.

Summary

The aim of this mixed methods study was to examine teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, writing orientations, and classroom practices; students' writing self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards writing; and students' classroom writing behaviors. The data analysis revealed that numerous factors contribute to the complex task of teaching writing to young students. This study illuminates how these factors are seemingly connected to students' writing self-efficacy and their writing behaviors in the classroom.

Teachers' Writing Orientations and Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Connection to Writing Behaviors

This study's first research question, "What are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices in first-grade classrooms," was answered with data

demonstrating that a teacher's self-efficacy, writing orientations, and instructional practices are important factors that are connected to students' self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors. An analysis of the data revealed that both teachers possessed high self-efficacy and had positive effects on their students' confidence and persistence in writing tasks. Furthermore, because these teachers had the confidence to meet their students' developmental needs and overcome the obstacles found in teaching writing to young students, they could affect their students' self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors.

This study underscored the integral connection between teachers' writing orientations and students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors. LeAnne's and Elizabeth's belief that writing skills and strategies should be explicitly taught and their belief that students should be taught writing through less formal methods are important factors that educators and researchers should consider when examining factors that could be connected to students' self-efficacy for writing.

Teachers' Instructional Practices and Connection to Students' Writing Behaviors

The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data regarding the teachers' instructional practices revealed that the teachers' instructional practices are connected to students' writing self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors. This study demonstrates that the teachers understand how important their instructional practices are to guiding student learning. For instance, both teachers' instructional practices included teaching their students to use the writing process for different purposes, such as informing, persuading, making arguments, sharing personal experiences, and demonstrating in writing an understanding of a particular text. LeAnne and Elizabeth were observed explicitly teaching various writing strategies to their young students and guiding their

young students on a daily basis on how to apply and appropriately use a variety of writing strategies. In addition, during several classroom observations, LeAnne and Elizabeth ensured that their students had the background knowledge and skills necessary to understand and use specific writing strategies.

Teachers' Instructional Practices for Supporting Students' Writing

A common occurrence in LeAnne's and Elizabeth's instructional writing sessions was their use of the instructional practices of modeling new strategies and soliciting ideas from their students on other ways to use particular strategies before beginning a writing task. In addition, each teacher was observed assessing which students needed more time or additional writing practice and who needed additional guidance to master a writing strategy or skill to be successful in writing. Both teachers posted various writing strategies on the wall and placed anchor charts with writing rules and writing conventions throughout the classroom for their students to use as a resource.

Moreover, an analysis of the data revealed that both teachers designed writing instruction and writing tasks that provided students with numerous opportunities to write for a variety of audiences. For instance, both teachers were observed teaching their students how to choose different words to better convey their meaning to a particular audience. LeAnne and Elizabeth had their students look at the words they chose for writing tasks that were aimed at particular audiences. Then, they guided their students in finding similar words that meant the same thing but that might convey the message in a stronger way for that audience. The students in both classes seemed to understand that writing is an authentic way to communicate and to accomplish a variety of goals.

Another instructional technique that both teachers demonstrated was their use of

literature during writing instruction. The instructional practice of incorporating literature into the writing lesson then acted as a springboard for writing tasks. For instance, both teachers read the book *Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee. They then had their students list words describing the characters' feelings about going on a roller coaster. This practice was followed by a brainstorming session in which the teachers encouraged their students to come up with other "feelings" words they could use in their writing about doing something that was exciting. Using literature to guide students in their writing supported the students' self-efficacy and persistence in writing tasks.

Analysis of the data also revealed other instructional practices, such as teaching students how to pick ideas, organize ideas, and write more. After students in both classes finished their writing assignments, both teachers offered their students the opportunity to sit in the author's chair and read their writing to the class. The teachers also provided their students with numerous opportunities to share their writing with a peer; during this time, the students engaged in feedback with their writing partners to strengthen the content of their writing. Furthermore, both teachers incorporated other instructional strategies, including instructing students on how to apply proofreading strategies and how to use and add to their student dictionaries. The teachers also provided their students with models of how to expand and combine their sentences to make their writing more interesting. In addition, an analysis of the data revealed how both teachers helped their students communicate their thoughts and ideas through writing, encouraged students to engage with the text to deepen their understanding of the content, and modeled how to draw connections to prior learning experiences to assist their students with their writing tasks. Findings from this study are summarized in the following sections, and conclusions

are identified.

Teachers' Assessment Practices to Support Student Writing

This study also highlighted how important the instructional practice of assessment is to supporting writing with young students. The teachers in this study understood that good instruction in writing requires the continual assessment of students' needs and skills and the modification of writing instruction to meet those needs. For example, LeAnne and Elizabeth assessed their students through writing trait rubrics and provided their students with numerous opportunities to give and receive feedback throughout the writing process with their peers. Students in both classrooms also appeared to grasp the purpose of monitoring their own writing progress by revising their writing at each stage of the process and by using their writing rubrics as a checklist and guide to improve their work. Students in both classes demonstrated the ability to self-evaluate using teacher-created and curriculum-based rubrics to see if their ideas were clear, if the writing had a beginning, middle, and end, and if the sentence structures were varied. The teachers' use of age-appropriate rubrics and their utilization of other assessment practices (e.g., students' writing portfolios, teacher and student conferences, and student-to-student conferences) highlights the importance of assessment practices, which future writing researchers and educators of young children should consider.

In addition, an analysis of the data revealed that designing an organized, supportive, purposefully designed classroom environment is connected to students' self-efficacy beliefs and classroom writing behaviors. Both teachers' classroom environments contained numerous literacy items to facilitate their students' literacy learning and feelings of writing in a safe environment. Future writing researchers and educators of

young children should also consider these factors when examining the factors that best support young students' writing self-efficacy and writing behaviors.

This study's second research question, "How do first-grade students' writing self-efficacy and attitudes about their own writing affect their classroom writing behaviors," was answered by data revealing that when students are motivated to connect with their writing, their classroom writing behaviors are positively affected. LeAnne's and Elizabeth's practice of giving constructive feedback on their students' writing made their students feel safe and that their writing was valued in their classroom.

In addition, this study demonstrates that a teacher's participation in the writing process facilitates the students' excitement for writing. For instance, both teachers took part in the writing process by composing their own letters to Lucky the leprechaun. As the teachers wrote their letters to Lucky on the board, they read their writing out loud to the class. This instructional practice helped generate excitement about writing to Lucky and served as a model of a meaningful text.

An analysis of the data further revealed that the teachers encouraged their students to collaborate as writers and provided their students with opportunities to publish their written works. By allowing their students to participate in peer collaboration, the students could identify problems in other people's writing more easily than they could with their own work. This helped them enhance their understanding of their own writing. LeAnne and Elizabeth were further observed publishing their students' writing so all the visitors and students in the school community could read their students' work. Publishing the written works motivated the students to become more involved in the writing process in their classrooms. In addition, both teachers created a supportive and motivating

environment in which the young writers felt safe when engaging fully in the writing process. The data analyzed in this study revealed that motivation is connected to students' self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors.

In addition, this study demonstrates the importance of teachers understanding young students' potential challenges with writing. These challenges cannot only affect a child's motivation for writing but also may interfere with learning the writing process. An analysis of the data revealed how some challenges, such as developmental issues (e.g., graphomotor and attention concerns) or being unable to write about topics of interest, could negatively affect students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors. Furthermore, the data revealed how a lack of time for writing instruction can affect students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors if they do not have enough time to complete a writing task.

Connection of Teachers' Self-efficacy Beliefs, Orientations, and Writing Practices to Writing Assignments Given

This study's third and final research question, "How do teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, orientations, and writing practices align with their approaches to the types of writing assignments given in their classrooms," was answered through data analysis revealing that the teachers' assigned writing tasks were connected to their writing self-efficacy and writing orientations. The teachers in this study implemented highly effective, research-based teaching practices and assigned writing tasks consistent with their writing orientations and beliefs. LeAnne and Elizabeth gave their students writing choices and often brainstormed about numerous topics based on their students' personal interests. The teachers included numerous opportunities for their students to choose their own topics and allowed their students to modify the assigned writing prompt. This study

demonstrates how the teachers' beliefs and orientations for teaching writing to young students were consistent with the types of writing tasks they assigned to their students.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. First, the sample consisted mostly of Caucasian participants from a predominately middle-class socioeconomic background, and any findings may not be transferable to individuals from other ethnic, racial, or socioeconomic groups; students with disabilities; or ESL students. Second, the current study only examined self-efficacy as it occurs in a classroom setting. Further research is needed to determine the influence of other variables, such as parents, peers, socioeconomic statuses, and other motivational constructs (e.g., writing apprehension). The convenient sampling strategy did not yield a representative sample, and the sample size may not be large enough to obtain credible results. These factors might limit the generalizability of the study's results and therefore may threaten the external validity of the study. Possible internal threats to the study include testing procedure and instrumentation issues.

The researcher strengthened the validity and rigor of the qualitative methods used in this study by incorporating a variety of strategies to establish trustworthiness. Reflexive journals, field notes, and memos were kept throughout the study. Additional strategies utilized to strengthen the qualitative findings related to trustworthiness include participant review (Guba & Lincoln, 1989); persistent observations of the teachers' writing instruction in their classrooms (Alaggia & Millington, 2008); triangulation of all qualitative data (Tobin & Begley, 2004); peer debriefing (Patton, 2002); simultaneously collecting and analyzing the data (Maxwell, 2005); and a thick description (Maxwell, 2005).

Self-reports and social desirability are also threats to internal validity. To address these threats, the data was triangulated through multiple observations throughout the study. The researcher conducted participant reviews and used experts in the field of the constructs examined to strengthen the content validity. Blueprints of the interview and observation instruments were employed to enhance content validity.

To strengthen the data collection and interview analysis, the researcher enlisted two doctoral students, who were experts on best literacy practices, as peer de-briefers to help strengthen the credibility and accountability of the data interpretations (Rager, 2005). The peer debriefing prompts used before and after the interview process were based on Spillett's (2003) prompts, which helped the researcher understand her influence on the research process. The prompts involve question such as, "What do you mean by...", "What is important (or not) about this to you?", and "How does that relate to..." (Spillet, 2003). Although all limitations could not be addressed, the strategies employed to counter some of the major limitations served to strengthen the overall design and implementation of the study.

Implications

The findings from this study provide some insights into the multidimensional, complex task of teaching writing to young children; these insights could inform writing instruction. This study provides evidence that the teachers' responses on the survey instruments accurately reflected their actual classroom practices. Although most of the reported practices were corroborated by observation, not all practices were observed because of the limited nature of this inquiry. In future research, observations throughout the school year will help ascertain if all the reported teaching practices are incorporated in the classroom. It must be noted that this study only focused on classroom practices and

not on school-wide, local, or state policies affecting writing instruction in the elementary grades.

This study finds that both first-grade teachers believed and practiced a combined teaching approach incorporating both process and traditional skills. Although this combined approach has been supported in the literature, further research should examine how to balance each of these approaches in the classroom to support developing writers. Furthermore, it should be noted that these practices were not examined to determine how frequently they were applied.

The findings suggest that a teacher's theoretical orientations and beliefs are vital to understanding the factors leading to effective writing instruction in the lower grades. The findings from this inquiry demonstrate that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and writing orientations regarding writing instruction are in line with the teachers' actual and reported teaching practices and with the writing tasks they assigned to their students and that these beliefs, orientations, and practices are connected to students' self-efficacy and writing behaviors. Although this study relies on self-reported data, on-site observations in the teachers' classrooms, and students' artifacts, further research should include observations throughout the year to further verify and validate these results and to ensure that the results from this inquiry are not sample-specific.

The results of this study also demonstrate that both teachers found it challenging to find enough time to write with their students on a daily basis. Teachers should find ways to increase the amount of time their students actually spend writing. The National Commission on Writing (NCW) (2003) recommends that teachers spend double the amount of time on writing that they are spending now. Some possible ways of increasing

writing time are to have students write during other instructional times and to have students engage in writing activities at home.

The National Writing Project (2003) states, “Learning to write requires frequent, supportive practices. Evidence shows that writing performance improves when a student writes often and across content areas” (p. 12). One study on time spent on reading and writing reported that the amount of time students spent writing and reading was directly connected to their writing proficiency and literacy development (Allington, 2002). Therefore, students who can write well and who enjoy writing spend more time actively participating in writing activities; students who do not write very frequently do not enjoy writing and face challenges in attaining writing fluency (Allington, 2002).

A teacher’s inability to write with students on a daily basis may be connected to students’ self-efficacy in writing because the students do not have as many opportunities to practice this complex construct. This assumption is supported by research showing that effective writing teachers commit time to writing and writing instruction and ensure that writing occurs across the curriculum (Graham & Perin, 2007b). Past studies on student writing demonstrated the importance of allotting more instructional time to help students develop proficient writing skills (Allington, 2002; Kilgore, 2004; Sexton, 2003). The teachers in this study said that when time was cut short on a given day, writing instruction was unfortunately given less priority over reading and math instruction. This is supported by research demonstrating that teachers often view writing as a low priority in their instructional planning and that enough time is not allotted for basic writing (Calfee & Miller, 2013).

Teachers face many instructional demands and often find it difficult to provide the

necessary time for students to develop and craft writing skills (Barone & Taylor, 2006). Several studies found that when teachers face time pressures, they often fall back into a default lecture mode or presentational mode rather than providing opportunities for active student participation (Allington, 2002; Barone & Taylor, 2006; Hillocks, 2007). Because of constraints on instructional time, Allington (1994, 2002) found that students in many classrooms still spend less than 10% of each school day engaged in productive writing activities. Teachers who achieve success in writing instruction understand the importance of recurrent and continuous writing (Graham & Perin, 2007b). According to the research, students should spend at least one hour each day writing, including planning, revising, or publishing (Graham & Perin, 2007b).

The teachers in this study faced challenges related to a lack of instructional time to teach writing and working with various writing abilities. Teachers should find ways to overcome some of these challenges to help their students become skilled writers. Research literature supports this inquiry's finding that students sometimes have very little time to write (Graham & Harris, 2013). One way in which teachers might overcome the challenge posed by a lack of time for writing instruction is to write across the curriculum rather than only writing during a designated block in the morning. According to Graham and Perin (2007), highly effective teachers understand that writing is essential for young students and find different ways to approach writing instruction. For example, teachers could have their students write a "learning log" in their reflection journals on what they are learning in other subjects, such as science and social studies (Bangert-Drowns et al., 2004).

In addition to the teachers lacking sufficient time to teach writing, the teachers

also did not have sufficient access to technology in the classroom. During the 10-week inquiry, the use of technology in writing was not employed. Both teachers reported having access to word processing programs and computers less than a few times a year. Research studies have demonstrated that students in grades 1 through 12 show a marked improvement in writing over a period of time when they use technology, such as word processing, to write as opposed to writing by hand (Goldberg, Russell, & Cook, 2003; Morphy & Graham, 2012). The NCW (2003, 2005) recommends that teachers make technology a more integral part of writing instruction. An effort should be made to increase the amount and quality of software in schools because technology can enhance student writing (Graham & Perrin, 2007). One suggestion is for teachers to apply for classroom grants that would enable them to purchase more computers for their classrooms.

The challenge teachers face in working with various ability levels in writing can be addressed in different ways. For example, both teachers in this study shared an adult aide during their writing blocks. Each teacher utilized this aide at least three times a week. Unfortunately, the aide only filed papers and escorted students to other parts of the school. One potential solution is to provide training on developmental writing skills for aides and incorporate aides into writing instruction by having them assist students who find writing tasks difficult. The aides could help individual students who struggle with writing tasks by helping them organize their ideas, elaborate on ideas, and understand what needs to be accomplished in particular writing tasks.

To help students overcome challenges related to writing, such as handwriting, spelling, and other grammar issues, teachers can provide direct instruction on these skills

and offer adequate opportunities to practice these elements of writing. According to the research, focusing on these issues can affect writing abilities and contribute to a student's future disability in writing expression (Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000). Therefore, teachers of young children must understand the importance of helping students overcome these challenges through direct instruction on these skills to facilitate students' fluency in writing and prevent writing disabilities (Graham et al., 2000).

This study also demonstrates the importance of teachers offering a classroom climate filled with print-rich items and materials. The International Reading Association (IRA) (2010) added classroom climate as a core standard for preparing literacy professionals in outstanding practices. Both the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the IRA (2010) note that literacy instruction and learning occur in environments comprised of three core areas: (1) physical space, which consists of utilization of space and classroom design, texts containing both print and non-print formats, technological resources, and other supplies and materials; (2) socio-emotional, which allows interaction and communication between teachers and students; and (3) intellectual, which refers to instructional activities such as scaffolding, varying groups of students, and differentiating instruction and activities. These three areas are designed to raise achievement levels and motivate students to participate in literacy processes. The qualitative data from the interviews and observations suggest that both teachers understood that these three core areas can affect student learning, particularly in the context of writing. The field of literacy has recognized the range of environmental influences that can affect student behavior and student learning, especially in young children (Wolfersberger, Reutzel, Sudweeks, & Fawson, 2004).

As previously mentioned, many factors must come together to support students' self-efficacy and classroom writing behaviors. Components that are intertwined include a print-rich classroom environment, the connection of teachers' beliefs and writing orientations to students' self-efficacy beliefs and writing behaviors, teachers' use of instructional techniques based on his or her beliefs, and materials used during instruction. This study adds to the literature on writing self-efficacy because it examines the effect teachers' self-efficacy, orientations, and writing practices can have on students' self-efficacy beliefs on student learning. Although many factors, such as those listed above, influence students' success in writing, the classroom teacher has the most powerful effect on student learning (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). The overall implications of this study are that teachers must reflect on their writing orientations, writing self-efficacy, classroom writing practices, and role as writing teachers to understand how these factors influence their instructional decisions and their students' self-efficacy for writing.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research include the following: (1) increasing period of study to a full academic year (i.e., nine months) to determine if students' self-efficacy changes from the beginning of the year to the end of the year; (2) conducting student interviews to obtain a more in-depth understanding of their high or low attitudes and self-efficacy for writing; and (3) conducting exit interviews with teacher participants to answer any questions about the data collected in the study. Furthermore, a future study could be conducted with a revised WAS for young students that includes additional choices for answers, such as "nervous," and that includes all components of a school's writing curriculum.

The frequency at which rubrics are used to monitor students' progress, how

classroom teachers alter these rubrics to better fit particular writing tasks, and how these rubrics are reviewed with students was not determined due to the limited nature of this inquiry. In addition, this inquiry did not focus on monitoring all the ways in which teachers might utilize other assessment practices, such as teacher-to-child conferences and parent-to-teacher conferences. Further research is needed to determine how often other types of assessment practices are incorporated into practice, to what extent these assessments are utilized, and how the results are shared with students because these factors could affect a child's attitude and self-efficacy in writing.

Teachers of young children must understand the factors that can influence writing instruction in classrooms, such as teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and orientations about teaching writing to young students (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Because writing is vital to students' academic and future occupational success, it is important to examine teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and orientations about writing and how they plan writing instruction. In addition, it is important to understand the potential effect students' attitude and self-efficacy in writing have on their classroom writing behaviors given the degree of emphasis placed on early writing success and its effect on students' future academic success (NCW, 2004, 2005).

The NCW (2003) reported that writing is an important component in the school reform movement and emphasized that (1) students need to write more; (2) technology needs be a more essential component in teachers' writing instruction; (3) students' progress in writing should be monitored more often; and (4) teachers should be better prepared to teach writing. Although it is necessary to improve writing instruction at all grade levels (Persky, Daane, & Jen, 2003), it is particularly important to make

improvements when children are first learning to write. This focus on writing instruction with younger children becomes more prevalent because it is difficult to surmount literacy issues in later grades when those issues originate in the primary grades (Slavin et al., 1989). The creation and expansion of policies and practices to improve writing instruction should be based on a strong understanding and extensive knowledge of how writing is currently taught and on how younger students perceive writing. Without such valuable information, it is difficult to validate what must be accomplished.

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Appendix A Principal Letter

Dear Principal,

My name is Julie Dashiell and I am a graduate student at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. To meet the requirements for my dissertation, I would like to conduct a research study on the impact of teachers' self-efficacy on classroom writing instruction in first-grade classrooms. I seek to understand how teachers approach writing instruction in a first-grade classroom, how they value writing as a tool of learning and evaluation, and what their beliefs are regarding teaching writing to young students. Furthermore, I hope to understand the role of teachers' self-efficacy and its potential impact on student attitudes towards their own writing and on students' writing outcomes.

For the purpose of this study, the principal researcher requests your consent/approval to recruit your first-grade teachers as participants in this study. The teachers would be asked to complete an hour interview regarding their views towards teaching writing in a first-grade classroom. Additionally, they would be asked to complete 3 surveys, which should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Finally, they would be asked to allow the researcher to observe their writing instruction between 4 to 8 times during the 10-week study. Students would be asked to complete a writing attitudes survey that would only take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The researcher would also collect three writing samples of students' written works at the onset and at the end of the study. There will be no known risks to you, your facilities, students, or parents. To insure that all information in this study is kept and handled confidentially, the principal researcher will use the information for your site under a different name (pseudonym). Consent to use your site is voluntary, and as principal, you can withdraw your site from the study at any time, without consequences. Your teachers will receive a \$25 gift card to a local bookstore for their participation in this study. All first-grade students will receive an age-appropriate pencil and eraser for their participation in the study. My Old Dominion University Department Chair, Dr. Angela Eckhoff, has endorsed this study. If you have any further questions or concerns before signing this consent, you may contact me by email at jdashiell01@gmail.com, or by phone at (757) 489-7861. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Consent of Site Administrator/Principal

I, _____, consent to the use of _____ School for a research study exploring the impact of teachers' self-efficacy on classroom writing instruction, on student attitudes towards writing, and the potential impact on students' writing outcomes.

Principal

Date

Appendix A (continued)
Headmaster Letter

Dear Headmaster,

My name is Julie Dashiell and I am a graduate student at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. To meet the requirements for my dissertation, I would like to conduct a research study on the impact of teachers' self-efficacy on classroom writing instruction in first-grade classrooms. I seek to understand how teachers approach writing instruction in a first-grade classroom, how they value writing as a tool of learning and evaluation, and what their beliefs are regarding teaching writing to young students. Furthermore, I hope to understand the role of teachers' self-efficacy and its potential impact on student attitudes towards their own writing and on students' writing outcomes.

For the purpose of this study, the principal researcher requests your consent / approval to recruit your first-grade teachers as participants in this study. The teachers would be asked to complete an hour interview regarding their views towards teaching writing in a first-grade classroom. Additionally, they would be asked to complete 3 surveys, which should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Finally, they would be asked to allow the researcher to observe their writing instruction between 4 to 8 times during the 10-week study. Students would be asked to complete a writing attitudes survey that would only take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The researcher would also collect three writing samples of students' written works at the onset and at the end of the study. There will be no known risks to you, your facilities, students, or parents. To insure that all information in this study is kept and handled confidentially, the principal researcher will use the information for your site under a different name (pseudonym). Consent to use your site is voluntary, and as principal, you can withdraw your site from the study at any time, without consequences. Your teachers will receive a \$25 gift card to a local bookstore for their participation in this study. All first-grade students will receive an age-appropriate pencil and eraser for their participation in the study.

My Old Dominion University Department Chair, Dr. Angela Eckhoff, has endorsed this study. If you have any further questions or concerns before signing this consent, you may contact me by email at jdashiell01@gmail.com, or by phone at (757) 489-7861. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Consent of Site Administrator/Headmaster

I, _____, consent to the use of _____ School for a research study exploring the impact of teachers' self-efficacy on classroom writing instruction, on student attitudes towards writing, and the potential impact on students' writing outcomes.

Headmaster

Date

Appendix A (continued)
Parent Notification Letter

January 14, 2014

Dear Parents of First-grade Students,

In the next two months, our first-grade classes will participate in a research study exploring the impact of teachers' self-efficacy on classroom writing instruction, on student attitudes towards writing, and the potential impact on student writing outcomes. Mrs. Julie Dashiell, a doctoral student at Old Dominion University, will complete this investigation using brief classroom observations, teacher interviews, student surveys, and a review of student writing samples. All data collected in this study will be kept confidential and reported under a pseudonym.

We are delighted to share with Julie our beliefs about writing and information about our strong writing program in first grade. We feel certain that when students learn the steps within the writing process, along with the traits of great writing, students of all ages will think, talk, and write like writers.

For questions about this study or writing instruction in your student's classroom, please contact us by phone or email.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Principal
Director of Lower School

First-grade Teacher A

First-grade Teacher B

CC. J. Dashiell

Appendix B
Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing

Directions: Teachers, please respond to each question by choosing and circling one answer, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* for each item on the survey. There are no right or wrong answers on this survey.

1. When students' writing performance improves, it is usually because I found better ways of teaching that student.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
2. Even a good writing teacher may not reach many students.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
3. If a student did not remember what I taught in a previous writing lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
4. The hours in my class have little influence on students' writing performance compared to the influence of their home environment.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
5. If a student masters a new writing concept quickly, this is because I knew the necessary steps in teaching this concept.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
6. If I try really hard, I can help students with the most difficult writing problems.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
7. When a student does better than usual in writing, it is because I exerted a little extra effort.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
8. If students are not disciplined at home, they are not likely to accept any discipline during the writing period.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
9. When a student is having difficulty with a writing assignment, I would have no trouble adjusting it to his/her level.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
10. The influence of a student's	Strongly	Moderately	Disagree	Agree	Moderately	Strongly

home experience on writing can be overcome by good teaching.	Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Slightly 3	Slightly 4	Agree 5	Agree 6
11. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her writing achievement.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
12. If one of my students could not do a writing assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
13. The amount a student can learn in writing is primarily related to family background.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
14. If a student becomes disruptive and noisy during writing time, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
15. When students' writing performance improves, it is usually because I found more effective teaching approaches.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
16. If parents would do more in writing with their children, I could do more.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6

Appendix B (continued)
Writing Orientation Scale

Directions: Teachers, please respond to each question by choosing and circling one answer, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* for each item on the survey. There are no right or wrong answers on this survey.

1. A good way to begin writing instruction is to have children copy good models of each particular type of writing.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
2. Instead of regular grammar lessons, it is best to teach grammar when a specific need for it emerges in a child's writing.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
3. Students need to meet frequently in small groups to react and critique each other's writing.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
4. The act of composing is more important than the written work children produce.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
5. Before children begin a writing task, teachers should remind them to use correct spelling.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
6. With practice writing and responding to written messages, children will gradually learn the conventions of adult writing.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
7. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (e.g., nouns and verbs) is useful in proficient writing.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
8. It is important for children to study words in order to learn their spelling.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
9. Formal instruction in writing is necessary to insure adequate development of all the skills used in writing.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
10. Children need to practice writing letters to learn how to	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6

form them correctly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Teachers should aim at producing writers who can write good compositions in one draft.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
12. Before they begin a writing task, children who speak a nonstandard dialect of English should be reminded to use correct English.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6
13. It is important to teach children strategies for planning and revising.	Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Agree Slightly 4	Moderately Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6

- Please circle your gender: male female
- Please circle your ethnicity: Hispanic Black White Asian Other
- Please circle your highest educational level:
Bachelor's Bachelor's + Master's Master's + Doctorate
- Please circle your evaluation of the quality of the preparation you received for teaching writing within your teacher certification program. If you did not attend a teacher certification program, check here.

exceptional very good adequate poor inadequate
- How many years have you taught? _____
- What grade(s) do you currently teach? _____
- How many children are in your classroom? _____
- How many children in your classroom receive a free or reduced lunch? _____ don't know _____
- How many of the children in your classroom are: _____ Hispanic _____ White
_____ Black _____ Asian _____ Other
- How many of the children in your classroom receive special education services? _____

Write the number of students who fit within each classification. Write 0 if you have no students within a particular classification. The combination of your answers should total the number of students in your classroom.

____ students are above average writers (writing more than 1 grade level above their current grade placement)

____ students are average writers (writing at their grade level or within 1 grade level plus or minus their current grade placement)

____ students are below average writers (writing more than 1 grade level below their current grade placement)

12. Check which of the following best describes your approach to writing instruction:

- ☐ traditional skills approach combined with process writing
☐ process writing approach
☐ traditional skills approach
☐ Other (describe briefly):

Section II: Please circle the appropriate response.

SD-Strongly Disagree
 MD-Moderately Disagree
 DS-Disagree Slightly
 AS-Agree Slightly
 MA-Moderately Agree
 SA-Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. I like to teach writing. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 2. I effectively manage my classroom during writing instruction. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 3. I like to write. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |
| 4. I am effective at teaching writing. | SD | MD | DS | AS | MA | SA |

Section III: Please complete each question below

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

2. During an average week, how many minutes do you spend **teaching** each of the following?

_____ Spelling _____ Handwriting _____ Revising Strategies
 _____ Grammar and Usage _____ Planning Strategies

3. How much of your instructional time in writing involves **whole group instruction**?

_____ % (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

How much of your instructional time in writing involves **small group instruction** or “**cooperative**” **learning activities**?

_____% (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

How much of your instructional time in writing involves individualized instruction?

_____ % (Please give a figure from 0% to 100%)

4. Do you use a commercial program to teach writing, handwriting, spelling, or any other aspect of composing? _____ Yes _____ No

What programs?

5. Please check which of the following writing activities your students will do this year.

_____ Stories _____ Personal Narratives _____ Journal Writing _____ Poems

_____ Lists _____ Book Reports _____ Books _____ Comic strips _____ Plays

_____ Alphabet Books _____ Completing Worksheets _____ Copying Text

_____ Drawing a picture and writing something to go with it _____ Writing letters to another person

_____ Autobiographies _____ Biographies _____ Writing to persuade

_____ Writing to inform _____ Writing summaries _____ Writing in response to material read

_____ Other types of writing (Please specify): _____

Section IV: Please complete the following questions.

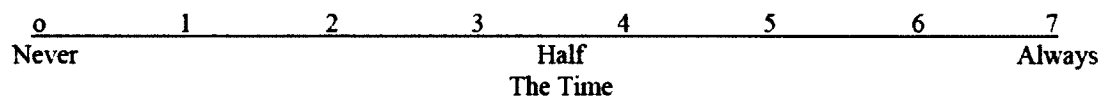
1. Circle how often you conference with students about their writing.

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

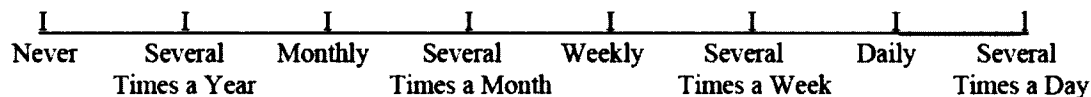
2. Circle how often students conference with their peers about their writing.

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

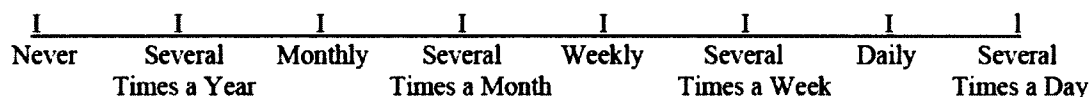
3. Circle how often students select their own writing topics.



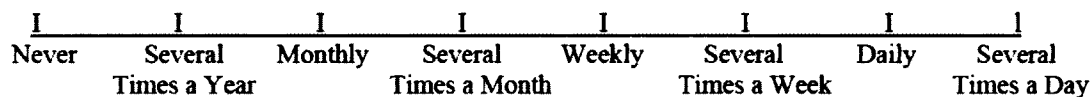
4. Circle how often your students engage in “**planning**” before writing.



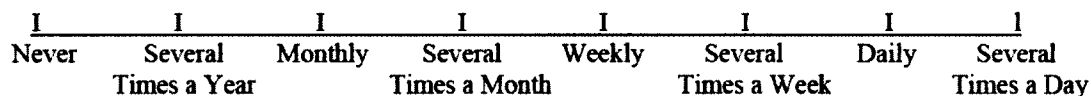
5. Circle how often your students “**revise**” their writing products



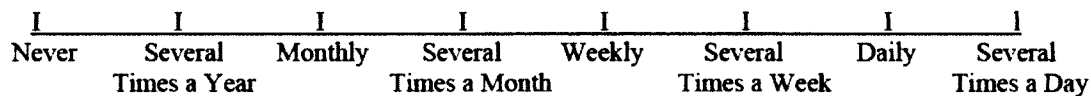
6. Circle how often students share their writing with their peers.



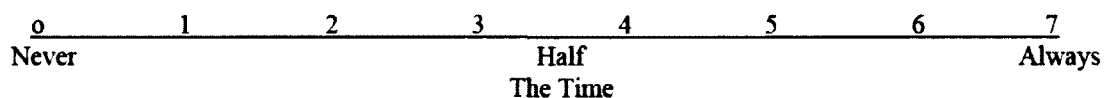
7. Circle how often your students “**publish**” their writing. (Publish means to print or write it so that it can be shared with others.)



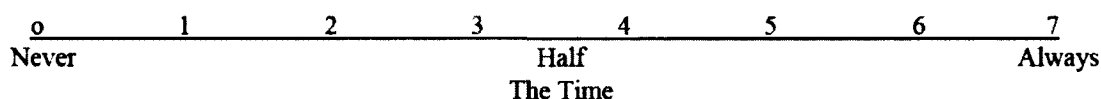
8. Circle how often your students help their classmates with their writing.



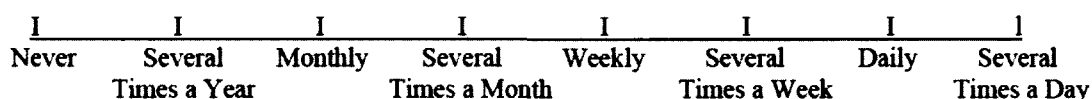
9. Circle how often students are allowed to **complete writing assignments at their own pace**.



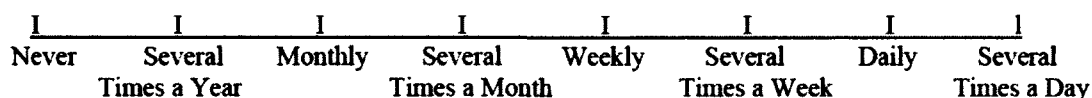
10. Circle how often you encourage students to use “**invented spellings**” at any point during the writing process.



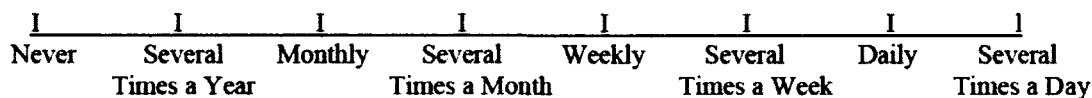
11. Circle how often you **read your own writing** to your students.



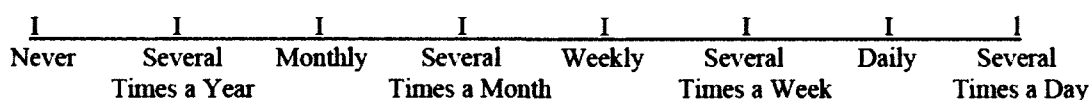
12. Circle how often you teach **sentence construction skills**.



13. Circle how often you teach students about **ways of organizing text or how texts are organized**.



14. Circle how often you teach students **strategies for planning**.



15. Circle how often you teach students **strategies for revising**.

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

16. Circle how often you teach students **handwriting skills**.

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

17. Circle how often you teach **spelling skills**.

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

18. Circle how often you teach **grammar skills**.

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

19. Circle how often you teach **punctuation skills**.

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

20. Circle how often you teach **capitalization skills**.

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

21. Circle how often you **provide mini-lessons** on writing skills or processes students need to know at this moment---skills, vocabulary, concepts, strategies, or other things.

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

22. Circle how often you **overtly model writing strategies**.

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

23. Circle how often you **model the enjoyment or love of writing** for students.

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

24. Circle how often you **reteach** writing skills or strategies that you previously taught.

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

25. Circle how often you assign **writing homework** to students in your class.

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

26. Circle how often your students work at **writing centers**.

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

27. Circle how often your writing lessons have **multiple instructional goals**.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Never Half Always
 The Time

28. Circle how often you use a **writing prompt** (e.g., story starter, picture, physical object, etc.) to encourage student writing.

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

29. Circle how often your students use a **graphic organizer** (e.g., story map) when writing.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Never Half Always
 The Time

30. Circle how often you **monitor the writing progress** of your students in order to make decisions about writing instruction.

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

31. Circle how often you encourage students to **monitor their own writing progress**.

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

32. Circle how often students use **rubrics** to evaluate their writing.

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

33. Circle how often students in your classroom use **writing portfolios** (add material to a portfolio, look at material already in it, and so forth).

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

34. Circle how often you ask students to **write at home with parental help**.

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

35. Circle how often you ask **parents to listen** to something their child wrote at school.

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

36. Circle how often you **communicate with parents** about their child's writing progress.

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

37. Circle how often you allow one or more students in your classroom to write by **dictating** their compositions to someone else.

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

38. Circle how often you allow one or more students in your classroom to use **computers** during the writing period.

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

39. Circle how often students use **writing to support reading** (e.g., write about something they read).

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

40. Circle how often students use **reading to support writing** (e.g., read to inform their writing).

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

41. Circle how often your students use **writing in other content areas** such as social studies, science, and math.

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

42. Has No Child Left Behind influenced what you do during writing instruction? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain how: _____

If you have any additional information about your writing program that you would like to share with us, please do so here.

Appendix C

Writing Attitudes Survey

Writing Attitude Survey

Name _____ School _____ Grade _____

1. How would you feel writing a letter to the author of a book you read?



2. How would you feel if you wrote about something you have heard or seen?






























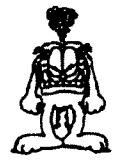












3. How would you feel writing a letter to a store asking about something you might buy there?



4. How would you feel telling in writing why something happened?



<small>GARFIELD © PAWS, All rights reserved.</small>	5. How would you feel writing to someone to change their opinion?				
	6. How would you feel keeping a diary?				
	7. How would you feel writing poetry for fun?				
	8. How would you feel writing a letter stating your opinion about a topic?				
	9. How would you feel if you were an author who writes books?				

CAMPBELL & PAVES All rights reserved	10. How would you feel if you had a job as a writer for a newspaper or magazine?				
	11. How would you feel about becoming an even better writer than you already are?				
	12. How would you feel about writing a story instead of doing homework?				
	13. How would you feel about writing a story instead of watching TV?				
	14. How would you feel writing about something you did in science?				

<small>COPYRIGHT © P. W. W. All rights reserved.</small>	15. How would you feel writing about something you did in social studies?		
16. How would you feel if you could write more in school?			
17. How would you feel about writing down the important things your teacher says about a new topic?			
18. How would you feel writing a long story or report at school?			
19. How would you feel writing answers to questions in science or social studies?			

20. How would you feel if your teacher asked you to go back and change some of your writing?



21. How would you feel if your classmates talked to you about making your writing better ?



22. How would you feel writing an advertisement for something people can buy?



















23. How would you feel keeping a journal for class?



24. How would you feel writing about things that have happened in your life?



GARFIELD © PAWS All rights reserved.	25. How would you feel writing about something from another person's point of view?				
	26. How would you feel about checking your writing to make sure the words you have written are spelled correctly?				
	27. How would you feel if your classmates read something you wrote?				
	28. How would you feel if you didn't write as much in school?				

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Appendix D Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Participant: _____

Interviewer: _____

School: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Script: I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I will be recording and transcribing, verbatim, what we say. It is important to me to give you a voice by accurately interpreting and representing what you say; therefore, I will be asking you to review my transcriptions and any notes I make regarding my interpretations. The transcription will be verbatim, including “uhs” and “ahs,” so that I do not paraphrase something you have said with an incorrect interpretation (these will not be included in the direct quotes of the final written paper). I am interested in exploring the impact of teachers’ self-efficacy on their classroom writing instruction. I want to know your perspective so please feel free to discuss your views. In order to clarify some of your answers and statements, I may ask you some additional questions as we proceed. Are you ready to begin?

Questions:

1. How do you plan for teaching writing in your classroom? Methods used?
Strategies used?
2. Describe how you evaluate student writing in your classroom
3. What you think is meant by the phrase, “teacher’s self-efficacy”?
4. What qualities, both internal and external, do you think can foster teachers’ self-efficacy?
5. Do these qualities contribute to your success as a classroom teacher? If so, how?
6. What qualities, both internal and external, do you think can hinder teachers’ self-efficacy?
7. Do these qualities prevent your success as a classroom teacher? If so, how?
8. What are some characteristics of a good writing teacher for young students? Why

do you think these are important?

9. What are some of the challenging aspects of teaching writing to young students? Why? What supports and/or resources do you have for writing instruction in the classroom?
10. How do you give feedback on students' writing?
11. How do you evaluate/assess students' writing? How do you assess if a writing assignment is developmentally appropriate for a student?
12. What makes a student feel successful with the writing process?
13. How do you approach the types of assignments you give your students in the classroom? Why did/do you choose this particular type of approach?
14. What are some typical types of writing tasks you assign in your classroom? Why?
15. What do you think are some reasons why a student may or may not want to complete a writing task? Describe your students' attitudes towards their writing.
16. What place do you think writing should have in the first-grade curriculum?

Appendix E
Observation Protocol

Classroom Observation Protocol

Participant: _____

Interviewer: _____

School: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Script: I want to thank you for allowing me to observe in your classroom today. The observation will last for approximately 30–45 minutes. What I am interested in finding out is how teachers value writing as a tool of learning and evaluation and how they implement related instruction in the classroom. I am interested in observing your classroom during writing instruction time with your students and documenting it. It is important to me to give you a voice by accurately interpreting and representing what I observe; therefore, I will be asking you to review any notes I make regarding my observation. I really want to know your perspective so please feel free to reflect and discuss your views.

Description of Setting:

The setting for this observation is in a local suburban elementary school with approximately 60 students in first grade. This first-grade classroom represents a broad range of diversities with a common bond of community. English is the primary language of the students. The majority of these students come from middle to upper-middle class families. Demographics of this class show ____ Caucasians, ____ African-Americans, ____ Asians, and ____ Hispanics. Most of the children live with two parents in which both work outside the home.

Observational Notes

Type of Writing in the Classroom	Yes	No	Reflective Notes
Evidence that students write everyday			
Prewriting, drafts, revisions, publishing			
Teacher writes with students/shares own writings with students			
Teacher modeled writing process steps			
Teacher provided time and opportunity for students to use the process steps			
Writing strategies modeled through the context of student writing			
Teacher provides opportunities for self-selection of writing topics			
Students working with partners or in small groups when they are writing			
Students are encouraged by teacher to be independent writers			
Feedback provided by teacher through conferencing			
Teacher reads students' writing for focused purpose, idea development, and organization without immediately focusing on grammatical errors or misspellings			
Strategies for evaluation: e.g., selected, fully revised pieces, reflective portfolios, folder system, etc.			
Evidence of published student writing			
Evidence that students share/celebrate writing			

***Form adapted from Regie Routman (2005; 2008)**

Appendix F
Observation Checklist

Types of Writing Materials and Writing Resources Observed in Teachers' Classrooms

Writing Materials in Classroom	Observed Materials in LeAnne's Classroom	Observed Materials in Elizabeth's Classroom
Paper		
Pencils (black/white/colored)		
Markers/highlighters		
Crayons/staplers/scissors		
Grade-level chart paper		
Grade-level writing paper		
Writing portfolios		
Reflection journals		
Print-rich learning environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big books • Classroom library w/magazines • Poetry • Trade books • Textbooks 		
Writing charts on wall for resource <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proofreading and editing checklists • 6+1 Trait® writing poster • Other teacher-made charts 		
Word walls		
Letter and word sorts		
Dictionaries		
Thesauruses		
Pointers for rereading writing on board		
Individual slates/white boards		
Students' written work displayed		
Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening center • Computers 		

Appendix G

Final Codebook

CODES AND BRIEF DEFINITIONS OF CODES	EXAMPLES OF PARTICIPANTS' WORDS	OVER-ARCHING CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charts (a sheet of information that makes information easier to understand) • Books (printed works) • Pens/pencils (writing tools) • Organization and design of writing classroom (something made up for a variety of functions and arranged in a specific way) 	<p>"Students can look at the 6+1 Trait® Writing chart to see what we are working on"</p> <p>"They can refer to the charts on the wall when they are writing"</p> <p>"Incorporate it (a book) into our shared reading and writing objective"</p> <p>"Dictionary"</p> <p>"We use books to help teach different writing concepts"</p> <p>"Whatever book we are reading all together there will be writing assignments pulled from that"</p> <p>"Share the pencils/pens"</p> <p>We use colored pencils during revision stage"</p> <p>"They can write anywhere they want to write"</p> <p>"Some kids do best on their stomachs"</p> <p>"As long as they can focus, they can go anywhere"</p> <p>"If you want to get your clipboards and take your writing anywhere in the room"</p>	<p>Environmental Influences</p> <p><i>Subtheme 1:</i> Print-rich Learning Environment</p> <p><i>Subtheme 2:</i> Physical Set-Up</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling (an example for imitation) • Planning (the act or process of carrying out plans) • Pacing (the rate in which a person moves to complete a task) • Teaching basic skills (focusing on a target skill in order to help expand writing skills) 	<p>"You will model for them what it looks like"</p> <p>"Sharing examples with the kid"</p> <p>"I model the topic sentence"</p> <p>"Writing an example with them"</p> <p>"They would be naming them and I would write them down"</p> <p>"Have an organized plan of how it's going to look"</p> <p>"You need to be prepared ahead of time"</p> <p>"Start off by brainstorming"</p> <p>"I know my plan could change as I'm teaching for various reasons"</p> <p>"Just work on your ideas today"</p> <p>"Just illustrate today"</p> <p>"Vocabulary such as blends, digraphs, consonants, vowels, antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, grammar, manipulate letters to form words"</p> <p>"Word study"</p>	<p>Instructional Practices</p> <p><i>Subtheme 1:</i> Teaching Approach</p> <p><i>Subtheme 2:</i> Teaching Writing Skills and Strategies</p> <p><i>Subtheme 3:</i> Supports for Writing</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safe Environment (feeling secure in the writing environment) 2. Writing supports (giving assistance to students for writing tasks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional approach <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditional (A teaching approach that focuses on writing tasks in which the learner imitates, copies, and transforms teacher-supplied models into a final product) 2. Process (a teaching approach that focuses on the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning) 	<p>“The capital at the beginning, the spacing, and punctuation at the end”</p> <p>“You’re there to help them” “Completely encourage them at any time” “Put their mind at ease” “Just do your best”</p> <p>“Graphic organizer” “A bubble map, 4-square, y-chart, Venn diagram” “They sound it out (invented spelling)” “Writing folder (word walls in them)”</p> <p>“Teach through the writing process: prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, publishing” “Tie in writing traits”</p> <p>“Express themselves through writing” “I’m not worried about punctuation, I’m not worried about capitalization, I’m not worried about spelling”</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing beliefs and attitudes (the way of thinking or believing in something) 	<p>“How the teacher feels about teaching writing” “General sense of security” “Develop a relationship” “After they feel within your classroom environment, the better they are going to perform” “Belief in yourself as a writer” “Be confident to get the outcome you are looking for” “Have children be a part of it” “Teachers have to believe in themselves” “If I see myself as a writer”</p>	<p>Self-efficacy Beliefs</p> <p><i>Subtheme 1:</i> Teacher Beliefs</p> <p><i>Subtheme 2:</i> Student Beliefs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Curriculum implementation (the execution of a lesson) 	<p>“Really hard to conference with our students one-on-one” “Time of day we are going our lesson: their brains are fresh” “If she wasn’t so tired” “Lack of sleep” “I don’t like putting writing in the afternoon” “Do writing in the morning”</p> <p>“Constraints of it has to be done this way” “Pressure” “Weight on shoulders” “Might only have one path they can follow”</p>	<p>Challenges</p> <p><i>Subtheme 1:</i> Students’ Writing Challenges</p> <p><i>Subtheme 2:</i> Teachers’ Challenges for Teaching Writing</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental abilities (developing the means and skills to accomplish a task) • Topic (theme of a text) • Teacher supports (giving assistance to teachers) 	<p>“Not up for a challenge” “The open-endedness I think is hard” “Different areas that certain kids need” “They’ve got to actually create something” “Writing is challenging for most first-grade students”</p> <p>“Topic is not interesting” “Depends on how much a student wants to write”</p> <p>“Feels extremely supported by their administration” “I talk to my colleagues” “We definitely collaborate” “I know I have a little bit more freedom” “It allows me to relax a little more” “If you’re not quite getting it, there’s others to help you”</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student interest (exciting one’s curiosity) • External motivation (acting in a certain way due to an external force) • Student choice (act of selecting and making a decision) 	<p>“Making it first-grade friendly” “Get their imagination” “That would interest the kids” “Let them come up with ideas” “Because it’s novel” “They can get ideas from all sorts of places” “Write about your favorite place” “What would be fun” “They are very excited because they have already written this beautiful piece”</p> <p>“Making it fun” “Exciting activities” “Encouragement” “Sharing ideas” “What did you do in the snow” “You’re writing together” “Kids want me to read”</p> <p>“You may choose that idea and see where it goes” “Self-selected” “They would choose” “These were things they chose to write about” “Things they chose to write about and wanted to keep writing” “I let them choose what organizer they would like to use” “Let them come up with ideas”</p>	<p>Motivation</p> <p><i>Subtheme 1:</i> Internal Motivation</p> <p><i>Subtheme 2:</i> External Motivation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback (helpful information given to improve performance) • Rubrics (list of specific writing tasks and 	<p>“Give them sincere feedback” “I want to see where we are right now” “Everything that you have learned, is this a paragraph” “I give them positive feedback”</p> <p>“Use rubrics to evaluate” “I use rubrics to help me” “Rubrics may change depending on what I’m</p>	<p>Assessment</p> <p><i>Subtheme 1:</i> Teachers Monitoring Writing Progress</p> <p><i>Subtheme 2:</i> Students</p>

expectations for a writing assignment	teaching"	Monitoring Own Writing Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing portfolios and journals (collections of student writing) • Teacher conferences (a short meeting between teacher and student) • Observations (the act of observing in order to gain information) • Student-to-student conferences and feedback (a short meeting between student and a peer) • School writing curricula (a school's writing program) 	<p> "I keep a writing portfolio" "Students keep writing portfolios" "They can write in their reflection journals" </p> <p> "Conferencing is one way" "Why don't you go back and add something to it" "I conference with them daily, some of them more than others" "Depends on their needs" "I usually have a group with me at the table" "We went back and looked at that writing" </p> <p> "Through observation is one way You get a good idea of who grasps the concept" </p> <p> "Go work with a friend" "Go talk with a friend" "Working with a friend can give them ideas" "TAG: T would be tell them one nice thing about their writing, A would be ask a question, and G would be give a suggestion" "Read to a partner" </p> <p> "Following the writing curriculum in the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model" </p>	

Curriculum Vita

JULIE BRIDGET MARY DASHIELL**ACADEMIC DEGREES**

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|------|---|
| 2014 | Doctorate of Philosophy
Concentration: Early Childhood Education
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA |
| 1994 | Master of Science in Education
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA |
| 1990 | Bachelor of Arts in Communications
Loyola University, New Orleans, LA |

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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|--------------|---|
| 2014-present | Adjunct Professor
Education Department
Marymount University
Arlington, VA |
| 2002-present | Adjunct Professor
Career Switchers Programs for
Continued Learning/Elementary Methods
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA |
| 2012-2013 | Department Chair
Norfolk Collegiate School, Virginia |
| 1996-2013 | First-grade Teacher
Norfolk Collegiate School, Virginia |
| 2002-2009 | Adjunct Professor
Military Career Transition Program and Distance
Learning Department
Old Dominion University, Virginia |
| 1994-1996 | Pre-school Teacher
Stuart Early Childhood Center
Norfolk Public Schools, Virginia |
| 1994-1995 | Child Development Center Teacher Assistant
Old Dominion University, Virginia |

1994–1995	Teaching Assistant for Dr. Katharine Kersey University Chair Early Childhood Department Old Dominion University, Virginia
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UNIVERSITY TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

2002–present	Career Switchers Program, Department for Continued Learning Old Dominion University, Virginia
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2011–2013	Level II Technology Workshops Career Switcher Programs Old Dominion University, Virginia
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2009–2010	Norfolk Public School, Preschool Literacy Grant
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