

PRESERVICE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY FOR TEACHING WRITING:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Kallen June Dace

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the self-efficacy of teaching writing for elementary preservice teachers at a small private university in southern Missouri. Preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing was defined as the level of confidence preservice teachers possess in their ability to effectively teach writing to elementary students. This study explored how the preservice teacher participants viewed their self-efficacy as writers and their experiences as writers in both kindergarten through twelfth grade education and higher education. Additionally, the study explored how the writing experiences of these preservice elementary teachers shaped how they might teach writing in their first elementary teaching position. The following research questions were explored through this study: how do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy as teachers of writing, how do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy as writers, and how do preservice elementary teachers describe their preparedness for teaching writing after completing their university writing methodology courses? For the purpose of this study, the elementary teaching population was bound by grades third through sixth, because the literature revealed a gap in research with this population of elementary teachers. The researcher utilized participant writing prompts, Hoy and Woolfolk's Teacher Efficacy Scale, cognitive representations, and individual interviews to discover common themes in the data. The results of this study surfaced two themes: enhancers of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing and detractors of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing.

Keywords: writing, self-efficacy, writing workshop, preservice teachers, preservice teaching programs, preservice teacher writing methodology course

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my three wonderful children: Mackenzie, Juliana, and Ethan. I pray that I have set a good example of following the plans that the Lord has for you no matter what obstacles are in your way. Dream big my precious children and allow the Lord to move mountains for you for His glory. I also pray you see the blessing of a supportive spouse as your dad has been an excellent support system for me. I hope you are able to support your future spouse in his or her dreams as your dad has supported me. Additionally, I dedicate this dissertation to my mom, Kay Bylo. Without her daily prayers, encouragement, and guidance, I would not have been able to complete my dissertation to the best of my ability. Thank you for always setting a good example of how to persevere through challenges to reach your dreams. Last, I dedicate this dissertation to my grandma, Mabel King, and my late grandpa, Don King. They encouraged me to pursue my educational dreams from the time I was a little girl. They continually reminded me that an education was something no one could take away from me. This dissertation could not have happened without their love and support.

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as writers and teachers of writing with me. I hope that my writing honors the wonderful future elementary teachers they are.

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List of Abbreviations

Dual Credit Composition Writing Course (DC Comp)

English Language Learners (ELLs)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE)

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)

National Writing Project (NWP)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Forming letters into words, then organizing words into sentences, and sentences into logical thoughts is a complex process (Clay, 2010). Writers determine how to transfer their thoughts into words to communicate their message. Teaching writing is both an art and a science (Calkins, 1994, 2006). To communicate through writing, students learn how the important structures of different genres such as narrative, informative, and opinion. For example, for a personal narrative piece, writers focus on one small moment in time to explore. However, teaching students to write is an art also, because crafting an engaging beginning does not follow a one-size-fits-all format (Laminack & Wadsworth, 2013). As writers are exposed to different authors' works, they learn how to play with language to find the beginning that works best for their specific writing pieces (Anderson, 2011). With this complex process of learning to write proficiently, learning to write and teaching others to write is not a clear cut formula (Fletcher, 2013).

According to the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment results, only 30% of students in eighth and twelfth grade in the United States earned a proficient score on the national writing assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Unfortunately, the 2011 assessment is not an isolated year of poor assessment results. For the past 10 years, only 25-30% of students have scored proficient on the annual NAEP writing assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). With the majority of states adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), these standards have brought about a renewed focus for nurturing student writers to create quality writing pieces in order to reach

college and career ready status upon completion of high school (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010).

A concurrent problem facing students in writing is studies revealing teachers do not feel confident to teach writing (Brimi, 2012; Fisher, 2012; Galligan, 2011; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Grisham & Wolsey, 2011, Landon-Hays, 2012; Rapp, 2009).

Landon-Hays (2012) explored the literature to determine what ways teachers have been effectively prepared to teach writing in the past. She also explored ways teachers can work together through professional learning communities. These professional learning communities provide support for teachers who are trying out new strategies as they problem-solve areas of difficulty within their collaborative teams. Teachers naturally teach the way they were taught (Rapp, 2009). Since the scores for the last 10 years revealed similar writing proficiency levels according to the NAEP, it would appear teachers are using the same methods to teach writing, or if changes have been made to writing instruction, the changes have not positively or negatively affected student writing performance.

Fisher (2012) qualitatively explored teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing and found his participants did not remember learning writing pedagogy in college and have only vague memories of writing as students. For his participants, the lack of writing experiences affected their self-efficacy for teaching writing. The teachers in this study described their background in writing instruction as emphasizing spelling and presentation components instead of word choice and content. Writing is a complex process which involves many aspects of planning, drafting, revising, editing, vivid word choice, sentence fluency, and engaging storytelling (Fisher, 2012). By emphasizing grammar and mechanics alone, writers do not receive the instruction needed to

push them to the next level as writers or become proficient writers with both authentic writing experiences and high stakes assessments.

Background

Guo, Connor, Yang, Roehrig, and Morrison (2012) found “[weak literacy skills are associated with higher high school dropout rates and higher rates of referral to special education” (p. 3) and “children with weak literacy skills are also more likely to enter the criminal justice system and to be underemployed” (pp. 3-4). Increasing writing skills is essential to assist the next generation of students to become college and career ready and to have the skills necessary to earn gainful employment (Bettinger & Long, 2009; Brothen & Wambach, 2012; Complete College America, 2012; Howell, 2011; Koch, Slate, & Moore, 2012). Complete College America (2012) conducted research exploring the number of students who were required to enroll in college remediation courses and compared this to the number of these students who graduated from a two-year college in three years’ time. The data revealed only 9.5% of students enrolling in remedial college courses graduate from community college within the three year time frame (2012). With 51.7% of students entering community colleges and required to enroll in remediation courses, educators in kindergarten through twelfth grades and higher education should consider what reforms need to take place in writing instruction to ensure all children have access to highly effective writing instruction (Complete College America, 2012; Guo et al., 2012). Preservice and inservice teacher preparation programs must consider whether the writing methodology they provide for teachers is being effectively implemented in preservice and inservice classrooms (Brimi, 2012; Copeland, Keefe, Calhoon, Tanner, & Park, 2011; Daisey, 2009; Haider, 2012; Street & Stang, 2009). If not, then changes might need to be made to ensure what is being taught in universities is meeting student writing needs.

Daisey (2009) found students' past writing experiences significantly impacted their enjoyment of writing throughout their lives. Students with higher rates of writing enjoyment shared they enjoyed the writing process, have received positive feedback from teachers to improve their writing, and enjoyed writing personally relevant and creative pieces. Participants who commented they did not enjoy the writing process commented their previous teachers focused more on the mechanics of writing, and the process of writing seemed too open-ended. Students who enjoyed the writing process also commented they could tell their teachers enjoyed writing.

Research has explored primary, middle, and high school teacher self-efficacy but has not explored preservice elementary teacher self-efficacy (Brimi, 2012; Chong & Kong, 2012; Copeland et al., 2011; Corkett, Hatt, & Benevides, 2011; Daisey, 2009; Dix & Cawkwell, 2011; Fisher, 2012; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Grisham & Wolsey, 2011; Guo et al., 2012; Haider, 2012; Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2011; Morgan, 2010; Pella, 2011; Pufpaff & Yssel, 2010; Street & Stang, 2009; Troia, Lin, Cohen & Monroe, 2011). The elementary grades, which for the purpose of this study were bounded to grades third through sixth, are crucial years in literacy development. Students are moving from the learning to read and write phase to the reading and writing to learn phase of instruction. Clay (2010), a leading expert in effective reading and writing instruction and the founder of the world-wide renowned Reading Recovery program, stated as children "write their earliest messages, children gradually begin to make links between speaking, reading, and writing. They may discover that: what I say, I can write. And, what I write, I can read" (p. 7). With these deep connections between reading and writing in the elementary grades, a better knowledge of how the next generation of elementary teachers reflects on their writing experiences is essential to better understand how to

prepare preservice teachers to teach writing. This study sought to hear the voices of elementary preservice teachers in southern Missouri who will be entering the field in order to learn more about their level of confidence as writers and teachers of writing to better understand how teacher preparation programs and new teacher institutes can better support preservice teachers to positively impact elementary students' writing experiences.

Situation to Self

Through this study, I sought to explore the phenomenology of preservice teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014). My motivation for conducting this study was to better understand the previous writing experiences preservice elementary teachers had experienced as students and the writing experiences they had experienced in their teacher preparation programs. Piantanida and Garman (1999) described this process by stating "rather than assuming the traditional stance of a detached and neutral observer, an interpretive inquirer, much like a tuning fork, resonates with exquisite sensitivity to the subtle vibrations of encountered experiences (pp. 139-140). Through taking on the role as the human vessel to interpret the data, I listened carefully to my participants' experiences and allowed their voices to resonate through the study and become like the tuning fork to share their stories (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014). With this knowledge, I hoped to more effectively meet the needs of incoming beginning elementary teachers as I worked as an instructional coach for grades third through fifth.

As I considered the research, I brought the paradigm of constructivism to guide the research, as I allowed the participants to construct the meaning of how they viewed their self-efficacy for teaching writing (Piaget, 1967). Building on Piaget's theories of assimilation and accommodation, I hoped to learn how the preservice teachers in this study assimilated or

accommodated new theories of teaching writing into their existing experiences as writers and teachers of writing. Additionally, I came with the axiological belief the participants in this study were created for a specific purpose and were fearfully and wonderfully made by the Lord. This belief system guided the way I interacted with the participants to ensure they felt valued and respected as they shared their experiences of the phenomenon.

Problem Statement

The problem was students in grades kindergarten through twelfth were not prepared to write proficiently, and this lack of proficiency hindered success both in school and future colleges and career opportunities (Bettinger & Long, 2009; Brothen & Wambach, 2012; Complete College America, 2012; Howell, 2011; Koch et al., 2012). For the past 20 years, student scores on the NAEP writing assessment have remained stagnant between 26-30% proficiency (2012). When reflecting upon this low level of proficiency, researchers have explored whether teachers feel prepared to meet the needs of student writers (Brimi, 2012; Chong & Kong, 2012; Copeland et al., 2011; Corkett et al., 2011; Daisey, 2009; Dix & Cawkwell, 2011; Fisher, 2012; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Grisham & Wolsey, 2011; Guo et al., 2012; Haider, 2012; Klassen et al., 2011; Morgan, 2010; Pella, 2011; Pufpaff & Yssel, 2010; Street & Stang, 2009; Troia et al., 2011). Practicing teachers shared that their background experiences of writing affected their self-efficacy for teaching writing either positively or negatively (Brimi, 2012; Fisher, 2012; Galligan, 2011; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Grisham & Wolsey, 2011, Landon-Hays, 2012; Rapp, 2009). The experiences preservice teachers had as students affected the level of confidence they had to teach writing. With the important literacy transition from learning to read and write to reading and writing to learn, elementary teachers have a crucial role in mentoring student writers to write to

process their application of reading and writing to learn (Clay, 2010). For the purpose of this study, preservice elementary teachers in southern Missouri participated to allow me to better understand the experiences which have shaped the participants as writers and future teachers of writing.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the self-efficacy elementary preservice teachers at a small private university in southern Missouri have for teaching writing. The participants in this study were purposefully selected based on the following criteria: completion of all field based, student teaching, and writing methodology courses, currently pursuing an elementary teaching position in grades third through sixth, and had not started their first teaching position. At this stage in the research, preservice elementary teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing was generally defined as the level of self-reported confidence in which preservice teachers possessed as they thought about their knowledge and skills to teach writing to elementary students.

Significance of the Study

Exploring the writing experiences, writing methodology experiences, and levels of confidence for teaching writing for preservice elementary teachers was significant in several ways. First, with the low proficiency rate for student writing scores nationwide, university teachers should ensure the writing methodologies in which they are teaching are the most effective research-based techniques, so universities are not inhibiting future teachers from effectively teaching writing at the beginning of their careers (Copeland et al., 2011; Grisham & Wolsey, 2011; Morgan, 2010; Pufpaff & Yssel, 2010; Street & Stang, 2009). Additionally, understanding preservice elementary teachers' experiences would hopefully better prepare

instructional coaches to mentor beginning teachers as they developed their own writing lessons and worked with students to create proficient writers (Landon-Hays, 2012). Also, exploring this phenomenon was important to better understand how to help preservice elementary teachers reflect upon their writing experiences to determine if they would like to emulate previous teachers' methodologies and philosophies for teaching writing or to adopt a new writing philosophy and methodology (Fisher, 2012; Landon-Hays, 2012; Porath, 2013; Rapp, 2009; Troia et al., 2011). Last, this study continued to build upon the empirical research for writing self-efficacy and teaching writing self-efficacy by exploring the shared experiences the preservice teachers have encountered and possibly helped others to write a quantitative self-efficacy measure through the responses given by the participants as there were no teaching writing self-efficacy measures available.

Research Questions

In light of the purpose of this study, the following questions framed this research:

Research Question 1

How do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy as teachers of writing? In studies by Copeland et al. (2011), Grisham and Wolsey (2011), Morgan (2010), Pufpaff and Yssel (2010), and Street and Stang (2009), the researchers have explored how preservice and practicing teachers at the primary, middle, and high school levels have described their self-efficacy as teachers of writing. For the purpose of this study, primary grade levels were bound to kindergarten through second, middle grade levels were bound to seventh and eighth, and high school levels were bound to ninth through twelfth. The missing voice in this phenomenon was preservice elementary teachers which for the purpose of this study were self-contained classrooms of grades third through sixth. Each grade band of teachers had a unique piece to the

progression of writing instruction and their experiences shaped their understanding of how to effectively teach writing within their specific grade band. With the shift from learning to write to writing to learn, elementary teachers had a unique contribution to the literature based on their perspective of this phenomenon. Elementary teachers also had the unique experience of striving to teach all subject areas well instead of being trained to teach one or two subjects in depth as compared to middle school and high school teachers.

Research Question 2

How do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy as writers? This facet of writing self-efficacy was an important aspect to consider as teachers shared a positive writing experience could change the way they viewed themselves as writers (Copeland et al., 2011; Grisham & Wolsey, 2011; Morgan, 2010; Pufpaff & Yssel, 2010; Street & Stang, 2009). University professors and instructional coaches had the opportunity to bring positive writing experiences to preservice and beginning teachers to change the way they viewed themselves as writers.

Research Question 3

How do preservice elementary teachers describe their preparedness for teaching writing after completing their university writing methodology courses? Grisham and Wolsey (2011), Morgan (2010), and Street and Stang (2009) have explored preservice secondary teachers' perceptions of their university methodology courses and the level of confidence in which these participants had felt prepared to teach writing. Additionally, Copeland et al. (2011) explored special education preservice teachers' experiences in the same manner. The voices of elementary teachers were not being heard in the literature. Elementary preservice teachers were an important voice to be heard, because elementary teachers work with students of all academic

levels within their classroom and teach writing in a crucial developmental milestone within the transition of learning to write into writing to learn.

Research Plan

A qualitative study was conducted using the hermeneutical phenomenological qualitative approach (van Manen, 1990, 2014). The phenomenological qualitative approach was appropriate to study the areas in which preservice elementary teachers felt confident in teaching writing and the areas in which they needed extra support. First, phenomenology allowed me to understand the essence of teaching writing (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014). Second, phenomenological research allowed me to study in depth several teachers who shared the same experience of finishing elementary preservice teaching writing courses but had not started their first teaching assignment. Third, phenomenology allowed me to analyze interviews with preservice teachers to reach the heart of the concerns and strengths with teaching writing to elementary students.

Delimitations and Limitations

For the purpose of this study, the participants were bound by preservice elementary teachers who had finished all of their writing methodology courses, elementary field experiences, and student teaching experiences but had not started their first job as elementary teachers. The rationale for this band of participants was to ensure preservice teachers had experienced all of the coursework in which the institution offered to prepare preservice elementary teachers, but the preservice teachers had not taken part in learning from future employment opportunities. This allowed me to explore the phenomenon of teacher preparation for teaching writing from the perspective of students who had solely experienced writing methodology through university experiences. Additionally, for the purpose of this study, the preservice elementary teachers were

limited to those who wanted to teach or who had secured a future position in grades third through sixth. The rationale for limiting the preservice elementary teachers to this band was to focus the phenomenon on teachers who were preparing students to move from the learning to write phase to the writing to learn phase of instruction (Clay, 2010).

One limitation which was present in this study was the limited diversity of participants in Ozark Hills University, which was a pseudonym for another private university in southern Missouri. This bounding of participants was also a delimitation to set the boundary of participants for this study. The preservice elementary teaching pool of candidates was primarily Caucasian female traditional students. I acknowledged the experiences of this pool of candidates may not have reflected the diverse perspectives of different genders, ages, ethnicities, and geographical locations. Additionally, Ozark Hills University was a small private institution in southern Missouri which also limited the diversity of candidates as compared to larger universities in more urban communities. Once the list of potential participants was gathered, I purposefully sampled the participants to find the maximum variation of data which was the widest range of diverse participants to ensure as many voices were heard from those who had experienced the same phenomenon (Patton, 2001).

Definitions

1. *Inservice Teachers* - Inservice teachers are teachers who have started their first teaching position (Allen & Wright, 2014).
2. *Preservice Teachers* - Preservice teachers are teachers who have yet to have started their first teaching position (Allen & Wright, 2014).
3. *Self-efficacy* - Self-efficacy is the confidence or belief in which people can be successful in a specific context (Bandura, 1986b, 1997).

Summary

Through describing the self-efficacy of preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing, I sought to gain a better understanding of the next generation of teachers' level of confidence for teaching writing. With the stagnant national writing assessment scores, I hoped to describe how the next generation of elementary teachers seeks to incorporate writing instruction into their own classrooms by imitating the philosophies taught in their own elementary experience or at the university level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Rapp (2009) explained teachers teach the way they were taught. Through exploring the experiences of the next generation of elementary teachers, I hoped to learn how this generation of teachers was taught writing and if the participants plan to continue incorporating this philosophy.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Writing expert and prolific author, Fletcher (2013), described the act of writing as allowing himself to enter a vulnerable place where he reveals his inner thought life. The process of transferring thoughts into logical ideas in a sequence which effectively communicates the writer's purpose for writing demands high levels of cognitive thought. Grisham and Wolsey (2011) described the process of teaching children to write as "a complex construct requiring both skill and art" (p. 348). Additionally, Fletcher (2013) shared "writing with real honesty takes tremendous courage" (p. 25). Entering this vulnerable place of writing and leading students to make the transition as writers is something which does not happen naturally. To make writing a more natural process and not a forced skill, students need more opportunities to write, more effective feedback to improve their writing, and more of a focus on the writing process instead of only the final writing piece (Landon-Hays, 2012). Synthesizing the research explored in these studies leads to the possibility in which the level of student writing proficiency on standardized assessments may be affected by their teachers' perceptions of their own self-efficacy as writers (Fletcher, 2013; Porath, 2013). Through this exploration, the level of self-efficacy teachers have for teaching writing becomes the theoretical framework for exploring the phenomenon of teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing.

Theoretical Framework

There were two theories that led to the development of this research problem. First, through exploring Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, I sought to understand the phenomenon of preservice teachers' self-efficacy as writers and as teachers of writing (Bandura, 1986b, 1997; van Manen, 1990, 2014). Through exploring the theory of self-efficacy, Bandura utilized

concepts of his social learning theory which supports exploring how writers learn the writing process through the social environment and provides his framework for developing his theory of self-efficacy. As beginning teachers become exposed to writing pedagogical decisions, learning in a social environment can allow preservice teachers to benefit from hearing others' experiences and to determine how to proceed with their own future students. Additionally, Mezirow's (1990, 1997, 1998) transformative learning theory led to the exploration of preservice teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing, because through the experiences that shape teachers as student writers and teachers of writing, they may decide to teach in a different way than they were taught and transform their teaching practice. The applications of these theories were described in the following sections in their application to this exploration.

Theory of Self-Efficacy

As people learn in a social environment, they can experience new things vicariously through their peers and teachers. As they hear other peers and university teachers share what works and what is not working in their classrooms, they can either imitate the successful experiences or reject the ineffective methods in their own classrooms. Vicarious learning experiences provide the preservice teachers the potential to gain self-efficacy for domain specific concepts through the process (Bandura, 1986b, 1997). This allows teachers to grow through hearing others' experiences instead of having to try every new idea out on their own without any feedback from others to avoid potential pitfalls. A teacher's perceived self-efficacy is personal and unique to each individual (Bandura, 1986b, 1997). Bandura further theorized the level of confidence in which teachers have is a perception of their confidence with which they can achieve.

With an increase in the challenge of the task, preservice and practicing teachers have the potential for a lower self-efficacy in which they can confidently achieve the task. Some ways that preservice and practicing teachers can overcome the possible intimidation they might feel when encountering a more challenging task include enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, physiological states, and affective states (Bandura, 1997). Mastery experiences include experiencing success in a task which can create higher levels of self-efficacy. Additionally, through the incorporation of verbal persuasion, which means through the use of words or language, people can increase their self-efficacy by increasing their confidence to try new tasks. Third, people can grow more efficacious through vicarious experiences which allow teachers to learn through watching others, and this allows them to have a frame of reference to refer to when they try a new task. By watching others, they can have higher levels of self-efficacy for attempting similar tasks. Bandura and Locke (2003) further theorized a person's level of self-efficacy is a greater motivator for the person to persevere through challenging tasks than any other type of motivation.

The concept of perceived self-efficacy is multi-faceted, because self-efficacy is an internal confidence preservice and practicing teachers have and can vary based on the task (Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Bandura (1997) further hypothesized the higher the level of self-efficacy individuals possess, the greater the effort both teachers and students will give to reach levels of success. With this hypothesis in mind, if students have high levels of success in mathematics, they will continue problem solving when they cannot find the correct answer. In the same way, when teachers have high self-efficacy for teaching math, they may continue to provide differentiated instruction until all of their students master the concept. This increased effort creates the potential for a mastery experience (Bandura, 1986b). As students and

teachers experience success, they experience increased self-efficacy; and when facing new tasks, they bring these greater levels of self-efficacy to increase levels of perseverance (Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Essentially, self-efficacy defined the confidence or belief in which people can be successful in a specific context (Bandura, 1986b, 1997). As far as teacher self-efficacy, teachers can have high self-efficacy in one content area such as mathematics but have low self-efficacy in another content area such as science. The level of self-efficacy in which teachers have in content or domain specific areas also varies in level of skill the teacher needs to teach the content (Bandura, 1986b, 1997). An elementary teacher may have high self-efficacy for teaching third grade mathematics but have low self-efficacy for teaching fifth grade mathematics. Additionally, a third grade teacher may have high levels of self-efficacy for teaching number and operations concepts and low self-efficacy for teaching geometry.

Physiological and affective states can also affect the way a person's body relates to a domain specific challenge (Bandura, 1986b, 1997). If a person can easily work toward mastering a domain specific skill, the person might have a higher self-efficacy for attempting other tasks within this same domain. Individuals do not experience self-efficacy in a vacuum. The brain combined other background experiences to either raise or lower self-efficacy for future tasks. Mastery experiences are experiences students or teachers encounter and feel confident in their achieved success. One way individuals achieve these mastery tasks is to visualize success and rehearse completing the tasks before attempting the task (Bandura, 1993). For example, Bandura (1993) stated, "People who regard themselves as highly efficacious ascribe their failures to insufficient effort; those who regard themselves as inefficacious attribute their failures to low ability" (p. 128). Essentially, preservice and practicing teachers with high self-efficacy believe

with increased effort they can accomplish their classroom goals. If they do not achieve their goals the first time, they have the confidence or self-efficacy to continue to try alternative methods until their students experience success.

Increased self-efficacy may lead to teachers giving greater effort to succeeding with their goals (Bandura & Locke, 2003). If preservice teachers are confident in their ability as writers and teachers of writing, based on this theory, they should exert more effort to ensuring their students are effective writers (Bandura, 1993). Based upon this theory, the reverse is also true. Teachers with lower self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing may exert less effort, because they feel the effort is futile. A teacher's self-efficacy for teaching English Language Arts overall may be high; however, teachers may experience lower self-efficacy in specific domains such as writing.

The agentic perspective builds upon Bandura's theories of self-efficacy and social learning theory (Bandura, 2001; Bandura & Locke, 2003). As people reflect on their thoughts, beliefs, motivations, and past actions, they determine what actions they would like to do in the future. Bandura and Locke (2003) defined agency as actions people do intentionally. Sometimes people act unintentionally or make a mistake. Agency is metacognitively considering possible actions before the actions take place. This requires self-reflection to consider how actions may affect future decisions. As individuals join a group, they have the opportunity to form collective agencies, which are groups of people who have similar belief systems and work together to create change (Bandura, 1986b, 1997). Through collaborating with others who hold the same belief system, this creates another example of how people learn in a social environment to process new ideas and explore how to act on these ideas. The reflective process of the agentic perspective is important to consider as preservice teachers plan writing

instruction. They need to possess the cognitive skills to think about their students' prior knowledge and reflect upon what lessons or experiences would lead to higher student mastery of the writing process.

Self-efficacy is an individual internal thought process in which individuals must metacognitively reflect on past experiences and their confidence for achieving new feats. Bandura and Locke (2003) maintained the human mind does not follow the same progression every time people encounter a new situation. Instead people have the free will to take experiences from the past and use those experiences to either build their self-efficacy or decrease their self-efficacy. Bandura and Locke (2003) theorized although people may achieve great success and reach their goals, they may feel overwhelmed with the amount of work and effort it took to reach their goals and set lower goals for the future. With this theory in mind, preservice teachers may experience challenges teaching writing to students in their field work or student teaching; and with the extensive work it takes to reach success, they may decide they do not have the stamina to provide the same amount of effort in the future. The reverse is also applicable. If preservice teachers set high goals for student progress in writing and students meet the goal, this could also encourage the preservice teachers to continue to set high goals. As Bandura theorized, preservice teachers have unique ways to look at their experiences to determine what types of goals they will set for themselves in the future.

Building upon Bandura's theories of social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory, Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) explored one aspect of the theory: self-motivation for academic attainment. As students encounter challenging tasks, they set personal goals for themselves. Their ability to achieve those goals is affected by the theory of self-efficacy and their belief system which guides whether they believe they can achieve their goals.

This theory supports the level of goals with which students set as determined by the level of self-motivation they have for achieving their goals. The higher the levels of self-efficacy, the higher the level of self-motivation students have for achieving their goals. This is applicable to this study because the level of self-efficacy teachers have for teaching writing may affect the level of goals they set for themselves to positively affect growth in their student writers.

In order to explore the research results of related literature, Klassen et al. (2011) conducted a literature review exploring the teacher self-efficacy research based on Bandura's theory of self-efficacy which has been conducted from 1998-2009. Starting in 1998, the overall consensus was self-efficacy research was about to become a more fully developed theory and the results 10 years later would provide essential insights into how teacher self-efficacy is present in the school setting. After 12 years, Klassen et al. (2011) have found this was not the case, and in order to obtain a more complete picture of teacher self-efficacy, additional research in the fields of qualitative and longitudinal research should be conducted to obtain a more complete picture. Since 1998, domain specific teacher self-efficacy studies have been conducted in the fields of science, reading, and math but have not included the field of writing (Klassen et al., 2011). English Language Arts teacher self-efficacy research has primarily studied teacher self-efficacy for teaching reading. More research is needed to further explore the domain specific to teaching writing. In order to progress in higher levels of literacy, both reading and writing instruction should be explored, because the two processes are interrelated. Further research should be conducted in the writing domain to explore how teachers perceive their self-efficacy for teaching writing and their self-efficacy as writers. Additionally, to gain a more complete picture of teacher self-efficacy, qualitative methods of research will allow participants to share their experience of the phenomenon on teacher self-efficacy for specific teaching domains. As

teachers learn these new strategies for intervening with students, they also need to have the self-determination to persist even when the students do not respond positively to the intervention (Chong & Kong, 2012).

Not only is it essential for preservice and practicing teachers to self-monitor their levels of self-efficacy for teaching writing, but they should be cognizant of how their self-efficacy for teaching writing extends to their students (Corkett et al., 2011). To study the possible spillover effects of teacher self-efficacy into student self-efficacy, Guo et al. (2012) utilized phase three participants from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's (NICHD) Early Childhood Care and Youth Development longitudinal study to explore how teachers' self-efficacy affected student gains in literacy. This study explored how teacher behaviors related to student literacy achievement. The teachers' level of self-efficacy had a direct effect on students and was a positive predictor of fifth grade literacy outcomes. Another related study conducted by Morgan (2010) hypothesized teachers with low self-efficacy for teaching writing engaged in fewer writing interventions for struggling students, because they did not have the confidence with which their interventions would be effective. Thus, exploring preservice teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing is essential to better understand how the role of teachers may be part of the problem with stagnant student writing scores.

Additionally, Landon-Hays (2012) found similar results when she explored teacher self-efficacy for literacy and found teacher self-efficacy was essential to explore when considering why teachers resist curricular or pedagogical change. Through increasing their self-efficacy, teachers became empowered in their own teaching abilities and transitioned from blaming environmental factors to obtaining higher levels of self-efficacy which encouraged them to attempt alternative ways to differentiate writing instruction for their students. Instead of

continuing with the same methods which are not bringing about positive change, if preservice teachers had high levels of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing, based on the research of self-efficacy, they may have a greater confidence to reach out of their comfort zones and attempt new methods of teaching writing until they find the method which works best for students (Landon-Hays, 2012; Morgan, 2010). Through exploring current preservice teachers' perceptions of their abilities as writers and teachers of writing, I compared this phenomenon with the theory of self-efficacy.

Transformative Learning Theory

An additional applicable theoretical framework to this study is the transformative learning theory. The transformative learning theory is similar to Bandura's (1997) social learning theory, because Mezirow (1991) also theorized concerning the importance of learning through a social context through finding individuals who share common transformative experiences. The transformative learning theory, however, further explored the inner thought process by which individuals change their practice through the types of inner reflection individuals incorporate as they transform their thinking (Mezirow, 1990, 1997, 1998). Mezirow's theory described in greater detail the lens in which people metacognitively reflect on past actions to determine the future actions they would like to take.

Mezirow (1990, 1997, 1998) theorized people make meaning of situations by actively reflecting to make sense of events or ideas and then interpreting the situation. Through interpretative reflection, people can make different choices in future situations based on reflecting on learning from previous experiences (Mezirow, 1990). Through this theory, teachers improve practice as they reflect on previous lessons they have taught and incorporate what went well in future lessons and make modifications to future lessons based on aspects not resulting in

the desired responses. Teachers can also reflect on their own experiences as students to determine if they want to teach the way they were taught or try another method of instruction.

Mezirow (1990) included two categories for how people reflect on previous situations and learnings: meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. People interpret situations through previous schemes by reflecting on the “related and habitual expectations governing if-then, cause-effect, and category relationships as well as event sequences” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 2). These schemes allow people to take their previous experiences and predict what the outcome will be if they continue the same actions. To apply this to teachers: if teachers have experienced success in teaching narrative writing through the use of mentor texts, then they would expect if they use the same mentor texts in future lessons with a different group of students, other groups of students might react in similar ways.

The second category for people to mentally organize their reflections is through meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1990). These meaning perspectives consist of “higher-order schemata, theories, propositions, beliefs, prototypes, goal orientations, and evaluations, and ... networks for arguments” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 2). With the meaning schemes, people draw upon their previous experiences to guide what they think might happen in future situations. To explore their thinking with greater depth, with the meaning perspectives, individuals reflect upon the theoretical framework guiding their rationale to explain why teaching strategies such as using mentor texts result in strong student narrative writing projects and why teachers may choose this model over another one based on their educational philosophy for teaching narrative writing. Through exploring the applicable background experiences to the meaning schemes and the guiding educational philosophies with which guide meaning perspectives, teachers can reflect on

previous teaching experiences and how they believe students learn most effectively to guide future lessons.

Mezirow (1990) hypothesized people change their perspectives most often when they experience an intense emotional reaction to the new learning. For example, when teachers modeled lessons on narrative writing through the use of a text by Laminack and through the use of the text, students and teachers had a strong emotional reaction to Laminack's writing style and the content of the story; teachers reflected on the experience and sought to find other texts that reached not only students' minds but also hearts. Mezirow (1990) theorized "experience strengthens, extends, and refines our structures of meaning by reinforcing our expectations about how things are supposed to be" (p. 4). These emotionally intense teaching and learning experiences have the potential to stir reflection resulting in changes in teaching practice (Mezirow, 1990).

These emotionally intense situations do not come with comfort. Mezirow (1990) theorized through reflection these experiences were uncomfortable, because as people reflect they must decide if they will continue with the same practice based on their meaning schemes and meaning perspectives or if they need to change their practice based on their new learning. Learning new skills can be uncomfortable, because people do not fully grasp the new idea or understand how to fully implement the concept. For example, with teachers who begin using mentor texts to guide narrative instruction, they may recognize they want to use mentor texts to guide other modes of writing but may lack the confidence or knowledge of other texts to use once they transition to another mode of writing. They may have felt confident with narrative writing with mentor texts but unconfident with expository writing in this same manner.

The crossroads of experiencing new learning through reflection and determining whether to incorporate this new learning in future situations or to revert to previous practice is the catalyst for transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990, 1997, 1998). The transformation occurs once individuals recognize they want to change their behavior based on reflecting on previous situations and philosophies and then put forth the effort to push through the resulting negative inner thoughts which may discourage them to change their practice (Malkki & Green, 2015; Mezirow, 1990). Malkki and Green (2015) further hypothesized for individuals to transform their thinking, they should acknowledge these possible resulting negative inner thoughts in the reflection process to help individuals consider all related factors when changing one's future action. They believed by acknowledging these negative inner thoughts, individuals could overcome these thoughts to transform their thinking and future actions.

Mezirow (1990) and Malkki and Green (2015) expressed the sense of loss individuals may feel as they experience this reflection and desire to make changes based on this reflection. For example, if teachers have always used a five-paragraph essay model to teach expository writing and through reflection have determined they would like to incorporate mentor texts to guide the process instead, they may feel a sense of loss over all of the previous lesson plans they have created and stored for future use, because they have reflectively determined these lessons are not the best fit based on their new learning. Changing practice is more than being willing to try an alternative plan; changing practice involves the sometimes messy experience of experimenting with new ideas, forming new ways to model the concept, and troubleshooting when the ideas may not resonate with students the way the teachers may have anticipated (Moore, 2005).

Mezirow (1997) further encouraged educators to consider both their short-term and long-term goals. Transformative learning is a slow process, and teachers need to give themselves the grace to take the time to explore new ideas without feeling the pressures of immediately incorporating new concepts into every aspect of their teaching process. To transform teaching practice takes additional reflection on previous schemes and perspectives. This will not occur quickly and may take several years to explore these changes (Mezirow, 1998). Malkki and Green (2015) encouraged individuals to persevere through the emotional turmoil of the transformative reflection and to recognize transformative learning is a slow journey which takes time to reflect and make changes based on those reflections. One way to make this transformative journey less uncomfortable is through connecting with others who experience similar transformative thoughts (Mezirow, 1991; Moore, 2005).

Another factor individuals should consider is through reflection, individuals may decide to continually evolve in their teaching practice (Mezirow, 1997). For those who want to repeat similar practice over multiple years, this may feel uncomfortable, because they find comfort in repeating similar processes. However, reflection is a process of continually analyzing mental schemes and mental perspectives to explore the situation in greater depth. Through experiencing a situation once and comparing this to experiencing a situation multiple times, these reflective opportunities have the capacity to provide much different results, because multiple experiences provide a more rich, multifaceted exploration into the concept as compared to a single experience (Mezirow, 1998). To apply this to teaching writing, teachers who have experience teaching writing through several different philosophies have a more rich experience base to draw from during reflection as compared to teachers who have only experimented with one or two

writing philosophies. The more varied experiences teachers experiment with the more rich the metacognitive reflection that is possible to occur.

Pella (2011) conducted a grounded theory qualitative study exploring perspectives of teachers who participated in a professional learning community and how this developed their writing pedagogy. Pella utilized candidate information from the National Writing Project to select four middle school teachers of varying experience that were located in diverse school populations. Although the participants were very similar, all Caucasian, middle class, and female, their students were diverse. Two of the participants taught in high income schools with the majority of students being Caucasian. These participants also taught English honors classes. The other two participants taught in schools with low-socioeconomic status and had lower levels of achievement in writing.

Two themes emerged through the constant comparative method: theoretical equilibrium and transformation. Theoretical equilibrium emerged as the participants synthesized their experiences through the lessons study and found balance with the new learning and their past experiences and knowledge for teaching writing. Transformation occurred as participants synthesized their new learning with past learning to arrive at a new view of teaching writing. The transformed perspectives from these participants included teaching methods which were in opposition to the status quo but are effective, researched-based, and is what is best for students, obtaining a higher expectation of students after observing the greater results of a colleagues' class of students, and transformation of a teacher's sense of self-efficacy through collaborating with other colleagues to create beautiful and effective writing lessons (Pella, 2011). Through this experience, the participants were able to collaborate with other participants in diverse school sites which brought a fresh perspective to teaching similar content (Pella, 2011). Through these

discussions, the participants had to reflect on how to meet the needs of their specific student population and the balance between direct and inquiry based writing instruction which allowed students to experience a balanced perspective in teaching writing methodologies.

Related Literature

Building upon Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1986b, 1992, 1993, 1997) and Mezirow's (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998) theory of transformation learning the background experiences preservice teachers have as writers is theorized to relate their enjoyment for the writing process. Daisey (2009) found the past writing experiences of students significantly impacted their enjoyment of writing throughout their lives. Teacher participants in this study with higher rates of writing enjoyment shared they enjoy the writing process, have received positive feedback from teachers to improve their writing, and enjoy writing personally relevant and creative writing pieces (Daisey, 2009). Teacher participants who enjoyed the writing process also commented they could tell their teachers enjoyed writing. Connecting these experiences back to Fletcher (2013), these participants had experienced the transition from a more fragmented writing journey to a vulnerable place where they were sharing their inner thoughts effectively with their audience. The opposite was the case for students who did not enjoy writing. Teacher participants in this study who commented they did not enjoy the writing process stated their teachers focused more on the mechanics of writing, and the process of writing seemed too open-ended (Daisey, 2009).

Throughout the treatment period of the study, Daisey (2009) nurtured the teacher participants' understanding of how to write genre specific writing pieces through building upon the modeling from mentor texts. Teacher participants learned how to write genre specific writing pieces by imitating exemplar writing models. After the conclusion of the study,

participants who at first rated themselves as not enjoying the writing process changed in a statistically significant way through this treatment period (Daisey, 2009). The number of participants who did not enjoy writing experiences decreased from 48% to 8% of the participant population. There was also a statistically significant positive increase in the number of participants who believe they will be able to effectively teach writing in an enjoyable manner.

Daisey (2009) stated “teacher educators need to promote teacher candidate ownership to write by offering topic choice in writing assignments” (p. 168). The writing genre is defined by the teacher; however, the teacher candidates in the study were given the freedom to select topics that were internally motivating which led to candidates feeling a greater connection and sense of purpose to the writing they were creating. This research presents interesting information about how experiencing one effective writing instructor’s instruction and following through the writing process in an effective manner can positively impact the writing self-efficacy for preservice teachers. One university professor can change the perception of preservice or inservice teachers about the writing process.

In another study, Morgan (2010) explored preservice early childhood participants’ self-efficacy for teaching writing through the modeling of genre specific lessons through units of study which is supported by leading teaching writing expert Calkins and the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (2006). Essentially, Morgan (2010) found the participants shared the types of comments teachers made in their early, formative years had a lasting impact on the level of confidence preservice teachers felt. Another troubling find from this study revealed “many preservice teachers recalled instructional gaps; a preservice teacher would remember a third-grade writing experience and then nothing until eleventh grade” (Morgan, 2010, p. 357). The wide gaps in writing instruction are concerning, because writing is a developmental process

(Laminack & Wadsworth, 2013). Without continued modeling and instruction, the stagnant trend of writing proficiency scores is likely to be continued (Laminack & Wadsworth, 2013).

Not only do students need continued writing instruction and modeling as they increase in content knowledge, teachers also benefit from continued modeling (Galligan, 2011; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Landon-Hays, 2012; Troia et al., 2011). Gilbert and Graham (2010) theorized “the effectiveness of educational reform efforts rests greatly on the skills of teachers” (p. 495). In order to nurture proficient writers, teachers need the skills necessary to engender stronger student writers. In this same study, 48% of teacher participants responded the writing inservice training they had experienced was also inadequate for providing them the skill set they needed to teach writing effectively. If teacher preparation programs and inservice professional development are not meeting teachers’ needs to nurture student writers, then educational stakeholders should consider possible changes needed to ensure teachers learn the skills necessary to positively teach students how to write effectively. If teachers are uncomfortable with their own writing abilities, they are not likely to model writing in front of their students (Landon-Hays, 2012; Porath, 2013; Rapp, 2009).

Preparing Teachers as Writing Mentors

The writing process is the interaction of writers expressing themselves in a way in which communicates meaning to their reader. Fisher (2012) found “teaching of writing involves interplay between teachers, pupils and the socio-cultural context in which it is taught (p. 302). Additionally, Ozturk (2013) found students have increased motivation when they are given the opportunity to write in social contexts and are given a clear audience and purpose. If teachers have not experienced this social learning environment as writers themselves or watched it modeled by other teachers, then they may have a hard time determining how to model a socially

engaging writing environment for their students (Ozturk, 2013). When provided with intensive professional development, the teacher participants in this study gained more confidence as writers and teachers of writing. Unfortunately, undergraduate elementary education programs may not be providing the type of support for preservice teachers to learn how to teach writing within a social context; teacher participants in another study conducted by Gilbert and Graham (2010) reported almost two-thirds received limited preparation to teach writing in their undergraduate programs.

A common request from practicing teachers is for their school districts to provide ongoing, site-based professional development and modeling (Galligan, 2011; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Troia et al., 2011). The benefit of ongoing, site-based professional development is that this form of professional development allows instructional coaches “to begin where the teachers are, acknowledging the writing histories of teachers are a vital consideration when working with teachers” (Street & Stang, 2009, p. 76). Through recognizing both the pre-existing knowledge base in which teachers are currently drawing from to teach writing and the effective research-based strategies for teaching writing allows instructional coaches to provide instruction for teachers within their zone of proximal development. This allows teachers to have the opportunity for maximum growth through these individualized professional development sessions. Instructional coaches may find teachers might be using the educational buzz words of implementing writing philosophies of writing process format or writing workshop, but may in fact be implementing these philosophies in a wide range of variances (Graham & Sandmel, 2011). By observing teachers in their own classrooms and having transparent conversations with instructional coaches with whom they feel comfortable being vulnerable with their strengths and weaknesses, instructional coaches have the potential to uncover where practicing teachers need

support and provide coaching and modeling for how practicing teachers can grow as writing teachers (Landon-Hays, 2012).

One component of authentically modeling writing skills in which instructional coaches can utilize is through guiding teachers to develop a writing mindset (Rapp, 2009). This includes modeling for teachers how to think about why authors choose to write in specific ways and about how teachers and students can learn to imitate the specific strategy in their own writing (Anderson, 2011). As teachers begin to read with the mindset of a writer, they can begin to write through the eyes of their readers. As they experience this mind-shift, they may feel more comfortable sharing this mind-shift with their students. This mind-shift takes ongoing, site-based professional development which allows teachers to receive modeling in their classroom with their own students as they learn new strategies for teaching writing (Galligan, 2011; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Landon-Hays, 2012; Troia et al., 2011).

Another way practicing teachers grow as writers is through enrolling in master's programs which focus on writing pedagogy. Street and Stang (2009) conducted a phenomenological study with practicing secondary teachers who were enrolled in a master's program and participated in a graduate level professional writing course. Throughout this course, the professors modeled different forms of writing and students wrote their own pieces. Through the modeling of writing in this course, 23 out of 25 participants stated their self-efficacy as a writer increased throughout this study. The remaining two participants stated their self-efficacy as a writer decreased, because this process made them more aware of the areas they needed to work on as a writer.

As writers become self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses, this self-knowledge has the potential to increase or decrease their self-efficacy as writers. The two participants who

stated their self-efficacy as writers decreased, also stated in the past they have been praised for previous writing pieces, had not been given constructive feedback to grow as writers (Street & Stang, 2009). These writers were not comfortable with being given specific feedback, because they had not experienced this process in the past as writers. The results of this study also find preservice and inservice teacher educators should nurture communities of writing practice with their students, so they become more comfortable with gaining feedback on their writing from their peers. Anderson (2000) revealed an essential component of growing as writers includes the act of conferring with others to recognize areas of strengths and weaknesses in order to improve writing pieces. Without experiencing constructive writing feedback, the teacher participants might experience difficulty in setting up a classroom environment which emphasizes this constructive, collaborative culture in class. This comfort level is important as teachers bring these writing principles back in other classrooms (Street & Stang, 2009). If teachers recognize the myriad of feelings they experienced while being a part of a community of writers, then they can more accurately create a safe, constructive writing environment for their students.

Street and Stang (2009) theorized “until teachers know as insiders what writing is like, they will never truly be able to teach their students to write well” (p. 76). This insider information allows teachers to plan lessons guiding students to learn these insider techniques as well. For the participants in this study, the comments made by their teachers about their writing had a more lasting impact in their memories than the content of the writing they wrote. Unfortunately, these teacher participants shared the negative comments and experiences surrounding writing they experienced as kindergarten through twelfth grade students and how those experiences continue to have a lasting impact on their confidence of their effectiveness as writers. Additionally, this study demonstrates how teachers can feel uncomfortable when

learning something new (Street & Stang, 2009). Sometimes when one learns something new, one uncovers more concepts they did not realize they did not know. Part of the learning process is becoming comfortable with the fact that one will never know everything. Life is a learning process. If one stops learning, then one stops growing.

Preservice Teacher Education Programs

With practicing teachers sharing how they feel unprepared to teach writing, preservice teaching programs should consider how they are positively or negatively preparing preservice teachers to teach writing. Effectively writing in multiple genres was one common area of concern for both practicing and preservice teachers. Morgan (2010) explored the phenomenology of preservice teachers experiencing modeling of writing genres and their self-efficacy for teaching writing. At the beginning of the course, almost 60% of the participants stated they did have confidence in their writing ability. Many participants shared they have a fear of writing and exhibit an internal struggle as they write. Additionally, 18 participants shared they struggled with grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Upon reflection, participants shared they can trace their writing confidence or lack of confidence to one teacher.

Another concerning find is the participants shared that they had gaps in writing instruction across the grades (Morgan, 2010). Participants shared they had “inconsistent messages about their writing ability from teachers as they moved from elementary to middle, high school to college, or from college professor to college professor” (Morgan, 2010, p. 357). Sometimes the participants received conflicting subjective feedback which reflected they were strong or weak in certain areas based on the current teacher who was evaluating their work. The inconsistent messages revealed the inconsistent philosophy of what makes a proficient writer. Some teachers value grammar and mechanics while other teachers value ideas, sentence fluency,

and word choice. Sadly, only six out of 42 preservice teacher participants commented they enjoyed writing and wrote regularly at the beginning of the class. This is the next generation of teachers who are going to model for students either their love or dislike of writing. With this statistic, students who are assigned to teachers such as these who do not enjoy writing and do not write on a regular basis might have a hard time seeing the authentic modeling of writing needed for students to see the reading and writing connections (Rapp, 2009).

In order to try to positively change the writing perceptions of the preservice teachers in this course, the researchers modeled how to authentically connect the reading and writing processes (Morgan, 2010). The preservice teachers shared they learned how to read like writers by noticing how to pay attention to how a piece of writing is written, and this understanding changed their perspective on writing and becoming teachers of writing. At the end of the study, participants shared that they grew in three ways: they increased in confidence and their sense of self as authors, they recognized writing takes work, and they continued to develop a comfort level with the impact of voice in their writing. Essentially the participants in this study found “to teach writing well, teachers must experience firsthand ‘the struggles and satisfactions of the writer’s task’” (Morgan, 2010, p. 352). Through these experiences of wrestling with the text, the participants gained helpful experience in how to lead others as they work through the challenging aspects of forming thoughts into a logical sequence with which clearly communicates their vision for the writing piece.

Additionally, Morgan (2010) hypothesized preservice teachers need opportunities to become fully absorbed in the genres and curriculum they will teach. Through the modeling of genre specific instruction, the preservice teacher participants gained knowledge of how to write in the different genres and learned how to draw from mentor texts within each genre.

Developing a quality writing piece is more than a one-time event where writers sit down and effectively compose their thoughts without the need for edits or revisions. Preservice teachers need to “encounter the constant decision-making writers face –the slow, deep thinking, the search for the right word or phrase, the false starts and stops, along with the joy and satisfaction of getting ideas clearly stated on paper” (Morgan, 2010, p. 352) and should “not be told what to do in teaching writing but rather live the experience of writing” (p. 353). These types of experiences cannot be as easily read about and put into immediate practice; preservice teachers need to experience these challenging aspects themselves, so they can connect to the writing challenges of their students and know how to direct students when they become stuck in writing plateaus (Laminack & Wadsworth, 2013).

Looking through a similar lens, Grisham and Wolsey (2011) explored writing instruction for preservice teacher candidates who chose teaching as a second career. They are similar to the preservice teachers explored by Morgan (2010) in which these teacher participants have not taught in their own classrooms but are different because they bring alternative viewpoints, because they did not originally choose teaching as their first career. At the beginning of the master’s program, the lesson plans participants wrote seemed to fit more of an assignment to complete than the art of science of teaching writing. Grisham and Wolsey (2011) reflected they felt the participants were just “jumping through the hoops” of completing the class in order to move on in their degree path. A revealing insight from the participants shed light on a possible explanation for this misconnection for the participants between the writing process and lesson plan products. The participants commented they were not able to see quality writing instruction in their cooperating elementary classes, because the classroom teachers were primarily using a basal reading series for instruction which if followed rigidly did not allow for teachers to provide

genre specific writing instruction in deep, meaningful ways due to time constraints. The participants were writing the lesson plans in a disconnected manner, because they were seeing writing lessons being modeled in a disconnected manner.

Out of all of the observations the participants observed, none of the participants observed writing workshops in the elementary school context (Grisham & Wolsey, 2011). The writing methodology and pedagogy being modeled in university classes were not being carried out in the real world classrooms. The disconnect between the teaching writing philosophy modeled in their university courses and the real world application of teaching writing was jarring for participants. During the student teaching phase, none of the teachers and cooperating teachers wrote writing lessons plans which fit the process writing approach. Instead the participants were required to write lesson plans based on the basal series, because this was required by the cooperating teacher. All but one participant stated he or she felt confident to teach writing after this experience. The participants shared they valued providing students with choices on what to write about; however, their lesson plans did not provide students the opportunity to write freely and with choice, because they did not feel they had the liberty to teach in a way they felt was best for students to grow as writers. Without this opportunity to partner with practicing teachers who authentically modeled the process writing approach, the preservice teachers were left confused and were unclear of how to merge research-based writing philosophy within the context of the real world classroom.

The researchers commented modeling for preservice teachers the writing pedagogy and methodology for teaching writing and then matching the preservice teachers with effective writing practicing teachers is especially challenging (Grisham & Wolsey, 2011). They concluded additional research should be conducted to find exemplar preservice writing programs

which effectively model how to integrate the components of effective writing instruction into preservice teacher education and the cooperating schools which authentically implement this form of writing instruction in elementary classrooms. Another common concern Grisham and Wolsey (2011) found was many teacher education programs place a greater emphasis on teaching teacher candidates how to teach reading and not enough modeling on how to effectively teach writing. Additionally, the same is true with the amount of quality research that has explored how preservice and practicing teachers learn to effectively teach writing (Grisham & Wolsey, 2011). This gap reveals a mismatch between the abstract teaching writing philosophies and the concrete strategies of how to best communicate with preservice and practicing teachers how to model the art and science of teaching writing.

With this gap in the literature exploring how teachers learn to effectively teach writing, providing instructional coaches and university direction on how to best meet the needs of incoming preservice and practicing teachers would be helpful. Researchers have found an increasing number of colleges need to provide written remediation to new students before students are prepared to take entry level composition courses (Bahr, 2012). More students are coming to college unprepared to write effectively. This level of unpreparedness does not begin in high school but begins much earlier in elementary school. This increase of students requiring remedial writing interventions at the university level could provide another rationale for why studying teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing is important to explore.

Preparing Preservice Special Education Teachers

In addition to modeling how preservice teachers can meet the needs of learners who are writing on grade level, Copeland et al. (2011) explored ways to prepare preservice teachers to meet the diverse literacy needs of students with disabilities. Three overall themes emerged from

the data: the challenges university teachers face while teaching literacy methodology, the changes needed to take place in preservice literacy education programs, and the future directions for literacy education programs. The key changes the participants noted includes the need to find exemplar practicing teachers who model the literacy intervention methodologies which are taught in preservice teaching programs and connects to the research conducted by Grisham and Wolsey (2011). Preservice teachers need to see how the abstract teaching intervention methodologies and pedagogies in which they read about in education textbooks are effectively carried out in authentic, concrete classroom situations. Participants commented finding quality cooperating teachers to match preservice teachers with for field experience is challenging. Additionally, participants noted more time needs to be spent exploring strategies for students who need extensive learning support in a variety of the preservice literacy courses. Very little time is spent throughout the courses on how to effectively intervene for students who struggle with literacy.

Participants also noted preservice special education teachers need a better picture of the reading and writing process, so they can better understand how to help students who are not mastering the process which connects with other general education preservice teacher education research (Copeland et al., 2011; Grisham & Wosley, 2011; Morgan, 2010). The researchers reflected they feared their preservice special education teacher participants “may be stopping instruction too early and instead should consider how to create and support ongoing literacy learning across the lifespan” (Copeland et al., 2011, p. 140). With the inclusion of National Reading Panel report and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), positive gains have been made in recognizing students with special learning needs have the potential to make literacy gains just as students without special learning needs and has created greater accountability for teachers to

ensure they are doing everything possible to provide the best instruction for students with literacy disabilities. Unfortunately, students with literacy disabilities were not given as many literacy opportunities before NCLB, because of their diagnosis of learning disability (Copeland et al., 2011). In the past, students with extensive literacy support needs “have been viewed as incapable of developing literacy skills” and “are often left out of the current national debate on literacy instruction” (Copeland et al., 2011, p. 128).

As educators consider the vast amount of students who struggle with literacy, including students with reading and writing disabilities, Pufpaff and Yssel (2010) have also questioned whether preservice teacher education programs are doing enough to address the issue of preparing teachers to meet the needs of these students. With the introduction of No Child Left Behind, schools must utilize scientifically researched based literacy methods, and universities should consider whether they are effectively modeling these up-to-date research-based practices in their teacher education programs. In order to change the current trend of mediocre writing performance, the next generation of teachers must have the background knowledge of how students grow as readers and writers and how to move students forward through these developmental milestones (Laminack & Wadsworth, 2013; Pufpaff & Yssel, 2010). This is not just a kindergarten through twelfth grade curricular issue; higher education programs should begin to share the burden of changing the status quo of reading and writing student performance with the preservice teachers they are sending out (Pufpaff & Yssel, 2010, p. 498).

Current Practices of Writing Instruction

Through exploring studies throughout the world, a common trend surfaces with writing instruction. Haider (2012) described the current state of English Language Arts education in Pakistan. To prepare students for entrance in English speaking universities, the Pakistani school

must change from solely focusing on training students to memorize literary analyses to teaching students how to analyze text and synthesize their results into authentic and fresh writing. The same problem Pakistani English Language Arts educators face also affects high school teachers in the United States. Teachers who have advanced degrees in English are often trained to expertly analyze literature but do not receive skills on how to effectively compose text. Educators need professional development and effective resources to change from a memorized English content for the course to a higher level thinking of synthesizing text. Haider (2012) hypothesized educators should promote writing process-based teaching resources to teach the art of writing, instead of continuing the trend of utilizing the memorized formulaic writing textbooks which currently lead the market. The rote, skill and drill, memorized curriculum does not prepare students to write critically in the job market or for higher education. Schools need to move away from teaching students to memorize literary analyses and learn how to transition through the writing process to effectively communicate their synthesized ideas instead of regurgitated memorized concepts.

In the United States, Brimi (2012) explored a similar high school population and the corresponding English Language Arts teachers. He asked his high school English Language Arts teacher participants to share their perceptions of how state mandates of standardized assessments affect their classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment choices. With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and the standards' greater emphasis on writing as compared to other state-adopted English Language Arts standards, Brimi explored teachers' perceptions of how the increased focus on writing would be beneficial to study. The high school teacher participants commented they did not feel prepared to teach writing through their preservice education programs. The teachers in this study shared with the focus on attaining high

achievement levels on end of the year state assessments, the teachers devoted some time to utilizing the writing scoring guide from the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), a state standardized assessment with hopes this instruction would help students to score higher on the state assessment; however, they also incorporated other forms of scoring guides and writing instructional strategies. Preparing for the TCAP was a part of their instruction but did not consume the instructional time and methodology.

The TCAP test seems to affect these participants' use of time, because they share they do not have much time to take many writing pieces through the complete writing process (Brimi, 2012). They expressed limited time for prewriting, editing, and revision. In this school, the focus on the final product is emphasized more heavily than the process of creating the writing piece. This is contrary to the participants' philosophy of writing they expressed. Persuasive writing and literary analysis dominated the writing genres taught in the participants' classrooms; however, the participants had few positive reflections about how their teaching education program prepared them for how to teach these genres effectively. They felt the instruction they received in their preservice teacher education programs was more superficial and did not prepare them to teach writing to high school students. With this lack of modeling of other methodologies, teacher participants shared they rarely departed from the five-paragraph essay, because this is the essay utilized on the TCAP standardized writing assessment and they were unsure of other formats to incorporate.

With the need to explore schools which are incorporating the authentic implementation of writing workshops with elementary students, Troia et al. (2011) conducted a case study exploring a year in the writing workshop with six teachers from an elementary school in the northwest section of the United States. The participants ranged in grade level taught, number of

years taught, and the highest degree earned. The school site was an urban school with 75% of students receiving free and reduced lunches and was ethnically diverse with only 7% of students identifying with the Caucasian ethnicity. Twenty percent of students were English Language Learners. Although this was a diverse student population, six out of 10 students exceeded the state of Washington standards on the yearly high-stakes assessment in the areas of reading and writing. With the diverse population, the results of this study can be more easily generalized to the greater nation-wide population of elementary students.

To gain a baseline of knowledge about the participants, the researchers asked them to complete a pre-survey rating scale describing their beliefs about writing workshop (Troia, et al., 2011). The participants shared they each incorporated 45 minutes of writing instruction daily for writing workshop. The curriculum was focused on genre study and the units consisted of nine week sections including personal narrative, expository, poetry, and fictional narrative, which connects to Calkins' (2006) leading research on unit studies to teach writing. Participants immersed their students into the genre they were currently studying by reading multiple texts within the genre. Students gathered ideas from listening to these texts. Next, students planned how they wanted to incorporate one of their ideas to write a piece which fit the genre. They gathered any additional information in which they needed to write their piece. Students wrote their first draft of the piece and conferred with the teacher and other students to make sure the ideas were clearly communicated. As students revised their papers, teachers provided mini-lessons to support the common needs of the group. Students edited their writing piece using a writing checklist and published their work. Throughout this process, the researcher observed multiple lessons, between four to nine observations per participant and conducted interviews four

times with each participant. At the completion of the study, the participants completed a post-survey rating scale describing their beliefs about writing workshop.

The teacher participants displayed between 70% to 89% of the 27 critical writing workshop elements, so the participants exemplified high levels of fidelity to the methodology of teaching writing (Troia et al., 2011). The participants differed the most with the vocabulary they used to describe the traits of writing and the procedures they incorporated in their workshop. The teacher participants exemplified high levels of self-efficacy and theoretical orientation to the writing workshop model throughout the course of the study. The participants started the year confident in their abilities to effectively teach writing and ended the year with the same high level of confidence to teach writing. This study demonstrates when schools adopt a new initiative and provide the ongoing professional development support needed for teachers to fully understand the initiative, teachers can buy-in to the process and change their mindset. Even with a diverse population with varied student needs, with this unified vision for teaching writing, students experienced high levels of success. In this study, the teachers had intensive support from their administration to understand the workshop model and to carry it out in their classrooms. Even with this support, the researchers observed small differences in the way the workshop model was carried out in the individual classrooms. This shows teachers still need autonomy to figure out the best way to carry out a new initiative in their own classrooms.

To explore an alternative way to explore the data, another group of practicing elementary teachers across the nation was surveyed quantitatively by Gilbert and Graham (2010) of teachers in grades fourth through sixth focusing on writing instruction. The results revealed the participants stated they spent 15 minutes per day writing, which is 10 minutes less than what primary teachers spend teaching writing given previous research. As students progress to higher

grade levels, they spend less time with process writing instruction. As the writing process becomes more complex, students are given fewer minutes to process how their thinking becomes writing. This mismatch seems concerning upon reflecting upon the challenging, abstract nature of the writing process. Teacher participants shared they spent most of their writing instructional time on writing to learn activities and spent much less time teaching narrative, persuasive, explanatory, descriptive, and research writing genres. These writing processes teachers neglect to integrate are the writing processes that will allow students to become prepared for college (Brimi, 2012).

However, these reported evidence-based practices cannot be easily implemented into the school day if only 15 minutes are devoted to writing instruction on a daily basis (Gilbert & Graham, 2010). The validity of teacher responses to this set of questions is examined. Two-thirds of the participants in this study reported they make 17 of the 20 adaptations for their students who struggle with writing. The survey questions the types of adaptations teachers made for students may not be true indications of what is happening in the classroom. Future qualitative research should be conducted to explore if teachers are actually implementing these practices or just using these writing buzzwords. These practices take more than 15 minutes per day to implement, so the actual implementation of these practices is questionable.

With the mismatch occurring between what teachers say they value in writing instruction, what they are implementing in writing instruction, and the amount of time needed to actually incorporate these components, one potential solution is for states to

develop clear, objective, and challenging standards in writing that include extending the types of topics that students in grades 4-6 are asked to write about, including placing a

greater emphasis on persuasive writing, writing to inform, writing to describe, and writing research reports. (Gilbert & Graham, 2010, p. 516)

Another area of concern from the participants in this study is the teacher participants in this study reported they implemented adaptations for struggling writers. Again, the time constraints of 15 minutes per day do not allow for in-depth accommodations for students. With these inconsistencies occurring, students are not receiving the high quality writing instruction they need in order to prepare students for the next grade span for writing instruction.

Shifts in Thinking with Writing Instruction

Through exploring the experiences of preservice and practicing teachers as they grow as writers and teachers of writing, a common theme emerges as this transition provides a shift in their thinking as writers and teachers of writing. Dix and Cawkwell (2011) explored ways to build teacher and student writing expertise through single case study research. The participant in this study experienced four shifts in her thinking as a writer and teacher of writing; she began thinking of herself as a writer and gained confidence as a writer, as well as, understood through writing she could express herself using more accurate word choice than when she was speaking. Also, she began to value the community of writers in her classroom and the effect the community had in increasing her students' writing products. Next, she began to see students benefit from extended time and explicit instruction of writing to continue to mold writing pieces into beautiful pieces. Lastly, she noticed students were more engaged through the writing process when she integrated the National Writing Project principles. Each of these shifts were supported in earlier explored research of practicing and preservice teacher participants (Brimi, 2012; Daisey, 2009; Galligan, 2011; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Graham & Sandmel, 2011;

Grisham & Wolsey, 2011; Haider, 2012; Landon-Hays, 2012; Morgan, 2010; Porath, 2013; Rapp, 2009; Street & Stang, 2009; Troia et al., 2011).

Authentic Writing Instruction

One way to authentically communicate with students how to write is through the writing workshop format which allows teachers to have autonomy in the art of teaching writing as described in the Troia et al. (2011) study. Writing workshop is not a one-size-fits-all curriculum, but instead a methodology of how teachers model for students through mini-lessons the writing procedures, skills, or techniques they would like for students to imitate in their own writing. Students are provided with sustained time to explore their ideas through writing on a daily basis in a variety of writing modalities and tasks. As students craft writing pieces, teachers and students take turns leading conferences about student writing, and teachers help guide students to utilize the writer's crafts they modeled through the mini-lessons. Lastly, after revisions are made, students are given the opportunity to publish their work and share their writing with their peers. The writing workshop process is a way for students to learn to authentically imitate the moves authors make as writers enhance their written expression and clearly communicate their ideas. The process of publishing and sharing with their peers allows students to build a community of writers within the classroom, so they can continue to grow from the feedback their peers provide and from hearing and reading the words their peers write (Troia et al., 2011).

Teachers often use educational buzz words to describe the philosophy of writing workshop but might be unclear on how to implement the writing workshop format in their classrooms (Troia et al., 2011). The National Writing Project (NWP) is the largest national writing professional development organization training practicing teachers in research-based practices for teaching writing. The NWP emphasizes the process writing and writing workshop

approaches for teaching writing, but in recent years has also included some explicit writing strategies and sentence combining strategies to meet the needs of students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with learning disabilities. The process writing approach or writing workshop format is a research-based framework which supports the majority of learners; however, students who are ELLs and students with learning disabilities need a little more structure than the process writing approach or writing workshop approach provides. Students who are ELLs or students with learning disabilities may need more concrete examples of the writing process, because the writing process is an abstract process. Graham and Sandmel (2011) concluded “high quality research is needed to examine the effectiveness of the most promising hybrids” (p. 405). Through combining the more open process writing approach with a more systematic direct instruction approach, teachers hope to meet the needs of the various learners in their classrooms.

Experts in the Field of Writing Instruction

There are several important experts in the field of writing instruction who have shaped the theoretical framework of this study by opening a world of possibilities for teachers as they provided insight into the way authors think, imitate other authors, and innovate with their writing to create their own, fresh writing pieces. Fletcher (2013) provided insight for classroom teachers for what supports writers’ needs as they develop their writing craft. Wood Ray and Laminack (2001) also provided excellent insight for teachers who want to model for students how to study writer’s craft and implement the writing workshop format. Their work guides teachers to transition from teaching isolated writing and grammar lessons into utilizing authentic modeling, think-alouds, and imitating writer’s craft. Additionally, Laminack and Wadsworth (2013) partnered to research the developmental plateaus writers naturally encounter and provided

troubleshooting ideas for teachers to help writers to move past areas of writing difficulty.

Through this progression, teachers can learn how to guide students to write authentically and advance through common challenging pitfalls students naturally experience as they grow as writers.

Effective feedback as writers. As teachers think through how to provide feedback allowing their students to blossom as writers, Anderson (2000) is the leading expert on conferring with writers. Conferring can be a challenging component for teachers to implement as they provide feedback leading writers to advancing their craft. Teachers often struggle with how to narrow their focus during writing conferences to help students grow as writers. Gulley (2012) explained the importance of providing feedback highlighting student strengths and weaknesses during these conferring sessions. Both Gulley (2012) and Anderson (2000) explained while conferring with students, teachers should focus on the content of the writing and not only the grammar and style aspects in order to nurture writing skills. Gulley (2012) also encouraged teachers to provide similar feedback to focuses on growing content skills for both high achieving writers and writers who struggle. Through exploring the types of feedback with which developmental writing class professors provide for students differs based on student writing abilities, Gulley (2012) found teachers gave more feedback on strengths and modeling for improving content for high ability students and focused more feedback on grammar and weaknesses for students who struggled with writing. Regardless of writing ability, students grow with specific praise and are motivated to work on other areas of writing when feedback is effectively communicated (Anderson, 2000; Gulley, 2012).

Traits of exemplar writing. To help teachers learn how to confer about the different aspects writers include in strong writing, teachers can model the six plus one traits of writing

approach. Through using the six plus one traits of writing approach, students and teachers develop a common language for exploring the various aspects of writing and have a better understanding of the traits they want to imitate in the texts they read. In the area of modeling the different traits of writing instruction, Culham (2003) is the leading expert. Culham is the creator and leading expert of the six plus one traits of writing, which changed the focus from teaching, conferring, and assessing a piece of writing from only a mechanical and grammatical standpoint to teaching, conferring, and assessing voice, sentence fluency, organization, word choice, ideas, conventions, and presentation. The inclusion of the six plus one writing traits is an important component of nurturing proficient writers. Instead of an overemphasis on the grammar, mechanics, and style of writing, Culham also provided insight on how to grow content, word choice, voice, and strong ideas in student writing. Through this writing pedagogy, students see the big picture of writing.

Conventions and style are two of the traits Culham (2003) included in this writing philosophy, although they are not the central focus of writing instruction. To model for teachers how to authentically model conventions and style, Anderson (2011) is the leading expert on integrating grammar skills, conventions, and style into writing workshop instead of teaching isolated grammar skills. Anderson currently has three books in publication and is working on a fourth. These texts provide modeling and mentoring for teachers who want to incorporate grammar in an authentic manner helping students use correct grammar in the context of what they are reading and writing. This process strengthens the reading and writing process connections.

Writing Instructional Approaches

These leading experts in the field of writing instruction have provided a foundation for researchers to explore the effectiveness of these writing instructional philosophies. Landon-Hays (2012) explored the effects of modeling the Inquiry, Modeling, Shared Writing, Collaborative Writing, and Independent Writing (IMSCI) technique for professional development providing support for teachers as they implement new writing strategies. The IMSCI strategy was explained in Read's (2010) article in the *Reading Teacher*, and Landon-Hays (2012) cited this article as the framework for her IMSCI dissertation. This study is important because the author explored how intensive site-based modeling may affect teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing which is the central exploration of this study. The participants in this study reflected they did not experience effective writing instruction modeled as students and were unaware of how to implement effective writing modeling for their own students. The majority of the participants in this study stated they believed the IMSCI strategy increased their self-efficacy for teaching writing. This study is important in studying the proposed research problem, because I wanted to explore the modeling concept by asking preservice teachers if they have experienced this type of modeling in their undergraduate elementary education studies and their perception of the effectiveness of modeling of writing strategies or lack of modeling of writing strategies.

Teacher's Writing Self-efficacy

Troia et al. (2011) provided essential insight into the perceptions and experiences teachers experience while implementing the writing workshop methodology and teaching format for teaching writing. This is a year-long study with six elementary writing teachers who received intensive writing professional development. This study is important to the current study, because the researchers explored how the participants responded to the professional development focused

on incidental, authentic writing instruction which was modeled through the professional development given and explicit writing instruction. The proposed research seeks to understand how beginning elementary teachers perceive professional development for writing instruction they have received through their undergraduate program. This study is important, because I wanted to explore whether the preservice teachers in the proposed study have had the opportunity to see the connections between reading and writing instruction. Taylor (2008) also explored the relationship between teacher efficacy and beliefs in conjunction with writing and found although teachers had high achieving writers in their class, these teacher participants did not believe they were the reason or had an effect on their students writing achievement. This finding needs to be further researched to determine if these teachers have effective writing methodologies they implement but are still lacking the self-efficacy and confidence they are prepared to model and mentor writing strategies.

Summary

Students need to have access to teachers who are confident in their writing self-efficacy. Highly qualified teachers who are confident they have the skills and strategies necessary to effectively model how to become effective writers should be available for all students. To ensure universities and schools provide the support necessary for preservice and beginning teachers to feel prepared to meet the needs of students in their classroom, university professors and elementary instructional coaches and administrators need to hear the voices of preservice teachers who are about to begin their teaching careers as elementary teachers.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the self-efficacy of teaching writing for preservice elementary teachers at a small private university in southern Missouri. Preservice elementary teachers in this study were defined as elementary teachers who have completed all of their coursework to earn a bachelor's degree in elementary education and have not started their first teaching position but intend to teach in grades third through sixth. Preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing was defined as the level of confidence preservice teachers possess in their ability to effectively teach writing to elementary students.

Design

A qualitative study was conducted using the hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach was applicable to this study, because I was able to welcome my own "assumptions, beliefs, and presuppositions as an integral part of the phenomenological interpretative process" (Milacci, 2003, p. 53). Additionally, through this approach, I was able to read the transcripts, images, and captions with the mission to better understand the "intention and meaning behind" the data (Moustakas, 1994, p. 9). Through studying van Manen's (1990, 2014) and Moustakas' (1994) texts, I believe the hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy allowed me to deeply explore the participants' responses and make rich, deep, thick connections. By selecting the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I was able to interpret the participants' experiences through the historical and social context of their responses and through my experiences to make sense of the phenomena (van Manen, 1990, 2014).

The phenomenological qualitative approach was appropriate to study the areas in which preservice elementary teachers feel confident in teaching writing and the areas in which they need extra support. First, phenomenology allows the researcher to understand the essence of teaching writing (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014). Second, phenomenological research allows the researcher to study several teachers in-depth who share the same experience of finishing elementary preservice teaching writing courses. Third, phenomenology allows researchers to analyze interviews, cognitive representations, Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) Teacher Efficacy Scales with preservice teachers to reach the heart of the concerns and strengths with teaching writing to elementary students.

The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986b, 1992, 1993, 1997) and Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998). A teacher's self-efficacy or confidence for teaching was domain specific and varied based on background experiences and experiences in content area methodology. As far as teacher self-efficacy, teachers could have high self-efficacy in one content area such as reading but have low self-efficacy in another content area such as writing. The level of self-efficacy teachers have in content or domain specific areas also varied in level of skill the teacher needed to teach the content. An elementary teacher may have had high self-efficacy for teaching third grade writing but have had low self-efficacy for teaching fifth grade writing. Additionally, a third grade teacher may have had high levels of self-efficacy for teaching narrative writing and low self-efficacy for teaching informational writing. Levels of self-efficacy were not stagnant and could change based on mastery experience, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, physiological states, and affective states.

Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998) created an additional layer to analyze the data. Through this theory, teachers analyzed past experiences through two lenses: any related previous experiences and the philosophies that shape how they analyze the experiences. As preservice teachers considered the experiences that shaped them as writers from kindergarten through higher education and the modeled philosophies and methodologies of how to teach writing, they had the potential to use these experiences to metacognitively determine how they would have liked to proceed in the future as writers and teachers of writing. The transformative feature of this theory included the sometimes difficult journey of making the transition from what was comfortable to what they feel was best for students. The fear of the unknown could be a daunting process through the transformative theory process and some teachers may have determined the process was not worth the effort.

Research Questions

Given the purpose of the study was to describe the phenomenology of preservice elementary teacher self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing, the following questions were presented and used to analyze the data of this study:

RQ1: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy for teaching writing?

RQ2: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy as writers?

RQ3: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their preparedness for teaching writing after completing their university writing methodology courses?

Setting

The location of the study took place at Ozark Hills University, a small private university in southern Missouri comprised of 2,000 undergraduate students and over Skype for three

participants who lived too far from Ozark Hills University campus to participate on campus. Ozark Hills University was used as a pseudonym to protect the identity of the participants in this study. Elementary education majors consist of 130 students. The majority of students in this university were 94% Caucasian, with 1% who are non-United States residents, 2% African American students, 1% Hispanic students, 1% American Indian or Alaskan native, and 1% Asian or Pacific Islander. The teacher to student ratio was approximately 1:16. Ozark Hills University was located in a small community in southern Missouri. The individual data collection session took place in the education department office in Ozark Hills University or by Skype. The participants were students from this university and were comfortable with this setting, because they completed their education classes in this building.

Participants

The participants for this study were selected using the purposeful sampling technique from a university in southern Missouri (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). A pseudonym was used to describe the university setting and was referred to as Ozark Hills University. I had a strong rapport with Ozark Hills University's education department and contacted the education department to compile a comprehensive list of preservice teachers who met the qualifications of the participant sample group. The participant group was bounded by preservice elementary teachers who have completed all of their undergraduate writing methodology courses, elementary field experience placements, and student teaching but have not started their first teaching assignment. The group has been purposefully bound by these parameters, so the teachers would have experienced the phenomenon of preservice teacher education programs for teaching writing but have not received additional training as a part of their first teaching position. Additionally, the participants were bounded by those who intended to teach elementary grades

third through sixth, so the participants had the common phenomenon of training to teach students who were moving out of the learning to write phase into the writing to learn phase of instruction.

Ozark Hills University follows the requirements set forth by the Missouri Department of Education's teacher preparation program course requirements for elementary teachers to obtain teaching certification. The relevant coursework for elementary education majors consists of a field placement allowing preservice teachers to observe and assist for 45 hours in an elementary classroom, a second field placement also consisting of 45 hours requiring preservice teachers to observe, assist, and teach a series of lessons in an elementary classroom, and student teaching which consists of a complete semester of co-teaching with a practicing teacher in an elementary classroom (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013). With these requirements, Ozark Hills University required preservice teachers to teach at least one literacy lesson. However, the requirements were not specific to whether preservice teachers should teach a writing lesson.

Additionally, preservice elementary teachers completed the following coursework: emergent literacy detailing how language develops and teaching reading and language arts in early childhood and elementary classroom courses I and II detailing the reciprocal process of reading and writing and how to integrate reading and writing into the content areas. Preservice teachers at Ozark Hills University must also select a second concentration either early childhood education or a middle school content area concentration. If the preservice teachers selected any middle school content area as a second concentration, they would also complete a course focusing on teaching writing. If they selected middle school Language Arts as their second concentration area, they would also have taken 24 additional hours concentrated on Language Arts.

The student demographics for Ozark Hills University's education department consisted of a majority of Caucasian, middle class, female students. There were no male graduates to attempt to select for this study. I purposefully sampled the participants to select eight participants who lived in diverse communities across the state. There were not any racial, ethnic or socioeconomic differences between the participants; therefore, I sought to purposefully sample participants who lived in different parts of the state and had completed different types of kindergarten through twelfth grade schooling options including homeschooling, public school, and private school experiences. The final number of participants was determined based on data saturation. I continued interviewing participants until data saturation was achieved as the participants' experiences were repeated and no new information was presented that resulted in new themes (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014).

Procedures

First, I submitted the proposal for research and secured Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix A). Ozark Hills University's Research Review Board (RRB) provided approval for contacting their graduates as long as I waited to contact potential participants until after they had graduated (see Appendix B). I submitted this letter to Liberty University's IRB, and my study was approved without requiring any other approval from Ozark Hills University's RRB. After approval was received, the following procedures for gathering participants and data collection were completed and described in detail to allow for future replication of the study. To ensure the interview questions were clearly understood, literacy experts in the field were selected to provide feedback concerning the readability of the writing prompt, cognitive representations prompt, and interview questions (see Appendix C). The literacy experts included two literacy professors who had earned their doctoral degrees in

literacy education, one literacy coach, and two reading specialists. Through the experts in the field test group, I made changes to the interview questions to allow separation in the questions to provide participants with a longer amount of time to clarify their experiences in each phase of their journey as writers and teachers of writing. Additionally, the experts in the field then suggested that I specifically ask the preservice teachers what they felt about themselves as writers and teachers of writing.

After making these changes to the interview questions, a sample group of three preservice elementary teacher participants were gathered from the list of Ozark Hills University graduates to conduct a field study to ensure the peers of potential participants also agreed on the readability of the prompts and questions (see Appendix D). These participants were also purposefully selected as preservice teachers who lived too far away from campus to participate in the full study but were able to participate through email to provide feedback on the clarity of the prompts. Based on the feedback gained from the preservice elementary graduates' pilot study, prompts and questions were further modified to ensure a more accurate readability of the questions and prompts for the participants. The interview question concerning the writing methodology courses was separated into several components to help preservice teachers understand the meaning behind the question.

Once changes were made to the writing prompt, cognitive representation prompt, and interview questions, a purposeful sampling was conducted to elicit participants for the study. I contacted the education department at Ozark Hills University through email and ask for a list of students who met the qualifications for the bounds of the study and their respective email addresses (see Appendix E). Next, informed consent letters were emailed to the potential participants to share the purpose of the study and the types of involvement needed to participate

in the study (see Appendix F). Additionally, I contacted the elementary education professors at Ozark Hills University by email to ask if they would be willing to advertise the study to potential participants either verbally or through email (see Appendix G). Three professors agreed to advertise the study through email to the potential participants.

Once informed consent letters were collected, participants were selected for the study through purposeful sampling to attempt to vary the demographics of the participants (see Table 3). I attempted to vary the participants from their hometown communities where they attended school from kindergarten through twelfth grade and by their schooling experiences: homeschool, public school, and private school. Once the participants were selected and had agreed to participate, participants were contacted to schedule individual sessions to complete the writing prompt, cognitive representation with corresponding image and caption, Teacher Efficacy Scale (1993), and interviews (see Appendix H). Once the participants were contacted and verified, they attended their individual sessions and pseudonyms and a corresponding number were assigned to each of the participants to track the data and begin to collecting data (see Appendix I). During the individual sessions, observation notes were recorded including descriptive and reflective notes detailing the experience (see Table 1). Additionally, participants completed Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) short form of the Teacher Efficacy Scale for participant demographic purposes only (see Appendix J). The individual sessions lasted between one hour to one and a half hours in length and consisted of the writing prompt, cognitive representation components, Teacher Efficacy Scale, and interview prompts (see Appendices K, L, and M).

Table 1

Observation Notes

Participant Name (pseudonym)	Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
Amelia		
Bethany		
Cindy		
Danielle		
Emily		
Felicity		
Gina		
Heather		

For the interview portion, the data was gathered and recorded through audiotaped recordings (see Appendix N). The results from the Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) short form of the Teacher Efficacy Scale were transferred into a table for demographic purposes (see Appendix O). The writing prompts were compiled and analyzed (see Appendix P). Additionally, the cognitive representations were compiled and analyzed (see Appendix Q). After the interviews, I transcribed the interviews (see Appendix R). To reduce bias in the data collection, I triangulated the data through the three data collection types and asked participants to review the transcripts to ensure I accurately transcribed and described their experiences with this phenomenon (see Appendix S). Once the transcripts were reviewed and data collection was complete, I sent a follow-up email thanking the participants for sharing their experiences and time concerning the experiences shaping them as writers and teachers of writing (see Appendix T).

The Researcher's Role

I was motivated to explore this study, because through reviewing the literature, I have found a gap which was documented throughout the literature and also found a gap during my own preparation for teaching writing. As a preservice teacher, I was selected from my university's education department as the 2006 Middle School Education Graduate of the Year and was highly successful in my studies as a middle school mathematics and Language Arts major. However, I did not feel prepared to meet the variety of needs of writers in my future classes with the courses that were part of the curriculum for middle school language arts majors. Language Arts education was a passion for me, and as I worked through my master's degree in literacy through another small private university, I experienced the same lack of writing instruction curriculum in my coursework. The focus of instruction for literacy and language arts was primarily reading instruction and did not provide modeling for successful writing instruction. Seminal works by Calkins (1994) and Graves (2003) demonstrated the important connections between teaching the interrelated processes of reading and writing; however, my preparation programs did not prepare me to meet the needs of both reading and writing processes.

Currently, as a reading specialist and instructional coach, I have researched best practices for teaching writing and have found great success with students who struggle with reading by increasing my modeling of writing instruction. Because there has been a shift in the past five to ten years to include more of the reading and writing workshop model for both preservice and inservice teachers, I wanted to explore how this change of instruction was being explored in preservice elementary teacher preparation programs. This change in literacy methodology has taken place after I finished my undergraduate studies, so I was motivated to explore how the

phenomenon of preservice teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing to elementary students has further developed. To maintain the integrity of this study, I did not have any professional or personal interactions with the participants or the site other than the interactions that were part of the study.

Data Collection

I collected data to better understand the phenomenon of preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing through several methods. First, I scheduled individual sessions for the participants to complete a writing sample and Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) short form of the Teacher Efficacy Scale, and I recorded observations of the experience (see Appendices J, K, and M). Second, upon completion of the writing prompt, participants created a cognitive representation with a summary sentence which explored their experiences that had shaped them as writers and a cognitive representation with a summary sentence which explains the experiences that have shaped the participants as teachers of writing (Anderson & Spencer, 2002). The visual can be an illustration, photograph, or clip art (see Appendix K). Last, I conducted individual interviews (see Appendices L and M).

Writing Prompts

First, I gathered the participants together to complete a writing prompt detailing their thoughts about teaching writing and which writing skills are important for instruction for grades third through sixth (see Appendix J). The writing prompt provided to participants was: To explore the experiences which have shaped you as a writer and a teacher of writing, on the lines below, please describe your thoughts of any memorable experiences you have experienced as a student writer, how do you plan on teaching writing to your future elementary students, and which writing skills do you feel are important for instruction for students in grades third through

sixth. The purpose of this prompt was to gain insight into preservice elementary teachers' experiences with teaching writing and what they value in writing instruction. These values helped me better understand the types of experiences the preservice teachers have experienced thus far in their educational journey. Additionally, because this study explored the participants' self-efficacy as writers, I wanted to see the behaviors and hear the thoughts participants experienced while completing the writing prompt.

The prompts were completed using a pencil and lined notebook paper to allow me to observe the physical hand movements the participants made while writing, as this may provide additional insight into their comfort levels for the physical act of writing. For the three participants who were unavailable to complete the data collection in person, they completed their writing prompts through Microsoft Word. While the participants completed the writing sample, I wrote observational notes regarding any gestures or facial expressions which may have added to the understanding of the writing prompt situation (van Manen, 1990). I created a triple column chart with participants' names down the first column, descriptive notes in the second column, and reflective notes down the third column to record observations (see Table 1).

Teacher Efficacy Scale

The short form of Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) Teacher Efficacy Scale was used to provide demographic data concerning the overall efficacy the preservice teachers have as teachers. I was not able to locate a quality writing scale measuring preservice teachers' self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing which led to the development of this qualitative study. The purpose of using this scale was to provide another measure of overall self-efficacy to compare with the experiences the preservice teachers described through their journey as writers and teachers of writing.

Cognitive Representations

The third form of data was collected by asking the eight participants to create an image which represents their writing self-efficacy (Anderson & Spencer, 2002). Participants were given these specific instructions: To explore the experiences which have shaped you as a writer, please select one image representing your experiences either through taking a photograph using the provided digital camera, finding clip art using the provided computer, or creating an illustration using the provided colored pencils and markers. If you choose to take a photograph or use clip art, please email the image and caption to the researcher. Once you have a printed or illustrated an image, please write a caption detailing why you selected or created the image to represent the experiences shaping you as a writer. Then, please repeat the process focusing on the experiences which have shaped you as a teacher of writing. Feel free to select the images at the same time to maximize your time or complete the images separately. Once you complete the images and captions, please bring your final product to the researcher. Thank you for your willingness to represent your experiences through pictures.

Participants drew an illustration, took a photograph, or selected clip art that exemplified their self-efficacy as a writer and wrote a caption describing the image (see Appendix K). The purpose of this third form of data was to allow the participants to incorporate an additional way to process their self-efficacy through images instead of oral interviews or written communication alone. Upon completion, I discussed the meaning behind the participants' cognitive representations with each participant. The participants had the opportunity to clear up any inaccuracies or incomplete interpretations. Additionally, participants drew an illustration, took a photograph, or selected clip art that exemplified their experiences that have shaped them as a teacher of writing to elementary students in grades third through sixth and wrote a caption

describing the image. Upon completion, I discussed the meaning behind the participants' cognitive representations with each participant. The participants had the opportunity to clear up any inaccuracies or incomplete interpretations.

Interviews

Lastly, I conducted individual interviews with eight preservice elementary education teachers (see Appendix L and Table 2). The participants answered 14 open-ended questions about their writing self-efficacy and self-efficacy for teaching writing to elementary students (see Appendix M and Q). After receiving IRB approval, I asked experts in the field to review the interview prompts for applicability to the research study and ease of understanding of the prompt. Then, I conducted a small pilot group of three preservice elementary teachers to ensure the questions were clearly worded for the participants. Once the pilot study was completed, I conducted the formal interviews with the eight participants for the study. These interviews were audio-recorded, and I recorded notes during the interview session concerning any additional gestures or facial expressions which added to the understanding of what was spoken during the interview (van Manen, 1990). Participants received a transcribed copy of their interview to correct any incomplete thoughts or incorrect information written by me. I determined the need to schedule two follow-up interviews conducted by email based on themes that surfaced from several of the participants. Pseudonyms were used to track participants for data analysis purposes and to protect the identity of participants.

The questions had been compiled to better understand the phenomenon of preservice teacher writing self-efficacy (see Appendix M). Van Manen (1990) reminded qualitative researchers "to be constantly mindful of one's original question and thus to be steadfastly oriented to the lived experience which makes it possible to ask the 'what it is like' question" (p.

42). The interview questions were developed with van Manen's interview goal in mind and connection to the research questions.

Table 2

Individual Interview Questions for Preservice Teachers: Writing Experiences from Preschool to the Student Teaching

Questions
1 Please describe why you decided to become an elementary teacher. Also, describe how you chose your second area of emphasis.
2 Please describe your earliest experience writing.
3 In your childhood memories, who did you see modeling writing and what were they writing?
4 Please describe your writing experiences in elementary school.
5 Please describe your writing experiences in middle school.
6 Please describe your writing experiences in high school.
7 Please describe your writing experiences at the university level.
8 During these experiences, describe how confident you felt in your ability as a writer.
9 Please describe the writing methodology courses you have taken. Describe how well you feel these courses have prepared you to teach students in elementary grades to write effectively.
10 What elements of writing instruction do you value and plan to include in your writing instruction? What elements of writing instruction do you personally value from your school experiences prior to college and plan to include in your writing instruction for your own students? What elements of writing instruction were gleaned from your methods courses that you plan to include in your writing instruction?
11 What successes have you experienced as a writing teacher during your field experiences or student teaching experience with elementary students?
12 What challenges have you experienced as a writing teacher during your field experiences or student teaching experience with elementary students?
13 What personal experiences have shaped the way you want to teach writing to your

elementary students?

- 14 After reflecting on these prompts, how do you feel about yourself overall as a writer? How do you feel about yourself as a teacher of writing?

Data Analysis

Through describing my background and personal experiences, I attempted to understand how my experiences shaped the way I interpreted the data (van Manen, 1990, 2014). By providing a full description of personal experiences concerning writing self-efficacy and self-efficacy for teaching writing I attempted to understand my personal experiences, biases, and assumptions as much as possible. During the course of the data collection and analysis process, I kept my three research questions in the forefront of my mind to allow myself to bracket my analysis around these questions (Moustakas, 1994). This process is also described as “practicing a critical self-awareness with respect to the assumptions that prevent one from being as open as possible to the sense and significance of the phenomenon” (van Manen, 2014, p. 224).

Once the data was collected, I utilized an open coding data collection method of the holistic reading approach (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen 2014). I transcribed the interviews. Then, the transcripts from the interviews, written text from the writing prompts, and images and captions from the cognitive representations, numerical responses to Hoy and Woolfolk’s (1993) Teacher Efficacy Scale were read for overall understanding, and I sought to come up with a phrase that captured the overall significance of the text as a whole. Next, I utilized the selective reading approach to read these texts several times to determine statements and phrases that seemed to reveal the essential components of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014). These significant statements were listed for horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994). Once I started the horizontalization method, I looked for commonalities or differences, listed non-repetitive

statements, and sought to avoid overlapping statements (Moustakas, 1994). In conjunction with the horizontalization method, I also utilized the detailed reading approach to look at each sentence to determine how the sentence might have revealed some aspect of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014). Last, the statements were combined into meaning units. Significant statements were synthesized to create meaning units, a textual description was written to cluster significant statements, and themes were created (Moustakas, 1994).

Trustworthiness

In order to increase the reliability and dependability of the research conducted through this study, several techniques were employed to increase trustworthiness of the study. First, I utilized triangulation of data (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014). Data from interviews with individual preservice teachers, the writing prompt, Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) Teacher Efficacy Scale, and preservice teacher images and captions were used to gain a more complete perspective of data with three different data collection types. The triangulation of data allowed me to create a rich categorization and development of themes present in the data. Next, I utilized the trustworthiness technique of clarifying researcher bias and assumptions (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014). This technique provided a statement of position as it related to my writing self-efficacy and teaching writing self-efficacy and allowed me to be cognizant of what shaped my interpretation of the data. Additionally, this technique ensured my preconceived ideas did not influence the interpretation of information.

The third technique I utilized was member checking (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014). Participants reviewed and made additions or corrections to interview transcripts, writing prompts, and image summaries to ensure participants' data was accurate. Through these member checks, I utilized a fourth technique: rich, thick description. The rich, thick description

allows other researchers to replicate this research to see if they obtain similar or different results. This technique provides a more complete context for the study and allows the reader to fully understand the phenomena of writing self-efficacy and teaching writing self-efficacy.

A final technique I utilized was peer review (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As I analyzed the data and created themes for the participants' experiences, I consulted with other knowledgeable experts in the field of elementary writing to ensure the validity of the conclusions. This peer review allowed me to be held to a higher standard of data analysis, as I understood my peers not only questioned the analyses, but in addition utilized their academic knowledge base and educational instructional experience to ensure the most accurate conclusions were drawn.

Ethical Considerations

To protect the privacy of participants, pseudonyms for all participants and locations were utilized (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014). Participants were provided informed consent forms before participating in any aspect of the study. Participants' interview transcripts, writing prompts, and images with captions were kept in a confidential location and all data was stored on a private computer using password protected files. Only the dissertation committee and I had access to the data. I ensured all participants are treated kindly, respectfully, and in an honoring manner.

Summary

Through exploring participants' experiences by analyzing writing prompts, cognitive representations, Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) Teacher Efficacy Scale, and individual interviews, I sought to describe the phenomenon shaping the preservice teacher participants from their experiences as student writers and how these experiences had shaped how these preservice teachers desired to teach writing to their future students. These four forms of data allowed the

information to be rich and triangulated to provide a more detailed description of these experiences. Throughout this process, the participants were treated respectfully and with care to ensure they felt valued as they shared these defining moments. Lastly, a careful analysis was completed to ensure participants experiences were analyzed with accuracy according to the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to describe the self-efficacy elementary preservice teachers at a small private university in southern Missouri had for teaching writing. A hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted in order to understand the essence of the experiences of eight preservice elementary teachers who had completed their bachelors' degree in elementary education, had not started their first teaching position, and intended to teach in grades third through sixth (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014). The theoretical framework guiding this study included Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986b, 1992, 1993, 1997; Zimmerman et al., 1992) and Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998). Eight individual interviews, writing prompts, Teacher Efficacy Scales (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993), and cognitive representations were conducted.

In this phenomenological study, I sought to read the interview transcripts, images, captions, writing prompts, and Teacher Efficacy Scales with the mission to better understand the experience of self-efficacy through the experiences of preservice elementary teachers (Moustakas, 1994). The hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy allowed me to deeply explore the participants' responses and make rich, deep, thick connections (Moustakas; 1994; van Manen's 1990, 2014). Through the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I was then able to interpret the participants' experiences through the historical and social context of their responses and through my experiences further make sense of the phenomena (van Manen, 1990, 2014).

To understand the lived experience of the phenomenon shared by this group of preservice elementary teachers, I interpreted the text in order to analyze the participants' narratives using

the thematic analysis approach (Creswell, 2013; Riessman, 2008). With the thematic approach to narrative analysis, I gathered the writing prompts, Teacher Efficacy Scales, cognitive representations, and individual interview transcripts and constructed thematic groupings of the data. The narrative provided in this chapter reflected the lived experiences of eight preservice elementary teachers who had completed their bachelors' degree in elementary education but had not started their first teaching position, and this narrative represented the essence of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). As I interpreted the data, I also took note of what Bruner (2004) described as the importance of recognizing omissions. For some of the participants what was not said appeared to be as important as what was said. Riessman (1993) suggested to qualitative researchers that "the text is not autonomous of its context" (p. 21). To uncover the meaning of what was said and what was not said was my task as I analyzed the data and created these narratives.

Additionally, the narrative presented in this chapter reflected my interpretation of the participants' experiences and was influenced by my own story as a former elementary education teacher and a current elementary education instructional coach for grades third through fifth. This narrative was my best attempt to accurately portray the participants' experiences which reflected their realities as they prepared to teach elementary students in grades third through sixth writing (Creswell, 2013; Riessman, 2008). The goal of this narrative was to provide insight into the experiences preservice elementary education graduates had experienced as student writers and teachers of writing and how those experiences influenced how they planned to teach writing to their own elementary students in the future.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the formation of this study and analysis of the data. Given the purpose of the study was to describe the phenomenology of preservice elementary teacher self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing, the data was analyzed and the following questions were presented:

RQ1: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy for teaching writing?

RQ2: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy as writers?

RQ3: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their preparedness for teaching writing after completing their university writing methodology courses?

This chapter consisted of a group portrait of the participants, individual participant portraits, the themes that arose through the analysis of participant data, and a summary of findings (Creswell, 2013; Riessman, 2008). The second research question was primarily addressed in the group and individual portraits of the eight participants (van Manen, 1997). The first and third research questions were primarily addressed in the development of common themes the participants experienced through the phenomenon of preparation to teach elementary students writing. The participant group portraits described the overall differences and commonalities of the group and how the participants experienced the phenomenon of preservice elementary teacher self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing.

Group Portrait of Participants

Eight preservice teachers participated in this study (see Table 3). All participants were of the Caucasian race and were female. Seven of the participants' ages ranged from 21 to 23. One participant's age was 31 (see Table 3). The participants all completed their bachelors' degree in

elementary education. Upon completion of Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) Teacher Efficacy Scale, Amelia and Bethany reported high average levels of overall self-efficacy, and Cindy, Danielle, Emily, Felicity, Gina, and Heather reported average levels of overall self-efficacy (see Appendix P).

At Ozark Hills University, the elementary education majors also choose a second area of emphasis to earn an additional teaching certification for the state of Missouri. Three participants chose early childhood birth through third grade as their second area of emphasis: Bethany, Emily, and Gina. These participants described how their early childhood courses helped build a foundation to better understand readers and writers in later elementary grades. Bethany explained:

I'm glad that I did it [chose early childhood education as a second emphasis], because it created a lot of paths of knowing what they are coming in from...where their development should be even if I don't end up teaching that.

Although the second emphasis in early childhood certification was more appealing to Cindy, she chose middle school social studies in order to graduate sooner, because she had transfer hours from another university that would go towards the middle school certification. Felicity and Heather chose middle school math as their second area of emphasis. Danielle chose art as her second area of emphasis. Although art education was originally Danielle's primary emphasis, after starting elementary education courses, Danielle shared this in her interview:

I don't even remember what it was, but when I was little I wanted to be an art teacher, so I thought, "I guess I will just try out the teacher thing." So then my sophomore year I started taking education classes, and I loved it...it was kind of I don't want to say easy for me, but it came easy to me, because it was just right. It was where I was supposed to be.

Table 3

Participant Overview

Participant's Name (Pseudonyms)	Age	Location of Hometown in Missouri	Population of Hometown	Self-efficacy Score	Second Area of Emphasis	Interview Type
Amelia	21	South	29,000	High	Spanish	On
		Central		average		campus
Kayla	22	North East	11,000	High	Early Childhood	On campus
				average		
Cindy	31	South West	10,000	Average	Middle School Social Studies	On campus
Danielle	23	South West	15,000	Average	Art	On campus
Emily	22	South West	10,000	Average	Early Childhood	On campus
Felicity	22	South	2,400	Average	Middle School Math	Skype
		Central				
Gina	22	South East	17,000	Average	Early Childhood	Skype
Heather	22	Southwest	3,500	Average	Middle School Math	Skype

Lastly, Amelia chose Spanish as her second area of emphasis. Encouragement was a reoccurring theme in Amelia's experiences and shaped the reason she chose Spanish as her second major. Amelia recalled her experiences in seventh grade as she started in Spanish I:

I just really caught on and my teacher was really encouraging, and she would always praise me and tell me, you know, how well I was doing, and so I stayed with that from

seventh grade on to twelfth grade and, uh, my teachers were very encouraging and my parents were encouraging and I knew people I could practice with...I feel it's something I could use not only in school, but also something that could help me in any missions that I seek in the future.

Amelia was not the only participant who shared her mission-minded focus as one reason she chose to become a teacher. Bethany and Heather also shared they viewed the teaching profession as a missions opportunity. Heather stated:

I feel like this is a really good mission opportunity for the kids that we have in this community that come from a lot of really broken homes, and you can show love to a kid, and it's just really cool to see them blossom in that.

Essentially, Bethany summed up the concept of teaching as mission oriented through her synthesis of the impact teachers make in the lives of students. She stated in her interview:

If I can affect a student's life, then that's going to affect their family, and that's going to affect their future...to be able to have that kind of impact is a lot of responsibility, but, um, why not? We all have that kind of responsibility to something and why not use that.

Although Bethany and Felicity chose other areas of emphasis for their second areas, they both expressed they had thought about choosing Spanish as their second area of emphasis.

Bethany shared through learning Spanish, she became a better reader and writer. She explained in her interview:

Learning about how another language was structured helped me learn English better...I understood how to remember and sound out words even if that's not actually how they were spoken, but that's how they were spelled, because I was learning Spanish vocabulary as I was learning English vocabulary...I understood how our sentences were

different, because I had to understand how Spanish was different, um, and how they structured their sentences...So that was cool to see the carry through of that.

The exploration of Bethany's experience of how learning a new language helped her understand how the English language works added depth to the experience Bethany described as a writer. Lastly, Felicity explained the reason she ultimately decided against selecting Spanish as her second area of emphasis was the difficulty of scheduling Spanish classes with her elementary education courses.

Through reflection of the experiences that shaped the participants as writers, the participants described several types of schools they attended in the state of Missouri. Amelia, Bethany, Cindy, Danielle, Emily, and Gina all attended public schools before attending Ozark Hills University. Felicity and Heather shared the common experience of being homeschooled for part of their educational journey. Felicity's mom homeschooled her from kindergarten through second grade, and then she attended a local public school from third grade through twelfth grade. Heather was also homeschooled by her mom, but also used what she called "video schooling" to supplement the instruction from kindergarten through eleventh grade. She also attended a local private school in twelfth grade before moving on to Ozark Hills University. In these different school settings, the participants all described participation in a college preparatory English class. Amelia, Danielle, Gina, and Heather completed a college preparatory English class, but did not have the opportunity to receive dual college credit for the course. Bethany, Cindy, Emily, and Felicity had the opportunity to take their college preparatory English class for college credit.

Through these diverse school settings throughout the state of Missouri, the participants shared common themes of experiences as writers and teachers of writing. The school sizes ranged from the smallest school setting in a rural community with approximately 400 residents to

the largest school setting in an urban community with approximately 29,000 residents. The participants' locations across the state of Missouri also ranged from Bethany, who lived in northeastern Missouri, Felicity and Amelia, who lived in central Missouri, Cindy, Danielle, Emily, and Heather, who lived in southwestern Missouri, and Gina, who lived in southeastern Missouri. Only Cindy and Emily grew up in the same community in Missouri and attended the same public school. However, Cindy was nine years older than Emily, so they did not attend school during the same time period. The other participants who lived in southwestern Missouri lived at least one hour away from Cindy and Emily. All of the participants except for Cindy were traditional college students in the fact that they attended Ozark Hills University immediately upon completion of high school and completed their degree in elementary education within three and a half to four years after high school graduation. Cindy originally attended another private university in southwest Missouri for her first three semesters of college and then transferred to Ozark Hills University to complete her degree, but after she was newly married, she found out she was expecting their first child. She decided to take a hiatus from college and went back to school when their third child started preschool. Out of all of the participants, Cindy's journey had more separation in her formal learning experiences.

Based on the participants' course load, some participants participated in student teaching in the fall of 2014 and others participated in student teaching in the spring of 2015. Amelia, Bethany, Cindy, and Danielle completed student teaching in the fall and were able to experience long-term substitute teaching in the spring. Emily, Felicity, Gina, and Heather completed student teaching in the spring of 2015 and did not have the opportunity to experience long-term substitute teaching. Additionally, through either student teaching or a long-term substitute teaching experience, Bethany, Danielle, and Emily were able to experience what they self-

reported as positive writing experiences as teachers of writing within the same elementary school. For the purpose of this study, this elementary school was referred to as Ozark Springs Elementary, a pseudonym. More information about their experiences co-teaching and using curriculum published by literacy guru, Lucy Calkins (1994, 2006), was shared in participants' individual portraits.

Individual Portrait of Participants

Amelia

Amelia was the first participant I was honored to explore experiences with in the study. Amelia grew up in a community in central Missouri with a population of 29,000 residents and attended larger rural school. She was 22 years old and was not married. During student teaching, Amelia had the opportunity of building strong bonds with a local school district and was able to fill in as a long-term substitute in the spring for a maternity leave for the same teacher who she student taught with in the fall. When she reflected on why she chose to become an elementary teacher, Amelia shared:

I want to be all that I can for the kids who may not have anyone or anything and to um encourage them, because I know I needed encouraging. And I know I can easily relate to them, because I was not one of those students who just zoomed through everything.

The themes of the importance of giving and receiving encouragement, persevering through writing difficulties, and appreciating choices as a writer and a teacher of writing carry through Amelia's experiences. In the beginning of Amelia's journey as a writer, she shared in her interview that her parents, grandparents, and kindergarten through second grade teachers provided encouragement in her writing ability, and she enjoyed "showcasing her writing." As a young writer, Amelia remembered sitting at her grandparents' counter and writing her first book

about a spider. She said, “My mom and dad still have it.” Upon reflection, she shared, “I don’t think I was actually writing words together. But I had just learned my letters and the story made sense in my head.” The value placed on the writing process and the encouragement she received in her journey as a writer was something Amelia appreciated.

She explained in her interview, “I remember doing my best in writing, because I knew it would be hanging out in the hall...I would always want to show case my writing, because I felt that it was really good.” These early experiences allowed Amelia to have choice in her writing which she explained was motivating. Additionally she stated in the early elementary grades, “I was encouraged to do your best. Then not only do your best, but be creative with it...It was something we had a choice of not something that was dictated to us.”

Once Amelia entered middle school, she stated, “Honestly I feel like the writing kind of stopped.” She described the different elective courses she was able to take as a middle school student and the important role Spanish became in her life as she received a lot of encouragement from her Spanish teacher as she learned the language. Amelia explained she felt that her ability as a writer “tapered off as soon as I got into seventh grade.” Although reading continued to be emphasized from elementary school through high school, Amelia shared that while she enjoyed reading, the writing instruction did not continue to increase and mirror the reading instruction.

Once Amelia reached high school, she recalled she felt more challenged as a writer. She explained:

There was a lot more that I had to do like writing-wise as in my skills, and like in elementary school I wanted to show all of my skills off that I knew, but in high school I wanted to hide what I had written, because I didn’t feel as confident in what I had written, because even in those two years in junior high like seventh and eighth grade

um...and even sixth grade I didn't, there wasn't much writing and there wasn't much practice um, but I feel like it was kind of strengthened as I got into eleventh and twelfth grade, because I decided to take a class that would really challenge me and help me in high school and in college. I ended up having to write a 10 page analytical paper. And that was, it was a struggle, um but I feel like I would have done a lot better on something like that having been cultivated and encouraged throughout writing like repeatedly and not just having a huge long break in between there. But it was a struggle in high school definitely. Writing was a struggle with whatever I wrote...

This lack of guidance continued to the university level for Amelia. She shared:

I remember writing papers and um my professor didn't give much guidance in that. I mean there was some, but not much guidance. Um, I didn't feel as if they were more open to reviewing a paper before it was turned into them, so I knew the disaster it was after I turned it into them after I received the grade: what was wrong and what could have been fixed.

Fortunately, when Amelia started her elementary education courses, she began to feel more confident as a writer again. She shared in her interview, "I feel as that after taking education classes and learning more and more about writing and how to encourage students in writing, um I feel like that helped me as a writer." Through these experiences Amelia recognized the value of providing timely feedback for her students as writers as they were writing instead of waiting until after the writing piece was published. She shared that her confidence as a writing teacher grew as she put herself at a student's level:

Once you get down to the nitty gritty, it's a little more raw. After talking to them like you would talk to anyone else, they can see the real you. With a writing prompt or a

discussion um you get to see the real them, so that's one of the experiences that I have had. After I have related to a personal experience um of something that has happened that you are thrilled about or that has moved you, um after talking about that with my students on a real level, on the surface level it was very raw, and um I saw that with each student. I wrote something on the board and confessed to them what everything was, what it was to me, and they were able to put their pencil and paper and write along with that and they were able to um tell me what that was to them. Just like I said it was on a raw surface level and that was one of the best successful experiences that I have had as a teacher.

After completion of the cognitive representations, Amelia further reflected:

Overall as a writer I feel as, if like in the clip art, I feel like I start off strong, and then I feel, well [like] I can't, I feel like I have an inability to put my words in my head to paper. I mean I read plenty of books, and I can see plenty of other styles of writing from different authors, but when I want to put pen to paper and have the words come out, it's as if my brain's on mute, and I can't think of anything. And then it goes downhill with my confidence, too. So, it's like I start off strong, and then I taper off at the end, kind of not really sure what to do next or where to go next.

She provided the following description for her experiences as represented by her cognitive representation:

As a writer, I am not very confident in my skills. Like this Nike swoosh, I may start strong but because of a lack of confidence and inability to put words to paper, I kind of taper off at the end.

Although she stated that she does not feel completely confident in her ability to teach writing to elementary students, she shared:

It's still a learning process for me...I feel it may be bad to say, but I feel it's something that the students and I could both learn together day by day...I know the destination that I want to reach. I am not sure the journey to get there. And I am in it for the adventure. I am on for the ride.

Although Amelia seemed a little unsure if it was okay to express that she was still growing as a writer along with her students, she voiced a mindset that she was excited to learn and grow along with her students. Lastly, Amelia also reported high overall self-efficacy for teaching writing which may relate to her overall confidence as a teacher of writing even though she stated that she does not completely feel prepared to teach her future student writers.

Bethany

Bethany was 22 years old and grew up in a community in northeastern Missouri with approximately 11,000 residents. Bethany was not married. She was the youngest of three sisters, and she had an oldest sister with Down syndrome. Bethany shared her mom had been a kindergarten teacher for over 20 years and had modeled how to take a passion for helping kids to make an impact in both curricular goals and life lessons. These experiences with her mom have led her to also pursue a career as a teacher.

From Bethany's earliest memories, she shared:

My mom being a kindergarten teacher, I had a book in my hand and pencils and whatever, and I had two older sisters, so my next oldest sister was in kindergarten when I was born or when I was a toddler and stuff, so I was around everything she did, and I was going to do everything that my sister did, because she was my older sister, and I wanted

to do everything that she was doing. So, I know that I did a lot of that. I have memories of drawing stuff and pictures and what not, and we saved a lot of the things that I wrote and created and whatever over the years.

These early memories of writing fed into positive writing memories from elementary school through eleventh grade. When she tried to remember her elementary experiences as a writer, Bethany shared:

I don't remember any of those experiences necessarily. I hope it was a lot like I have been teaching in early elementary in the first and second grade experiences that I have had in my student teaching and long term subbing with fourth graders, because I was able to see the impact that I was able to make in those kids and in the growth they had over time, so I hope that it was similar to that.

Bethany continued to remember positive memories as a student writer. In middle school, she remembered a positive experience peer editing with her peers. She stated in her interview, "I remember the partner aspect of going through something and applying our learning with a peer um and it was just a really cool thing to talk through their ideas...You haven't achieved anything if you can't communicate." She also recalled learning about figurative language which she defined as "pretty significant." Another enjoyable memory Bethany experienced as a student writer was entering a writing project for a VFW contest. She reflected she enjoyed this writing piece, because she "felt she was writing for a purpose." Later she shared in her interview that she wanted to make writing purposeful for her students as well. She does not want her students to write something "just because she said to write it."

As she progressed as a writer, she recalled two separate experiences in which teachers asked the class to complete a writing task, but she was the only person who completed the task.

First, a middle school teacher asked Bethany's class to record examples of figurative learning from the independent books they had read. Second, in high school a teacher asked Bethany's class to record examples of grammar and mechanical errors they found in their daily lives. Bethany shared she enjoyed when she found these examples and turned them in to her teachers. Although she was the only student who participated, she stated, "I think I was the only one person in class whoever did it...But I think that was just another way that I was able to connect reading and writing." Later in the interview Bethany shared that she was intrinsically motivated to keep learning as a teacher of writing. The connection between what Bethany reads and writes was a theme that surfaced throughout her experiences as a writer and a teacher of writing.

As Bethany transitioned into high school, she reflected that her English Language Arts courses continued the emphasis on the reading and writing connections. She remembered positive experiences as she explored *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Great Gatsby*. Bethany's teachers took creative approaches as they taught these texts and allowed students to share their ideas in ways that supported their learning styles to thrive. The opportunity for freedom and choice within the writing projects were qualities of writing instruction Bethany would like to implement in her own classroom. Bethany fondly remembered her junior English teacher as she stated:

I will be forever be grateful to that teacher, because she challenged us to make us think...She made you think, and a lot of people didn't like that...I guess that is another way that I will know that I will enjoy being a teacher, because I know that I enjoy learning, and I know that I enjoy being motivated and engaged...It doesn't have to take something external to make me want to learn. It's just a natural desire in me, and she engaged that.

As Bethany reflected on her progression as a writer, she chose a clip art that showed the progression of writing from writing on a stone tablet to a scroll and feather pen to a type writer to a first generation computer to a newer computer and last to an electronic tablet with stylus. She described this image and the connection to her journey as a writer through writing:

This picture represents how I grew as a writer. I changed over time and developed new ways of making connections and solving problems in my writing as I gained more resources and knowledge. As I writer, I was always developing and changing.

With the continued growth as a writer from preschool through eleventh grade, Bethany shared she was disappointed in her experiences senior year in an English Composition dual enrollment course. She shared:

It was the most blow-off course, and it was very irritating after going from that amazing experience to, “this is worth college credit and I am paying for you for this...Um, we are writing one page papers.” ...There was not a purpose....Everyone was frustrated. Even the people that were lazy were frustrated. So, I mean to have those diverse experiences irritates me a lot. I mean I was paying them money for them to not teach me anything.

As Bethany entered the university level, she appreciated her English Composition II professor’s priority of intentionally meeting with his student writers. Bethany shared that her professor conferenced with students and guided them with questions such as, “Hey, this is the idea that I am wanting to communicate. What is your opinion on that? Is it actually supporting that? Or what do I need to change here?” Bethany later shared she appreciated this experience, because this conferencing gave her ideas on how to guide her own student writers.

Bethany, like Amelia, had the opportunity to complete student teaching in the fall and was able to experience a long-term substitute experience in the same school district as she

student taught in for a teacher who had to take time off from work due to complications from a surgery. Bethany shared the experiences of student teaching and completion of a long-term substitute experience in Ozark Springs Elementary, a pseudonym, have shaped the way she wanted to teach writing to her future elementary students. Being exposed to Calkin's (2006) writing resources had shaped the way Bethany viewed effective writing instruction and how she wanted to structure writing for her elementary students. Bethany reflected through her student teaching experience, she saw the value of using mentor texts to help students grow as writers:

I was able to even see the implicit implications of my boys that read books that are written like diaries (laughs) that I don't prefer. Um yeah that's motivating for them in their reading, but it influenced their writing so much that we might be writing a personal narrative, and they would be writing a diary. Or we should be writing an opinion piece or a nonfiction piece, and they are still writing it like a diary story of "Hey, this is Josh. By the way: I'm really cool. You should be my friend." And um okay, that's not a story at all. Um, but that's what they are reading, so that's their implicit mentor text...The things that we put into our mind affects how we think, how we communicate.

During Bethany's long-term substitute experience at Ozark Springs Elementary, she also shared how she gained experience of how to work with students who struggled with the writing process. She was a long-term substitute for a Title I reading specialist and had the opportunity to work with a fourth grade student who had previously been retained and had difficulty communicating his ideas through writing. Bethany stated this student was "having a lot of self-doubt and feeling down, because things were hard." After Bethany worked with him, this student's classroom teacher shared with Bethany that this student was looking forward to

working with Bethany again. With this information, Bethany said she reflected on the experience and internally said:

“Oh alright, that’s cool! That showed me that like I’m engaging him in a way...What can I keep doing?” I sat on the same side of the table as him. I encouraged him to come up with ideas, and I just said, “Hey, that’s a good job, buddy. But um, I never thought of it like that before. I really like the way you did this...What do you really like about your writing?” And we were really refining our writing, going through it and encouraging. We [the classroom teacher and I] were both encouraging him...I really just enjoyed working with him. Yeah, and I think he will continue to do good things.

This positive experience helped Bethany when she reflected on how she sought to continue to grow as a writing teacher. Bethany shared:

I think my most frustrating moments were conferences where I didn’t know where to take them next. Some of that was just lack of experience. Like as the beginning of my conferencing and like “I have no idea where to take you in this.” So it’s like they are having multiple things [they need to work on]. So okay which one of these is the most foundational, important concepts that they need right now (claps her hands twice) to get them to the next place to get them to the next place...I hope that with more research and more experience, I can come to understand that better.

Through a strong foundation as a writer and positive experiences in student teaching and long term substitute teaching, Bethany shared she feels like she has high self-efficacy as both a writer and a teacher of writing. Bethany also had a self-reported overall self-efficacy score of high average on Hoy and Woolfolk’s Teach Self-efficacy Scale.

Cindy

Cindy lived in southwest Missouri, was married, and was the only participant who had three children ranging from a fourth grade daughter, a second grade daughter, and a preschool son. Cindy finished the first part of her degree before starting a family and then returned to the university after her son was a few years old and completed her elementary education degree. She was 31 years old. Additionally, Cindy was the only participant to attend another private university in southern Missouri before she attended and graduated from Ozark Hills University. Cindy graduated in December and had the opportunity to complete a long-term substitute class during her student teaching experience. This long-term substitute and student teaching experience took place in a small rural school. The population for the community of this school was approximately 400 residents. Cindy shared sometimes these small schools have difficulty hiring long-term substitutes which was why they sometimes allowed student teachers to fill in as long-term substitutes. With that said, Cindy did not have the same level of support as other student teachers, because the cooperating teacher who was supposed to have mentored her was on maternity leave.

As Cindy grew up, she shared that writing has always been an important part of her life. Cindy's mom was a journalist, and Cindy joked that,

I like to claim that I was just saturated with that [writing] growing up. So sometimes I claim that I received a second hand degree in journalism, although my skills may not be as sharp as they used to be.

Cindy shared she enjoyed watching her mom write, and her mom encouraged her to write.

Cindy's fourth grade daughter also has what Cindy called a "natural inclination toward writing" and had two articles published in the local paper that summer. With Cindy's mom as a journalist

and her father as an attorney, Cindy's parents modeled the value of written communication. Cindy also worked for her father when she was a high school student as she transcribed legal documents and as a writer and an editor while she was a homemaker when her children were younger. Writing seemed to be of great importance in Cindy's family.

Once Cindy entered elementary school, she remembered positive memories as a writer. She believed several of her elementary teachers recognized her ability as a writer. She stated that she believed writing was a "skill I had and they were really good to give me opportunities to extend that." One aspect of elementary writing Cindy remembered well was when she entered pieces into the Language Arts Fair each year. She shared in her interview that:

So much of the year we knew the projects that we would work on at the end of the year we were going to pick our favorite one, and we were actually going to publish them in a way that they could actually get sent to this contest. I still have ribbons in boxes somewhere from that.

Another opportunity Cindy was able to take part in was the Gifted Education program in her school. She shared:

Every year we wrote and published our own book that was submitted to that, so that is one of my fun memories that I have of elementary school was every year trying to come up with a new idea. Some years I wrote sequels to the year before...It was a big deal to not only write it, but then we actually put them in book form that we had actually sewn together ourselves and illustrated.

As Cindy transitioned into middle school, she reflected the experience continued to be positive writing experiences. She could not remember many specific middle school writing projects, because she felt the middle school years ran together in her memories. She did

remember one specific published piece: a sixth grade endangered species report which she shared the sixth grade teachers in her community still required students to complete. As she moved into her high school writing memories, Cindy reflected that:

I feel like I have always been a natural writer. I have always been verbal linguistic from an early age. But this is probably where I really honed some of those skills. I think that my writing, again a lot of this I picked up from my mom, a lot of those fundamentals, and she was always really good to edit and to read and to help me figure out better ways to do it. But this was...high school was probably where I had someone else other than my mom really um kind of direct some of the skills that were probably not as pronounced earlier. Um so I really remember feeling like I really grew as a writer in high school.

Reflection on university memories was more challenging for Cindy, because she felt that between her transfer from another university, a hiatus from college while she started a family, and as she reentered the university, her university experiences “felt choppy.” The key area of reflection for Cindy at this point in her educational journey expressed her frustration with peer editing:

I think that my frustration at the high school and college level, and I think if I could think back to the other grade levels was um when we were asked to trade papers and revise each other’s, because I felt like I was just bleeding ink all over other people’s papers, but not really helping them know how to become a better writer. Rather how I would revise that to make it sound better.

As a student teacher and long-term substitute, Cindy believed the most difficult challenge she experienced as a writing teacher was differentiating writing instruction, so all children

received appropriate and challenging instruction within their current levels as a writers. For Cindy, she felt like because:

Writing comes pretty naturally for me, and so then it's hard for me to break that apart and understand what fundamentals build it, because for me it's just always naturally come. And I think that's a benefit as a teacher, and I think that's what makes it really hard for me to teach as well. Because you know the kids that it does not come naturally for, then it's like how do I break that down and make them understand. And how do I decide which fundamentals to teach first. And how do I decide how to teach them and how to combine them and that's a challenge for me to know how to do that. Just because like I said for me it just all comes together. There's not just pieces of it that I can go back and dissect as easily.

Although Cindy has earned awards in the Language Arts Fair, has published writing pieces through her gifted education program, and has self-reported her success in all of her English Language Arts classes, she stated that her confidence as a writer varies. She explained:

I still think um I'm a perfectionist, and as such I have really high and unattainable standards for myself, so sometimes I tend to, to not have an accurate grasp of where my abilities are. So I feel that yes, I feel that I was confident and um at other times I felt like I really um underestimated my ability [as a writer].

Although Cindy stated, "I feel like I received in all content areas really good training in education here [at Ozark Hills University]," she shared:

I don't always have the confidence in that ability...I still struggle to know what to do, because I think some of it is finding that jumping off point and then learning from there how to go from there and how to figure things out. So, I feel like though I have received

really good training...I don't question that at all...I just question my own ability to have confidence in that.

As Cindy questioned her ability and her self-reported perfectionism, she also considered the likelihood that she may not know the best way to reach all writers in her class during her first years of teaching. She stated:

The idea that what I do this year as a teacher is not going to be what I do five years down the road, and that's a good thing and part of that also bothers me, because I think well I don't want to do a disservice to the ones that I have now. I want to just know what is the best thing to do now.

Danielle

Danielle was from southwest Missouri in a community of approximately 15,000 residents. She had been married for two years and was 22 years old. During student teaching, Danielle taught in a small school in a community of approximately 1,500 residents. She graduated in the fall and was able to be a long-term substitute in a third grade class at Ozark Springs Elementary.

Throughout her life, Danielle had seen writing modeled from both of her parents. Looking back on her experiences, she said, "My mom pushed me to do well in school, but um I think my dad has made writing cool." Danielle's father was a school administrator and had earned his master's and specialist's degrees and was completing his doctoral degree in administration. In one of her earliest memories of elementary school, she recalled:

My brother and I had a project in our kindergarten class where the teacher asked the parents to write a poem for us for this project, and my dad wrote poems for both of us. And they are really, really good. That's when I first found out that my dad is a "word

person"...I mean my dad he is really poetic, and he wrote my mom poems in high school, and it was really, really sweet...He was always very um involved in my writing in school, too, so.

As she reflected on her experiences as a writer in elementary school, Danielle shared she was never very good at spelling, but she liked writing. She stated she always liked the idea of writing a diary, but that idea "never lasted for more than two days." She said she remembered having a "lot of fun with writing." In her middle school experiences, Danielle shared, "honestly I don't remember too much about writing in middle school. I don't think we did too much of that. I don't know what that says about my teachers." In high school writing instruction started picking back up again for Danielle. She shared the focus of many of the English Language Arts courses centered on reading "a lot of books and we had to write comparisons and things like that, and I really enjoyed that."

Then as Danielle reflected on her university experiences as a writer, she shared that she really enjoyed one of her social studies education courses. The teacher, Mrs. Smith, a pseudonym, required Danielle and her classmates to:

Blog every week about what we had read which was actually a lot. It wasn't difficult. It was actually really fun. I liked relaying what I had learned to my reading and actually putting a purpose to my reading instead of just reading it to discuss it during class.

Danielle also recalled writing a children's book for Dr. Jacob's class (a pseudonym) and commented that writing the book was "a really fun experience." As Danielle reflected on these experiences as writer, she commented that she:

Felt pretty confident actually. I don't want to sound obnoxious, but I felt confident in my writing...I felt very poorly about my spelling, but my writing itself, I felt very confident,

I think, because my dad has always really pushed me to be an okay writer. He encourages me.

As Danielle moved into her student teaching experience, she experienced a defining moment in her teaching journey. During the first few weeks of student teaching, Danielle's cooperating teacher was present before she left on maternity leave and directed the students to respond to writing prompts from the stories they were reading. Danielle was frustrated, because they would teach writing as only a response to reading and grammar and mechanics in isolation. She stated:

We would like go over like our morning message, we would go over maybe like this is the rule for the beginning of a paragraph and you need to indent, but that's not really going to connect with them, because it's just the morning message...There was more like "okay, we are going to do reading, and you can do some writing on the side."

This lack of focus on developing genres of writing was contrasted by the long-term subbing experience Danielle had while she taught third grade in Ozark Springs Elementary. In Ozark Springs Elementary, Danielle shared she was partnered with a 25 year "energetic" veteran teacher who was "ready to learn." Reflecting on this experience, Danielle shared:

I think this shaped my writing experience the most, because honestly it's probably the most...time I have ever spent looking at writing and how we can build on that. Um like I kind of said in my um writing portion Lucy Calkins, it was really interesting to read kind of the progression of where she took things, because if you start from the beginning you would see okay, this is a persuasive speech. But next week we are talking about oil spills and just...it was just like she would just take random things and pull them in. But the kids were so excited, and she took it from step one to the end...This was just the most

time I have ever spent um looking at what makes a good paper or a good writing. And it didn't just help their final draft; it helped them improve as writers, because I could see the thinking.

Another benefit Danielle recognized from this experience was:

Well, I have seen it both ways now, so I know what's good and what isn't and what works and what doesn't, so...Um I would say just based off of my student teaching experience and my long-term subbing experience that it has really, really shown me what can be and what shouldn't be, so I am very fortunate to have both of those experiences.

As she reflected on her experiences overall as a writer and a teacher of writing, Danielle concluded her interview by saying, "You see with some of these I don't feel very equipped to be a writing teacher yet. I think it's going to take some time and definitely um some more focus." Additionally, Danielle gave an average self-efficacy score on the Hoy and Woolfolk scale. From Danielle's experiences, she seemed to have a realistic view of the challenges she would face as a writing teacher and had the determination to push through the difficult aspects of writing instruction to effectively teach writing to her students.

Emily

Emily grew up in the same hometown as Cindy but was nine years younger. This shared hometown was in southwest Missouri and had approximately 10,000 residents. Emily was single and was 22 years old. Emily had experienced second hand the life of a teacher, as her mom had taught second grade and preschool in the same community where Emily grew up.

As she reflected on her childhood memories of writing, Emily shared she remembered when she would pretend to play school with her older sister using a two-sided easel. She recalled:

My sister would sit on one side and I would sit on the other side. And we would just like write letters or you know just whatever like write notes to each other even though it wasn't real writing, but it was already getting us in the idea, "Oh I'm thinking it. I can write it down," and you know and express it to someone else.

Additionally, Emily remembered the joy she had when she received a card in the mail from her Grandma. She said:

My grandma especially like, um, she would write cards and everything on everybody's birthday, she had tons of grandkids, and we would all have cards. That's really the first thing I can think of when I think about writing is when I would get a card from my grandma or something, and even if I couldn't read it at that time, but just knowing that you know she wrote this note to me, and it was really special.

This enjoyment of writing continued for Emily as she entered elementary school. Like Cindy, she remembered entering writing pieces into the Language Arts Fair. When thinking about the Language Arts Fair, she said she remembered "it was cool!" Additionally, she shared:

I liked any time that we got to do anything on the computer. I remember there was this thing called Storybook Weaver, and you could add pictures with it and then type underneath it. I really liked that aspect of it, too. I don't know why. I just always kind of liked technology.

After these positive experiences as a writer in elementary school, Emily shared, "Middle school was a time when I really didn't like writing." She felt discouraged as a writer, because her teachers would assign a lot of journal entries, but she questioned whether her teachers actually read what she wrote. She said:

To me it felt like it was a time filler, and it didn't have purpose...When I am writing, I would want somebody else to read it, and I love feedback. And I don't feel like we got much feedback. You know they might write, "Oh, great story," or...but that was it, and I wanted more. Like what could I do to improve or what did you actually like about it? Not "Oh, it was a good story." You could have went through and wrote that on everybody's.

The negative experiences as a student writer continued for Emily during the beginning of her high school classes. The focus of instruction was on isolated grammar practice and Emily stated:

I just remember these grammar worksheets that we had to do, and I absolutely hated them. I did bad on them, because like I don't know. It was terrible. I didn't feel like it was actually helping me as a writer, because it wasn't applied it to my own writing. You know it was like, "Oh here is a sentence, how would you fix this?" and I might fix it on the paper, but I wouldn't really think about it when I am doing it in my own writing.

Fortunately Emily's writing instruction changed when she took the dual enrollment degree completion English Composition course. Emily shared how she valued the feedback Mrs. Johnson, a pseudonym, provided as Mrs. Johnson valued each student's voice in their writing and allowed the students to express themselves. She shared:

We would all say when we would get our paper back that it looked like it had bled, because she would like go all over, because you know I felt like a lot of us at that time would really...you know we had been through the grammar worksheets, but we didn't, you know, know how to do it in our own writing, and so you would get it and you would think, "Oh my goodness, this is terrible," but she would always then come back and teach

us exactly, you know, how we could fix that in our writing. And she would give us a second chance...you know by fixing my own writing kind of helped me think later on when I am writing later on, "Oh, I should do it this way."

After this positive experience at the end of Emily's high school career, she transitioned to the university level and remembered being discouraged again with the classes and the writing expectations and instruction. She shared, "To be honest, I feel like in all my classes, it was all about like how you could fluff it up." Once Emily started taking courses in the education department, she shared she began to enjoy writing again. She felt like she could apply her learning more and "got better about being able to reword things to make it sound a little more professional than just how I probably did in high school." When asked about how she felt in her ability as a writer, she said she now felt fairly confident in her writing and did not struggle anymore. She said,

I could just sit down and get a paper wrote pretty fast you know and felt like I addressed everything I needed to and above and beyond. You know I would always go and try and do better than I had to.

When it was time for Emily to begin student teaching, teaching writing was a concern for her. She said, "I was scared to death to start teaching it, because I didn't feel confident in it." Emily had the opportunity to student teach at Ozark Springs Elementary, and she shared, "The writing curriculum they had was Lucy Calkins...which she made it very personal to the kids, you know like it applied to their writing." Through this experience, Emily learned to allow the children to have choice in their topics within the specific genre they were teaching. She found that providing choice and timely feedback were essential in moving her third graders forward as writers.

Reflecting on these experiences as a writer and a teacher of writing, Emily stated:

I want to make it [writing] personal for them and seem real. Like their writing has a purpose. You know I want to get them feedback, like in high school Mrs. Johnson, a pseudonym, would give us feedback on our writing, and it made us better and I knew somebody was reading...So I want them to feel I'm part of their writing journey I guess; you know like helping them through it, and I want them, you know, to have a positive experience and know that I want them to do the best that they can.

As she reflected on herself overall as a teacher of writing, Emily shared:

I have a lot of learning to do. I definitely don't feel completely confident. I guess writing is one of the things a lot of us don't feel as confident about, because I don't feel like it is as concrete. It's definitely more abstract.

As Emily reflected on her overall self-efficacy as a teacher she self-reported an average self-efficacy as a teacher. Emily reflected that she understood how she wanted to teach writing to her future students and recognized she would need to rely on others to help her along on her journey as a writing teacher.

Felicity

Felicity came from the smallest community of the participants. She grew up in central Missouri in a community with approximately 2,400 residents. Emily was single and 22 years old. She student taught third grade in a community with approximately 10,000 residents.

Felicity's educational journey included being homeschooled by her mom from preschool through second grade. In third grade, she entered the local public school and continued in the public school until she graduated high school. When Felicity reflected on her experiences as a student writer, she had positive experiences from her earliest preschool memories through her

senior year of high school. In Felicity's earliest memories as a writer, she remembered an experience with her mom:

I remember before I could actually write, when you know, I was wanting to write, and we had these huge, big sheets of paper and I would doodle these big curly ques all over the paper to try to make it look like writing.

She also remembered her mom buying her a "pretty little journal" to practice cursive handwriting and to write stories.

Once Felicity entered public school in third grade, she remembered she continued to enjoy writing, because she said, "You could write about anything you wanted and that was really motivational, because no one was telling you, you have to write about this." Felicity expressed the joy she had when given the opportunity to use her imagination while writing. She also remembered writing a "big book of poetry...I gave it to my mom as a present."

When she started thinking about her middle school memories, those memories were less vivid and took a little longer for Felicity to remember. After a few minutes of processing, she remembered participating in a medieval fair, which after reflection with the information she learned in her education courses she recognized was an interdisciplinary project. She remembered her research project was over the black plague. She shared, "I remember that it took a lot of time, but I was really proud of it at the end, because I had worked so hard on it, and it was actually like a legitimate research paper."

For Felicity, the pattern of continuing to grow as a writer continued with modeled instruction in both research and persuasive writing. She remembered taking two dual credit English Composition courses and in one of the courses, she remembered researching Emily Dickenson. She commented this project was like the project she completed in middle school

researching the black plague. She felt the Emily Dickenson research project was “was really cool, because it was something that I was really proud of, too, afterward because I worked really hard on it.” Writing continued to be interwoven throughout the content areas for Felicity. She also enrolled in a dual credit history class, and she remembered, “There actually was a lot of writing involved with that, too, because we did a lot of research in there, so I think that was helpful.”

When Felicity reflected on her college experiences as writer, she shared she continued to have positive experiences overall. She remembered writing article reviews for her education courses and writing lesson plans which she stated, “That was a big part of college.” The only negative writing experience Felicity recalled was writing speeches. Felicity stated, “I hated that class with a passion!” As Felicity reflected overall on her experiences as a student writer, she shared, “I would say pretty confident. I feel pretty prepared. I think my mom started me out well, and then I had a lot of opportunities to practice.”

As Felicity transitioned into thinking about her preparation to be a teacher of writing, she shared she did not feel as confident as a teacher of writing. Although she felt that she was a strong writer, the writing process came naturally for her, and sometimes she felt:

I wish that I would have had a better grasp of the grammar rules and things, because sometimes I feel like I should be more knowledgeable in that, since I am going to teacher. And I kind of wish maybe we would have had a separate class for that. Which probably granted you should probably know that by now, by the time you get to college. But I feel like throughout my own education, it was kind of glazed over like...they would spend you know one day on one part of speech and another day on the other part of speech, and it wasn't really a practical way for me to learn it. And so I kind of feel a little bit behind.

I don't know how to describe it, but I just feel like I'm a little bit unprepared on that part.

Which like I use correct grammar, like I know how to write appropriately, just from experience, but I feel like I don't have a good grasp on the actual grammar rules.

Felicity, like Cindy, expressed the frustration of knowing how to write well but felt unsure of how to teach others why they need to write differently. Although they felt they were natural writers, as Felicity and Cindy have shared, they had been exposed to rich language experiences and recognized what good writing sounds like but have never been taught how to teach others how to pull the writing process a part for each genre to build the quality student writing pieces.

When thinking about Felicity's upcoming classroom, she wanted to incorporate an experience from her middle school English Language Arts teacher. She explained:

I had a language arts teacher in middle school that would, we all had basically a journal, and we would write about anything, and then she would write back to us. And it seemed really simple, but I loved that! I loved getting her feedback, and I loved that she was actually reading what I wrote and then responding. It's always so special to get any kind of lengthy written response from your teacher, because you know it took them time...I was really trying to find a way to incorporate that into my teaching this coming year.

When reflecting overall on her confidence as a writer and teacher of writing, Felicity shared that she felt "pretty well, as a writer; maybe not quite as much on being a teacher of writing. I think that would take some time and some extra learning on my part." Additionally, she reported an average self-efficacy as a teacher of writing. Felicity would like to continue to grow as a writing teacher to better understand how to guide writers who do write naturally.

Gina

Gina was 22 years old and was from a community in southeast Missouri with approximately 17,000 residents. She was not married. Gina shared she student taught in the spring in a small, rural school. Compared to the other participants, Gina's answers were more general and did not go into the more specific details. She seemed to be a more "big picture" thinker as compared to the other seven more detailed oriented participants. She reflected that she had difficulty remembering specific writing experiences as child. In general, Gina remembered positive experiences as a writer. She recalled seeing her parents constantly writing. They would write grocery lists, papers for work, and speeches. She also remembered her parents writing her notes and letters. She did not share any details about how those notes or letters made her feel.

Once she entered elementary school, Gina remembered that she practiced handwriting on d'nealian tablets as an early elementary student. She did not remember any specific writing pieces until she was a fifth grade student. As a fifth grade student she remembered she focused on personification writing, and she thought it was fun. She shared, this was "the first real final piece of writing I ever really remember like enjoying and fully finishing and remember the whole bit." As a seventh grade student, Gina remembered writing her first thesis paper. The research writing genre instruction continued through high school and college. When she reflected on her ability as a writer, Gina shared that she felt confident. She said, "I am definitely more English Language Arts minded, so it came pretty easily to me."

As Gina reflected on her preparation to teach writing, she shared she felt the junior block courses of teaching English Language Arts I and II and Emergent Literacy prepared her to teach writing. She shared she felt the university prepared her to teach writing:

I think really well. I mean any district that you are in will have different curriculums, but this university taught the balanced literacy, which is what the school districts that I have been in so far are using, and so that has been really helpful coming in already know things that a lot of the people do use. So that's been good.

Although she shared she felt prepared to teach writing, she also shared:

It's easy in writing to just make the sentence for them. I feel really good about the grade level that I have been at, but if I am ever in a different grade level, I don't know. You know it will be very different. I hope I will be able to learn how to back off...I am really good at helping them form a sentence and a small paragraph on a topic, but that is very important.

Gina described doing a lot of the sentence forming for the students and did not describe how she would model how to help students form sentences independently. The more Gina described the experiences she had as a writing teacher and her lack of confidence for how to help students write more than a sentence or a small paragraph seemed to express more than she shared. With the writing curriculum in third grade in the Common Core English Language Arts standards, students were not expected to write more than a paragraph; however, starting in fourth grade the expectation changed to "grouping related ideas into paragraphs" (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2005). At this point, Missouri teachers were expected to teach the Common Core State Standards to mastery at each grade level. With the experiences Gina described, if she is placed in a higher elementary grade level, she stated:

But at the same time, if I am ever in a higher grade, and they are writing more, it's like "Oh my gosh, you know." I don't have much experience with higher levels of writing, and I guess that is what I am trying to say.

When Gina reflected on the positive experiences she had experienced as a teacher of writing she shared:

Their finished product is always really cool to see them be proud of it. They are always excited to read it to me...Writing is one of those things that you can just visually look at it and see a big difference from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. It's just with their penmanship and their content and length and everything...I feel that more than anything with writing you can just see the progress every time they write. It's so cool.

Gina's enthusiasm for the writing process and seeing her students make progress as writers was easy to hear in her voice. Through her self-reported average self-efficacy as a teacher, her high self-efficacy as a writer, and self-reported high self-efficacy as a writing teacher for lower elementary grades, Gina seemed to feel confident that she would be able to meet the needs of her future student writers.

Heather

The last participant I had the opportunity to work with was Heather. As a newlywed and having recently moved into a new house, Heather had a busy start to her summer, but shared that she wanted to be able to share her experiences with me. Heather was one of five siblings and was 22 years old. She grew up in a small community with approximately 3,575 residents and was preparing to teach third grade in the public school in the same community where she grew up. Although Heather was preparing to teach in a public school next year, she did not have any experience attending public school as a student. She stated:

A lot of people find it kind of funny that I wanted to become a teacher, just because I haven't been in public school ever. The first time I was ever in a public school was when I was in my field experiences.

Heather was homeschooled from preschool through eleventh grade and then attended a local private school for twelfth grade before she attended Ozark Hills University. Heather brought a unique school experience as a writer, because she was exposed to homeschooling from her mom; what she described as “video schooling” with support from her mom was schooling with “limited support [from other teachers], because mom was so busy taking care of all of us five kids,” and one year in a private school. She was the only participant who described any experiences in a private school before she attended Ozark Hills University.

From Heather’s earliest memories as a writer, her parents encouraged her with her writing. She remembered when she was a toddler, she wrote a “whole row of ones” and “as soon as my dad came home, she [my mom] was showing him the paper of a row of ones I had drawn.” This positive praise and encouragement for writing made a lasting memory for Heather. As she started homeschool with her mom, Heather shared that she liked writing, “but I liked writing what I wanted to write. I didn’t really want to write like teachers or like my mom would give me a specific prompt that I didn’t really want to write about.” Having choice in what she wrote about was a reoccurring theme in Heather’s memories as a writer and teacher of writing.

Through being homeschooled, Heather felt her memories of elementary and middle school were “jumbled together.” She shared her writing experiences in elementary school were more “simple” writing pieces and not “a lot of like essay writing.” Heather reflected:

I admit I really think that I missed out um on that [essay writing], because I didn’t really know how to go about it. So, we kind of just skipped over it, and that was one thing my mom really regrets [about homeschooling]. She had five other kids and so we just kind of got by.

When Heather started her middle school homeschooling classes, she remembered doing a lot of book reports and she stated emphatically, “I hated book reports!” She felt that writing:

Would not have had to be so hard, but I didn’t have a lot of direction. Because like I said, my mom was really busy, and back then I did video school. I had really good teachers who would explain things to me, but I had no idea like how to...there was no one to check my writing, because my mom, she didn’t really know what to look for and so I would write something, but then I had no idea if it was good or not, and so it was kind of a lot. I just really felt lost in writing.

With this feeling of being lost as a writer, Heather’s family decided to enroll her in a local private school in their community for her senior year to help her be more prepared to enter the university the next year. Heather shared several times her enrollment in the private school was “a turning point” in her educational journey and stated, “It really wasn’t until that point that I decided that I wanted to go into teaching. So that was really, it was kind of a God-thing. He kind of worked that all out for me.”

She shared at the private school:

This was the first time I actually had feedback. That was just huge for me and at first I, you know, there was a lot I needed to work on, but I picked up on it really quickly and I actually, I actually graduated in the top of my writing class, because I really, I was just, I was just soaking up any um feedback I could get, I could get from teachers, so it was really valuable for me. So that really helped me kind of learn the value of feedback.

Kids really, really need to, you know, be encouraged in how to write and writing well.

And also to be aware of the things they need to work on. And that kind of helped me see the importance of um feedback in schools.

As Heather transitioned to the university level, she shared she continued to do well as a writer. She was encouraged because, “Most of the teachers at the university level would comment on I was a good writer, and that meant a lot to me...I had grown up thinking I was a terrible writer.” This encouragement continued as Heather prepared to be a teacher of writing. She had positive experiences with one of her education department instructors, Mrs. Smith, a pseudonym. Heather appreciated how Mrs. Smith “was really good about giving feedback and that’s one thing that really helps my confidence is getting feedback from a professor.” As she continued to prepare as a teacher of writing, Heather felt

Right now I feel, I feel like I probably need to probably keep practicing um, because I kind of think that’s kind of the key: just to stay current and not forget the things that you have learned thus far.

As Heather’s journey as a teacher of writing continued, Heather, like Gina, fondly remembered Dr. Jacob’s, a pseudonym, literacy courses in the junior block courses. She stated, “Dr. Jacobs’ [classes] were amazing with teaching me how to teach kids to write.” The challenging part in these courses for Heather was:

I really felt though the courses themselves were great, um but like with Dr. Jacobs, she kind of had a lot to teach, so I feel like there was kind of...in junior block...it’s like honestly like one big whirlwind and I would have to dig way back into my archives to remember most of the stuff that I learned in there, but I know I learned it. So I can’t really specifically tell you where, but I do think that they really helped, because going in like into student teaching, writing was one of my favorite things to teach um to my third graders. And I definitely felt, I definitely could tell that um that the courses that this university had helped me get there.

Heather's development as a writer and teacher of writing was also noticed by her cooperating teacher during student teaching. Heather shared:

Not only did my cooperating teacher say that she couldn't believe how well I did with the students [teaching writing], and [I couldn't believe] how much fun I had doing it. I was kind of surprised at that, because like I had never really thought of myself as a writing teacher, but I did have a lot of fun doing it. And so um I would do things that the courses, Dr. Jacobs, a pseudonym, had taught and it just kind of sticks with you as you develop as a writing teacher.

With the experiences as a student writer that started as she felt unsure of her ability to receive positive feedback and support from her high school senior year teacher and positive feedback from university teachers, Heather felt these experiences built a progression that prepared her to be a teacher of writing. She synthesized these experiences as she shared, "I would say they all [all of the writing experiences from preschool through the university level] kind of did...did help, but student teaching was probably the main thing that helped me." The positive feedback as a writing teacher from Heather's cooperating teacher for student teaching helped cement in Heather's mind that she was a good writer and a good writing teacher.

Additionally, Heather reported an average self-efficacy as an overall teacher on the self-efficacy scale. With the combined positive experiences from her senior year of high school and the positive relationships she built with her cooperating teacher who transitioned to her colleague as Heather prepared to start teaching alongside her cooperating teacher, she felt she was prepared to meet the needs of her future third grade student writers.

Results

Through exploration of the experiences of the eight preservice teachers in this study, by reading the participants' transcripts multiple times from looking at the overall essence of the experience down to individual paragraphs, sentences, phrases, and words, while also examining the writing prompts, cognitive representations, and Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) Teacher Efficacy Scales through hermeneutical phenomenological analysis, I found two commonalities in these participants experiences (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014): a) enhancers of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing and b) detractors of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. These two themes were more thoroughly explored through the following sections.

Theme One: Enhancers of Self-Efficacy as Writers and Teachers of Writing

As the participants shared their experiences as student writers and their preparations to become teachers of writing, they shared several aspects that enhanced their self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. Enhancers for self-efficacy were experiences that the participants shared which made them gain confidence as either writers or teachers of writing; and therefore, they felt created a higher sense of self-efficacy as writers or teachers of writing for the preservice teachers. There were three subthemes of enhancement that led preservice teachers to gain self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. First, the preservice teachers had positive experiences as elementary student writers that made them feel confident that they could teach elementary students to write in the future. Second, the preservice teachers experienced a motivation to persevere through the challenges as writers, because they were offered choice in what they wrote which raised their self-efficacy as writers. Third, the preservice teachers experienced higher levels of self-efficacy as both writers and teachers of writing through the

provision of effective feedback, because they were given the direction on how to improve as writers.

Positive experiences as elementary writers. As the participants in this study reflected on their experiences as writers, all eight reflected they had positive experiences in elementary school. Each participant remembered positive experiences as they first learned to write with support and encouragement from their parents and grandparents, as well as, their elementary teachers. As young writers they each shared they had high self-efficacy as writers. Felicity chose to represent her experiences as a writer through a photograph of a Dad helping his daughter learn how to ride a bike. The Dad in the image was providing support as his daughter started to take off on her own. Felicity further described the photograph through her caption:

I chose this photo to represent my experiences as a writer. God has blessed me with many good teachers (including my mom) who have supported me as a writer just like the man above is supporting his daughter. They have taught me good techniques, modeled effective writing, and shown me that, like riding a bike, once you get the hang of it, writing can be both useful and enjoyable.

Interestingly, when Heather wrote about her positive elementary experiences as a writer, she touched on how she planned to create a similar environment for her students to model the writing process through positive interactions. She wrote:

When teaching writing to future elementary students, my plan is to approach writing with utmost excitement. Even though writing is not something I really enjoy, my students should not know that. ☺ I have found in that past that a teacher's energy is usually contagious, and students will learn much more if the lesson is engaging. [Participant added the "happy face" image in the text.]

Heather picked up on the social cues her teachers provided for students that indicated their varied levels of excitement for teaching different content areas. She also chose a clip art for her cognitive representation that communicates a similar message. Heather's cognitive representation was a clip art showing a teacher jumping up and down with a smile on her face as her student's writing pieces circled around her. Heather's description for the clip art selection is "This image depicts the people in my life who made me want to be a teacher. I want to be upbeat and energetic to teach my students to appreciate and enjoy writing."

When the preservice teacher participants in this study reflected on their elementary writing experiences, they remembered their writing experiences as authentic, personally relevant, and a chance to be creative. Heather and Felicity shared they both enjoyed writing in elementary school, because they wrote what they wanted to and were interested in. Felicity reflected she was given a lot of choice in what she wrote about as an elementary student, and this was a positive experience for her. In her writing prompt, Felicity wrote:

Looking back on my early experiences in writing, I realize that I was blessed with many effective teachers who showed me the creative and expressive nature of writing as well as the practical uses. Many of my teachers made an effort to make writing a joyful affair. My mom bought me a pretty notebook to practice my writing in during homeschooling. My third grade teacher allowed us to choose what we would write about. My folder was full of stories that allowed me to harness my imagination. I journaled back and forth with my sixth grade teacher and learned that writing was a great way to communicate my feelings and opinions to others.

Felicity enjoyed being able to explore her creative side as a writer. Heather also preferred her elementary writing experiences, because she was given more choices as an

elementary writer as compared to when she transitioned into the older grades. In her interview, Heather shared:

I liked writing...I liked writing what I wanted to write. I didn't really want to write when teachers or like my mom would give me a specific prompt that I didn't really want to write about...I wasn't extremely creative in my writing, but (laughs) I had fun when it was something that I was interested in.

Cindy believed her elementary teachers noticed she had “an inclination” toward writing and nurtured and encouraged her growth as a writer. She also shared through her interview, writing prompt, and cognitive representation that she had a rich exposure to literature. She felt this positively shaped her growth as a reader and writer. Cindy expressed her experiences in a drawing (see Figure 1) and a brief explanation by stating, “This illustration represents my experiences as a writer through a literature rich environment and being exposed to seeing lots of things in the world.”

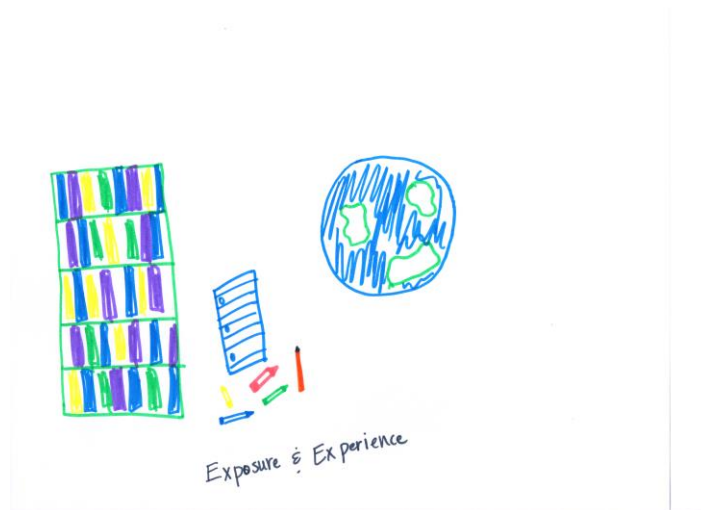


Figure 1. Cindy's experiences as a writer.

Cindy shared she was also motivated as she participated in the Language Arts Fair and published books each year in her gifted education class. She also had the opportunity to choose

what she wrote about for these tasks. Although Emily was nine years younger than Cindy, she attended the same elementary school and shared a similar experience as she wrote and submitted her work to the Language Arts Fair. She also remembered writing as a positive experience in elementary school. During her interview, Emily shared:

I really liked writing at that time. I liked entering my stuff into the Language Arts Fair. I remember, you know, that was cool. But um, that was a long time ago...I liked any time that we got to do anything on the computer. I remember there was this thing, I can't remember if it was called Storybook Weaver or Story Weaver or something like that, and you could add pictures with it and then type underneath it. I really liked that aspect of it, too. I don't know why. I just always kind of liked technology.

Bethany, like Cindy had the opportunity to make a book in early elementary and she reflected that:

I would say the earliest one [memories as a writing] was the most memorable and probably my favorite was when I was in second grade. I remember making books, and um I just remember the encouragement. We made multiple books, and they were just these little small, the weird, school spiral bound, um construction paper cover and back page, um but we got to write stories and illustrate them and color them and then share them. That was exciting, because I was creating a book. I wasn't just writing something.

Additionally in her writing prompt, Bethany wrote “I may not remember the plot or characters in those stories, but I remember the pride that came from the experience.” Through the shared positive experiences as they published their work as elementary students Cindy, Whitney, and Bethany felt they grew as young writers.

Danielle echoed the idea of writing being fun in elementary school, as she described enjoyed writing stories. She said in her interview:

Well I was never very good at spelling, but I really liked writing. I liked to write stories.

I always thought I would like to write a diary. It would only last two days, but um yeah. I wrote a lot just for fun. Actually I really liked writing. I always thought it would be really cool to be an author, but I was never really that good.

One of Danielle’s elementary teachers included Danielle’s dad in the writing process as she asked parents to write a poem for their children. When Danielle read the poem her dad wrote for her, she reflected this was one of the first times she noticed the positive relationship she had with her dad as her writing mentor. This relationship with father and daughter further developed as Danielle grew as a writer. Danielle chose to represent this relationship through a cognitive representation (see Figure 2) with the following description: “My dad took the time to help me enjoy writing as much as he does. I was very fortunate to have a ‘word smart’ person as a mentor.”



Figure 2. Danielle's experiences as a writer.

Danielle also elaborated on this further in interview and stated:

My dad he is really poetic, and he wrote my mom poems in high school, and it was really, really sweet. So, um, yeah, I would say that he was the person who modeled the most writing. He was always very um involved in my writing in school, too, so.

Although Gina had difficulty as she tried to pinpoint specific memories of elementary writing, she shared overall she felt her experiences as an elementary writer were “very positive.” When she reflected on her experiences as a writer, she chose a clip art showing a young elementary student holding a piece of paper that says “I love writing!” and wrote a caption describing why she chose this image: “I chose this clipart image, because I always enjoyed writing in school. Writing came easily for me.”

Lastly, Amelia remembered enjoying her experiences as an elementary writer, because she was able to “showcase” her writing talents. Amelia’s teachers encouraged her writing skills, and she felt she blossomed as a writer with their guidance. In her interview she shared:

In elementary school, um I remember writing was a big part of it all throughout...all throughout the like early grades like K through 2. Um, I remember doing my best in

writing, because I knew it would be hanging out in the hall...[For] all [of the] holidays, we would write something and...we would always put them up in the hall. I would always want to show case my writing, because I felt that it was really good. All throughout elementary school there would always be something to where “okay, this would be shown here,” and [I would] be encouraged to do your best then not only do your best, but be creative with it all the ones that I can remember be creative with it. It was something we had a choice of not something that was dictated to us.

Power of choice in writing pieces. One of the reasons the preservice teacher participants stated writing was a positive experience and enhanced their self-efficacy as writers was through teachers offering choice. Offering choice in the writing process was a subtheme the participants shared in many different ways. The participants found that as their own teachers offered choices in writing assignments, they experienced enhanced self-efficacy as writers. They also believed their students would have enhanced self-efficacy as writers if they gave their students choices in their writing as well. In her writing prompt, Bethany wrote she hoped, “My students will create writing pieces with an intentional audience, knowing the purpose behind each stroke of their pen or punch of a key.” Bethany felt that her students would have increased self-efficacy as writers when they had the opportunity to write with a clear picture of their audience.

Additionally, Danielle described her memorable experiences as a writer in her writing prompt as she stated, “The most memorable writing experiences that I have had are the ones that connected to me or a topic that I felt strongly about. I always enjoyed writing stories in school when given a good writing prompt.” Emily wrote she wanted to “make writing a real and personal thing for my students. I don’t want them to feel like their writing is pointless. I want them to be proud and take ownership of it.” Writing was a difficult process. Danielle and Emily

voiced when they were offered choices in their writing, they pushed through the difficulty of sorting through thoughts in their minds as they created meaningful writing pieces.

As Amelia shared more thoughts on the value of choice and the value of modeled practice of different genres of writing, she added:

Having more knowledge of different types of writing that students can get involved in, that teachers can get involved with their students and different types of writing is good. It's tiring and monotonous for students to write, "What do you think about this..." "What do you think about that...?" But showing them there are different ways to put out their thoughts...I think would definitely be good instruction for them.

Amelia believed that sometimes students do not feel they have a choice about what to write simply because they do not know the different writing formats and genres well enough to experiment and try something new. She gave further description of her fifth grade teacher who Amelia would like to model her teaching writing after:

She just let us explore different styles of writing and gave us our own personal time to do that and was very open to whatever we decided to write about and in whatever style that we chose...She was very thrilled for each and every student whether it was a descriptive essay, if you will, or if it was a diamante poem... she was very energetic and encouraging to all of her students in giving us a choice and letting us be explorers with our own writing.

Emily voiced the frustration she felt as a student writer when writing instruction was not authentic and writing skills were taught in isolation. Additionally, Emily echoed the same fear as Amelia of being exposed as an unconfident writer with respect to grammar. She described how her feelings toward writing changed in her writing prompt:

It wasn't until my senior year that it all started coming together. I had a WONDERFUL teacher who helped me improve my writing. She really encouraged us to use our voice which made it more fun for me. She also taught us about our grammar mistakes through our own writing which made it more real for me. [Emily included all capital letters for "wonderful" and underline of "our" on the original writing prompt.]

Bethany, Danielle, and Whitney shared during their experiences during either student teaching or long-term substitute teaching at Ozark Springs Elementary, they used Calkins (2006) units of study for writing. Using this format, Danielle described Calkin's (2006) philosophy of teaching writing as students having the opportunity to use the whole class models to add ideas to their own stories. Students also had the opportunity to share their writing with their peers. Danielle concluded her description of this experience in her writing prompt as she wrote, "most of all we made it [writing] meaningful, and that is how I hope to teach writing in my own class."

Amelia's favorite memories as a writer were opportunities where she had the choice of what to write and understood the purpose of the writing piece. She wrote in her writing prompt:

My most memorable experience in reference to writing as a student would take me back to fifth grade. My fifth grade teacher was very charismatic and encouraged her students to explore writing. With every subject she taught, she integrated writing and gave her students a voice in which writing style to use.

Amelia further described this favorite elementary teacher in her interview as she explained how this teacher gave choice to her writers, and Amelia felt she flourished as a writer through this type of instruction. Amelia and her classmates learned the same content, but were allowed to process their understanding through multiple written formats.

Bethany described her joy as she created a book in early elementary, because it was purposeful, and she “wasn’t just writing something.” This theme continued for Bethany as she enjoyed her high school junior level English course, because she was given the choice of how to represent her understanding of the texts they read. She understood the purpose of the assignment, and she could use her creativity as she demonstrated to her teacher her understanding. As an elementary teacher, Bethany reflected:

I want them to know the purpose of what they are doing. Even if they don’t know, even if it doesn’t have an explicit, authentic audience right then, right there, I want them to understand what it is building them towards. Because a lot of the things we do in elementary school are building blocks. It’s not necessarily going to have a job application for the rest of their life, but it will have an impact on the rest of their life and how they communicate.

Cindy echoed Bethany’s experience in her Language Arts Fair and gifted class writings, because she learned that writing for these tasks was purposeful, and she enjoyed the publishing process. She felt her writing was more meaningful, because it would be read by others. She also shared she wanted her future students to know they were not just writing, because Cindy told them to write. They were writing, because “something is going to happen” with their writing.

As teachers of writing, Danielle, Emily, and Heather recognized students were motivated to write about topics that mattered to them. For Danielle’s third grade students, they enjoyed writing as they practiced persuasive essay skills through writing an essay to convince their school to build a bigger playground. Emily learned her students were more engaged in writing informative writing pieces when they had the opportunity to choose their own animal to research

and discover new things about their animals to share with their peers. She described in her interview:

I was at Ozark Springs Elementary, and the writing curriculum they had was Lucy Calkins, and um I only taught a few lessons out of hers, which she made it very personal to the kids, you know like it applied to their writing. It wasn't like as much as teaching out of the book really...when it was my turn to teach we did a wonder unit and that was their nonfiction writing and it...started [with] brainstorming ideas. I thought how the kids had to brainstorm ideas was good. They just did multiple activities to try to help them come up with something instead of here you have to write about this....I learned that you have to make it, like the kid has to be interested in it for sure. Otherwise they are not going to really want to write. If we were going to write about animals, if I would have picked their animals for them, they wouldn't have really enjoyed the writing or wouldn't have wanted to do it. And I think it's important that they enjoy it, because it was something they wanted and they were interested about researching and stuff.

Gina stated one of the greatest challenges as a teacher of writing was getting the students motivated to write. She explained in her interview that she had motivated her students to write by “finding out what the kids are interested in and finding good topics for them to be able to indulge in [will motivate them]. Or else it's [writing instruction] meaningless, honestly.” Gina found her greatest successes with student writers as she made the writing process personal. On the other hand, Felicity believed one of the reasons her students in her student teaching classroom struggled to enjoy writing was because of the lack of choice. She believed this lack of choice led to a decreased motivation to write. She shared:

I found it really hard to motivate them to write or to get them excited to write, because a lot of what we did was more dictated, and they didn't get to really write about anything they could chose, so I think maybe that played into it.

This experience during student teaching was the opposite of what Felicity felt she experienced as an elementary student herself. She shared in her writing prompt, "My third grade teacher allowed us to choose what we would write about. My folder was full of stories that allowed me to harness my imagination." Felicity hoped to create a more similar writing environment that she experienced as a student writer for her future writers. The experiences the preservice teachers explored concerning the motivational power of choice increased their self-efficacy as teachers of writing, because as students enjoyed what they wrote about they were more engaged in the writing process and the preservice teachers felt more confident as they guided their student writers.

Feedback nurtures student writing growth. Another subtheme that surfaced as participants shared their experiences as writers and teachers of writing was the power of feedback in nurturing student writers. The participants shared how they experienced the power of feedback both as student writers and future teachers of writing. Bethany shared in her interview that:

I think I am a pretty confident person. I am very motivated like I said, so I um I took the criticism pretty well of what I needed to improve, but I have also kind of been an easy achiever. Um there were a lot of things in high school that I really didn't have to work extra hard at to do well in by the term of a grade and um but...so I was always motivated to achieve. And I worked for it, but a lot things I didn't have to struggle through.

Writing came natural to me. Reading came pretty naturally to me. And that, that gave

me a lot of confidence. I think the encouragement from other people and from my parents and my older sister who is just four years older than me, she...she reminded me that I could achieve in times that I didn't...in things that were hard, and that gave me a lot of confidence, too.

Although Bethany considered herself a confident person, she took the feedback she was given and applied the feedback to her writing to make her a more skilled writer.

One way the preservice teachers explained teachers provided specific feedback to them as writers was through the use of mentor texts. When Bethany reflected on her student teaching experience, she shared:

I would say in that student teaching experience in the lower elementary was the place that I got to watch how it [utilizing mentor texts] influenced my students. Um, that was another place that I saw a student who could tell you a story...um two specific students that I could remember. They could tell me a story. They could not write a story. It was just very confusing and didn't have a lot of fluidity of thought, so that was something that I would get to work on with them. Um...I think the mentor texts is probably one of the biggest [things that helped these writers], just because of the connection between reading and writing and how the things that we put into our mind affects how we think, how we communicate.

As the preservice teacher participants reflected on the ways their teachers and themselves provided feedback to increase self-efficacy as writers, they shared how as they utilized mentor texts, they were able to provide a bridge for students to take their ideas and figure out how to write in different genres. Bethany reflected in her interview:

I would trace that [the use of mentor texts to guide writers] mostly to my student teaching. That's probably the place that I got to see it first. And then seeing it there, I got to see how it influenced other things. I got to see how, because of the things I was reading in my personal life, my vocabulary was growing and the way that I was communicating was growing and becoming different. Um and gratefully I was reading good things that were influencing that. Um things that were challenging my mind and stuff. But...so I was able to see it there, too.

To support how the preservice teachers have processed the use of mentor texts in providing feedback for student writers, through the inclusion of her cognitive representation, Bethany also represented herself as a teacher of writing with the an image showing a person matching two puzzle pieces together and wrote further detail in her caption: "This picture displays how I intend to teach writing to my future students. Making clear connections between their reading and writing will influence how they perceive their success and how successful they are in communicating their ideas."

Bethany further reflected on the use of mentor texts in regard to providing feedback for students as they become more skilled with spelling:

I think when it comes to spelling my opinion has been formed a lot by um what we read and understand by the meaning of the words that we are reading influences a lot of our spelling and writing. So we have to see it in our real world...our real structures...English is so confusing, because it has so many homophones and everything and that they have to see those things explicitly and I don't...I don't know how to teach a kid the difference between writing the long "i" sound like "ite" write or "ight" right. Like what's the difference? You just have to know. You just have to remember. You just have to see in

your world and understand this is what it means in this sentence. This is what this word means. This is how it's spelled. Like you just have to put those things in your brain sometimes.

Felicity also reflected on the value of the connections between reading and writing and chose another way to represent this connection in her cognitive representation. The image she selected was a tool belt with a hammer, pliers, gardening tools, and measuring tape. Her explanation for choosing this representation is as follows:

I chose this photo to illustrate the experiences that have shaped me as a teacher of writing. I have learned that writing is a useful tool that works in tandem with reading, can be integrated across all subject areas, and is useful to help students process their learning.

Felicity took the application of the connection of reading and writing one step further and described how reading and writing form the basis of the other subject areas. Felicity saw the big picture of the strategies she taught her students as readers and writers also applied to the larger context of the learning process. In her future classroom, Felicity shared in her interview that she hoped to create an environment where:

Writing [will] be integrated amongst the social studies, and I think um part of what's important to me is, would be that element of choice that they have some choices in um how they present their writing. Like for instance, if I was giving them options in books they could read, different historical fiction books they could read, I would want to give them, you know a list of different options for how they could respond in writing to that book, and how they could share about it, because I think that's motivating for them.

Felicity noticed that she wanted to provide choice in what her students read and to provide modeled instruction of the connection of reading different genres related to content area instruction and writing texts based from these mentor texts.

The connections between reading and writing, however, were not modeled authentically for all participants. Amelia shared in her writing prompt, interview, and cognitive representations through her educational experiences she loved reading and constantly had a book she was in the process of reading, but she did not see the connection between what she read and what she wrote. She shared that when writing instruction tapered off in middle school and early high school, she wanted to be a better writer and was confident that she could be a better writer, but did not know how to become a better writer. The teachers who made a difference in Amelia's writing experience were ones who were encouraging and provided timely feedback for how she could improve as a writer.

One challenging aspect of the feedback Amelia received as a writer was the inconsistency of the feedback she received about her writing. She described how the feedback she received would sometimes be positive and other times negative and given too late to make revisions on her writing pieces. Depending on what Amelia's teachers valued in writing, she would either receive positive notes about her ideas or voice in her writing or negative feedback about her grammar or mechanics. Amelia voiced confusion as a writer, because she felt the feedback was inconsistent and did not build as she progressed as a writer. She stated in her interview, "Writing was a struggle with whatever I wrote."

Additionally, in order for feedback to be beneficial for writers, Amelia, Whitney, and Heather specifically voiced the need for feedback to be timely. After reflection on her experiences as a writer, Heather realized:

Because I was homeschooled most of my school-life, having feedback from actual teachers that year was extremely valuable to me. I remember my grammar teacher in high school telling me that I was very good at writing and should become a teacher one day. That was a huge turning point for me, and from then on my confidence as a writer grew tremendously...I was just soaking up any um feedback I could get from teachers, so it was really valuable for me. So that really helped me kind of learn the value of feedback. Kids really, really need to, you know, be encouraged in how to write and write well. And also to be aware of the things they need to work on. And that kind of helped me see the importance of um feedback in schools.

Heather also chose to represent her experiences as a writer through focused attention on the benefits she experienced through the powerful feedback her teachers provided through her cognitive representation. She chose an image of a teacher and a student conferencing with a writing piece and both the student and teacher have smiles on their faces. She explains this selection by providing the following caption: "This image depicts how my experiences as a writer were majorly influenced by having teacher feedback. The encouragement from teachers definitely shaped the writer I am today." The positive feedback Heather experienced as her cooperating teacher commented on her ability as a teacher of writing impacted the way Heather viewed herself as a teacher of writing and has encouraged Heather to feel confident that she has achieved success as a teacher of writing.

Felicity shared about an experience when her teacher took the time to respond to her writing in middle school. This extra nurturing as a student of writing made her feel so special, because Felicity recognized how busy her teacher was. Felicity felt valued as a writer, because her teacher took time to personally respond to Felicity's writing. Although Cindy believed she

had a natural inclination to write and had a strong support system to nurture her writing ability through her parents' guidance, she believed things changed in high school when teachers started directing "some of the skills that were probably not as pronounced earlier...I really remember feeling like I really grew as a writer in high school." Timely feedback made the difference for Cindy as a strong writer as she became even more skilled at the university level when her composition professor continued with positive, timely feedback.

Emily described the power of feedback she experienced both as a writer and a teacher of writing. First, she chose a clip art to illustrate her experiences as a writer with an image that showed a little girl shouting, "I LOVE MY VOICE!" and explained, "Once I was able to write in my own voice, writing became more fun and interesting for me. I felt like I could really express myself through my writing instead of my writing seeming like a robot wrote it." The experience Emily illustrated connected with the experience she described in her writing prompt and individual interview.

Additionally, Emily described how she found the value in conferencing with students with her cognitive representation. She chose an image of a teacher and student conferencing over a writing piece and both the teacher and student were smiling. She wrote the following caption to explain her rationale for choosing this image:

In my student teaching class, we spent a lot of time working one on one with the students on their writing. I thought this was very important because it helped me learn more about the students needs as a writer, and then I could spend time helping them directly with what they were struggling with.

Emily, Danielle, and Bethany all echoed the same value of the one-on-one conferencing with student writers they experienced at Ozark Springs Elementary. Students blossomed as writers as

these preservice teachers learned to give feedback to guide their writing. As the students increased in their skills as writers, these preservice teachers commented they felt more confident as teachers of writing.

Additionally, Bethany shared her college writing professor provided a model for her as a student writer that she wanted to emulate with her own students as she conferenced and provided feedback for her elementary students. This learning experience was transformative for Bethany, because she adopted the way her professor modeled conferencing and provided feedback and now has implemented that same method of conferencing with her elementary students both in student teaching and her long-term substitute experience. Bethany, Danielle, and Emily experienced increased levels of self-efficacy as writing teachers through vicarious experiences of mentoring the cooperating teachers from Ozark Springs Elementary school provided for them. As they co-taught with these veteran teachers, they learned from their experiences on what to say and how to focus on what is most essential to move the writers forward on their journey. Emily described this situation best as she shared how her cooperating teacher modeled how to select what is most important and focus on that first when she conferenced with students. Both Bethany and Danielle echoed similar comments. Danielle also represented her experience through her cognitive representation (see Figure 3) and explained, “I had the opportunity to grow as a writing teacher with the mentoring of a 25-year veteran teacher. We co-taught writing together, and the students were able to write their persuasive speeches on Chromebooks.”



Figure 1. Danielle's experiences as a teacher of writing.

Danielle shared several kind reflections that detailed the positive relationship she built during her long-term subbing experience at Ozark Springs Elementary with the veteran teacher she illustrated in the co-teaching example. The feedback this colleague provided for Danielle left a lasting impact and forms the basis of how Danielle wants to continue to implement Calkins' (2006) style of writing instruction for her future students.

Although the participants shared they were not always as confident in what to say and how to say the feedback, they recognized their words became part of their students' inner thoughts as they processed how to write their ideas. Bethany and Emily were excited to see how the think-alouds and strategies they provided their students became part of the writing process for their students. Bethany learned how the words she used had the potential to become part of her students' stories. This process was not only transformative for Bethany but also for her student who picked up her teacher's catch phrase of "making every minute count."

Lastly, Bethany recognized the value of peers offering constructive feedback to raise self-efficacy of student writers. In her interview, Bethany reflected:

I had two students that they were probably the best working pair I have ever seen. I was so surprised by it, because they were both so quiet. But they would sit together, and they would set these goals together and they would ask each other questions as if they were the teacher or like repeating what I had said like, “Now what is the problem in your story?” It was so precious, because it was like, “You were actually listening and you were listening, because you want to help someone.” Um, as well as, make your writing better, so it gave them a purpose, too. And not all of them took that, but um, not all of them took that out right out on their own, but that doesn’t mean that I can’t support them in. That I can’t remind them of its purpose, and I can show them the purpose of it in an example. I could pull up those two students and say, “This is something that I was noticing and I am noticing that their writing is improving a lot, because they are really trying to help each other a lot,” and showing them the purpose in that. So, I’ve taken a lot in those things, and that’s influenced where I am headed.

Through these experiences, the preservice teacher participants recognized the value of feedback from their peers, family members, and teachers that moved them forward on their journey as writers and raised their self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing.

Summary. The experiences described in the previous section enhanced the preservice teachers’ self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. The preservice teachers’ positive experiences as elementary writers, the power of choice in writing pieces, and feedback nurtures writing growth were subthemes of experiences that enhanced preservice teacher self-efficacy. In addition to these positive experiences, the preservice teachers also experienced detractors in their self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. These detractors will be discussed in the following section.

Theme Two: Detractors of Self-Efficacy as Writers and Teachers of Writing

As the participants shared their experiences as student writers and their preparations to become teachers of writing, they shared several aspects that detracted their self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. Detractors for self-efficacy were experiences that the participants shared made their confidence as either writers or a teachers of writing diminish; and therefore, they felt that created a diminished sense of self-efficacy as writers or teachers of writing for the preservice teachers. There were two subthemes of detractors that led preservice teachers to diminish in their self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. First, the preservice teachers experienced lost years of writing instruction that made them feel less confident in their abilities as writers. Second, the preservice teachers experienced a limited preparation for teaching writing that led to detracted self-efficacy as teachers of writing. These themes were explored in greater depth in the following sections.

Lost years of writing instruction. All participants shared they enjoyed their experiences as writers in elementary school. Unfortunately, this enjoyment did not continue for all participants as they entered their middle school years. Although the preservice teachers felt confident in their self-efficacy as writers in elementary school, as they continued through the higher grade levels, the participants shared the different context of writing affected their self-efficacy as writers. The participants described their elementary years as a time where they were given choice over what to write and had the opportunity to be creative. When the participants began describing their middle school years, this was not the case. Amelia and Danielle shared they did not remember writing very much in middle school. Danielle shared in her interview:

Honestly I don't remember too much about writing in middle school. I don't think we did too much of that. If we did, I don't remember a lot. It obviously wasn't too

much....Yeah, I don't remember much writing in middle school. That's sad...I don't know what that says about my teachers.

Emily shared writing in middle school was frustrating, because she felt they were being assigned random journal entries to act as "time fillers." She reflected that her middle school years were:

Time[s] when I really did not like writing. I felt like we did a lot of journal entries, and I felt like our teachers never would probably read most of it, because I know that they had a bunch of kids. But it was like I'm, you know, to me it felt like it was a time filler, and it didn't have purpose...when I am writing, I would want somebody else to read it, and I love feedback. And I don't feel like we got much feedback. You know they might write, "Oh, great story," or...but that was it, and I wanted more. Like what could I do to improve or what did you actually like about it? Not "Oh, it was a good story." You could have went through and wrote that on everybody's. So, I mean I just don't really remember caring about it too much in middle school, and I don't remember there being a lot of writing. But...again, that was a long time ago, so I am not sure. But I do remember I wasn't thrilled with writing at that time.

For Amelia, Bethany, Cindy, Danielle, Emily, and Heather, the middle school and early high school years were characterized by a focus on reading and responding to what they had read but not providing guidance for how to continue to grow as writers. Later Danielle coined a phrase that described her experience student teaching and could also describe the majority of the participants' middle school writing experiences as, "We are going to do reading, and you can do some writing on the side." Although these preservice teachers commented they continued to enjoy reading and were happy they had the opportunity to grow as readers, they did not

appreciate the lack of writing instruction in their middle and high school years. Additionally, Bethany described a time when she helped a peer in college with writing, because her peer felt that due to teachers' maternity leaves and other teacher absences in middle and high school, she did not have a good background as a writer. Unfortunately, both Emily and Heather remembered this time in their student writing experiences as "feeling lost" as writers.

Although Felicity shared she felt her experiences from elementary through the university level were positive as a writer, she felt the grammar and mechanics instruction she received was what she referred to in her interview as "glazed over." She shared she felt comfortable as a writer using grammar and mechanics correctly, but she was unsure of how to teach students to use grammar and mechanics correctly. Also, Emily explained the focus of grammar and mechanics in early high school was taught in isolation with grammar worksheets. She had difficulty understanding how to apply correct grammar and mechanics in her own writing. She stated in her interview:

I just remember these grammar worksheets that we had to do, and I absolutely hated them. I did bad on them, because like I don't know. It was terrible. I didn't feel like it was actually helping me as a writer, because it wasn't applied it to my own writing. You know it was like, "oh here is a sentence, how would you fix this," and I might fix it on the paper, but I wouldn't really think about it when I am doing it in my own writing.

Danielle shared she saw the negative effects of teaching grammar and isolation during her student teaching experience. By introducing grammar and mechanics lessons during the morning message, Danielle felt this instruction was a waste of time, because students did not apply the learning to their own writing. Overall, all participants in some manner described their desire to have experienced writing in a more sequential fashion that writing would have included

modeled details of how to become a proficient writer in each of the writing genres. The preservice teachers hoped their students would not experience silent years in their writing instruction as they had. Danielle stated in her interview:

You see with some of these [aspects of teaching writing] I don't feel very equipped to be a writing teacher yet. I think it's going to take some time and definitely um some more focus. Right when I got into my college classes and started looking back on elementary school people were like we don't really teach science and social studies anymore and now thinking through all of this, we really don't teach writing very much anymore or give it that much of a focus.

As Cindy reflected on her confidence moving forward as a teacher of writing, she expressed as a self-proclaimed perfectionist, she wanted to be able to provide the best writing instruction at the beginning of her career and felt bad about the less than perfect instruction that she thought she would provide for her first class of students. She expressed a desire to provide the best instruction possible to her first group of students. Cindy shared in her interview:

It is hard to know uh when you are walking in fresh what to expect. And I think teachers who have taught the same grade level for multiple years while every group of students you get is unique and every student is going to be unique, you still probably have a general idea of how, okay here is the range of ability that I can typically expect and that's the challenge of walking into a school or a grade level that you have not done before and saying okay I don't really know where to start, because I don't know what a typical range to expect is and so I think that is probably the biggest challenge of just trying to be efficient in how you teach and not waste time doing stuff that they don't need and not confusing them and asking them to do something they are not ready for. And so I think

it's just trying to figure out that right balance, and then also just the fact that even in one classroom I had 17 students and the ability range was still so wide and so it's trying with all of the other demands to figure out how you can direct more individualized instruction, because I don't want to invest all of my time, even though those kids need it, I don't want all of my time and energy going to those kids who I feel like I am having to drag up. I want those kids who are in the middle to feel like okay, you have met the bar so let's see how far you can go. I want my kids at the top to see just because this is easy for you, doesn't mean it's okay to stop. Let's keep looking for ways to keep going. And then I want my kids at the bottom to feel like um, I don't want them to hate writing, because it's a struggle for them. And so I think that's probably the biggest challenge is to...knowing where to start and knowing where to be able to manage all of the different levels and still teach a class as a whole.

Amelia, Danielle, and Felicity echoed a similar sentiment. They expressed the need to allow themselves to have grace while figuring out how to provide consistent writing instruction and avoid adding to the lost years of writing instruction.

Several of the participants shared how colleagues have helped them grow as writing teachers in either student teaching or long term substitute teaching experiences. Heather, Bethany, Danielle, and Emily shared through student teaching cooperating teachers or long-term substituting colleagues, they have built relationships with teachers who have helped them process similar transformative thoughts. These teachers have shared how they have processed through teaching writing and have served as a model for these preservice teachers to reflect on their teaching of writing. These positive relationships have allowed the preservice teachers to gain confidence as both writers and teachers of writing. Cindy also wrote in her writing prompt,

“This [writing instruction] is where I feel I will rely heavily on support and advice from more experienced teachers.” Through these positive relationships, Heather, Bethany, Danielle, Emily, and Cindy recognized the value in collaborating with others and did not intend to “close the door and teach” in isolation. They feel in order to provide the best writing instruction possible for their students, they want to collaborate with others who have more experience guiding student writers.

Limited preparation for teaching writing. When I asked Danielle to reflect on how confident she felt the writing methodology courses at the university prepared her to teach writing, she said, “Can I say ‘scrunched face’ on this part, because I am not sure, honestly? I guess that goes back to not learning too much when I learned how to teach writing.” Bethany, Danielle, and Gina shared that although their primary emphasis in college was elementary education grades first through sixth, they had limited experiences with students in the third through sixth grade range as writers. Bethany’s field base and student teaching experiences were in grades first and second. She did not experience teaching writing to third and fourth graders until her long-term substitute experience. She was hired to teach fourth grade in the fall.

During Bethany’s long-term substitute teaching experience, she recognized the need to understand the writing developmental levels of her fourth grade level of writers how to move them forward. She stated:

I think my most frustrating moments were conferences where I didn’t know where to take them next. Some of that was just lack of experience. Like as the beginning of my conferencing and like “I have no idea where to take you in this.” Um, or the kids who have multiple issues in their writing where um, they are having a problem really like fluidly telling a story, and they are having a problem with spelling and they are having

problems with making sentences. So asking myself those questions was probably one of the more challenging places. And I hope that with more research and more experience, I can come to understand that better. Um, the kids that had no idea what they needed to work on next and sometimes it's like there are four things we need to work on. Which one is going to be the most important right now? So really just determining that importance and filtering those ideas was something that I struggled with. Um, but I just had to keep pushing forward, because it wasn't going to help them if I didn't keep pushing them.

Additionally, Felicity shared most of her field base experiences were in schools that departmentalized their elementary settings, so the only exposure she had for teaching writing was during student teaching with a third grade class. She was hired to teach fifth grade in the fall.

Last, Gina's experiences, especially with the inclusion of her cognitive representation, seems to fit better with students in grades first through third grade. Gina stated in her interview:

It's easy in writing to just make the sentence for them. I feel really good about the grade level that I have been at, but if I am ever in a different grade level, I don't know. You know it will be very different. I hope I will be able to learn how to back off...I am really good at helping them form a sentence and a small paragraph on a topic, but that is very important. But at the same time, if I am ever in a higher grade, and they are writing more, it's like "Oh my gosh, you know." I don't have much experience with higher levels of writing.

Then, when Gina completed her cognitive representation, she chose a photograph that showed a teacher working one-on-one with a student and stated she believed "sharing the pen" was the most beneficial way to teach writing skills. Sharing the pen is a writing method primarily used

in lower elementary when writers need more intensive modeling. She did not seem as prepared for the possibility of teaching grades fourth through sixth for writing based on the experiences she shared as a writing teacher. She explained why she chose the image: “I chose this image because I feel that ‘sharing the pen’ through interactive writing is the most beneficial way to teach writing skills, especially at the early elementary level.”

Additionally, Danielle and Cindy did not have the opportunity to work with their cooperating teachers for the full length of their student teaching experience, because their cooperating teachers were taking maternity leaves. Field experiences and student teaching provide preservice teachers the opportunities to see how the theoretical ideas they learn in the university classroom look like in a real elementary classroom (Cuenca, 2011). Cuenca (2011) further explained preservice teachers need carefully selected field experience and student teaching placements that will help them apply what they are learning as teachers of writing to a real classroom context. Cindy shared in her interview, “Even though I know that I have the potential ability to do that [provide feedback that moves writers forward], I don’t have the practice of doing that and not having the practice um makes it feel overwhelming.” Cindy did not have the modeling of a skilled cooperating teacher to show her possible ways to move writers forward once they get stuck in a writing plateau.

Emily and Heather shared the benefits of a positive student teaching placement as they felt more confident to teach writing to elementary students after their student teaching experiences. Although not a part of their formal education through Ozark Hills University, because Bethany and Danielle graduated a semester early, they had the opportunity to substitute teach at Ozark Springs Elementary, a writing rich elementary school, which used the co-teaching model and Calkins’ (2006) units of study for writing. Although Bethany and Danielle were long-

term substitutes, the veteran teachers they worked with mentored them as they co-taught together. Danielle shared in her interview:

Mrs. Jones, a pseudonym, she has been teaching at Ozark Hill's Elementary, a pseudonym, for 25 years, and I have never have been so amazed with a veteran teacher that was ready to learn and just so engaged in that. Um I think this shaped my writing experience the most, because honestly it's probably the most I have ever...time I have ever spent looking at writing and how we can build on that.

If Danielle had not had the opportunity to experience this long-term substitute teaching experience, she said she would not have realized how she could teach writing differently, because her experiences leading up to that point at the university level did not model this for her. She further reflected:

One of the best parts was that I had Mrs. Jones, a pseudonym, right there to help me and guide me and just saying, "This is what I would say" or like with co-teaching, we said it at the same time. Like we were talking and going back and forth and just adding all of our thoughts. And the kids, I kind of just said that they were like excited about it, because they were really excited about it. I felt like every writing genre that we tried out with them, they were really excited, because they were like this is a new one. And then, it was just, they were just really excited.

In her cognitive representation, Cindy represented herself and all of the people who she felt would support her as she taught writing to her elementary students (see Figure 4), and she discussed that:

This illustration represents my experiences as a teacher of writing. I have had a great support system to bounce ideas off of; I am not alone in this process. My teachers, parents, peers, and colleagues are part of this support system.

Danielle, Emily, and Heather also seemed to understand the importance of relying on their peers to help them workout the difficulties they experienced, because they described how they will rely on their colleagues to help them troubleshoot challenges they face as writing teachers. Learning how to teach writing does not occur very quickly when working in isolation.

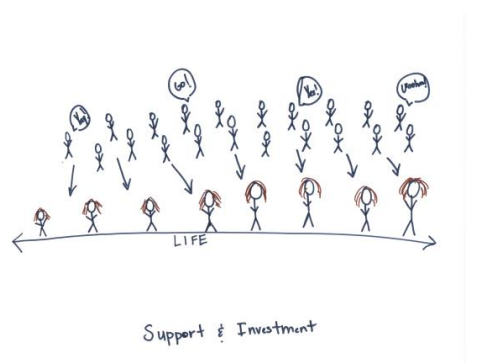


Figure 4. Cindy's experiences as a teacher of writing.

The elementary preservice teachers expressed limited experience and exposure to quality experiences as student teachers in the field of writing. Through maternity leaves and poor grade level placement, the field base experiences and student teaching experiences did not expose all of the preservice teachers to a well-rounded exposure of third through sixth grade elementary writing instruction. The preservice teachers had commented that this lack of exposure had led the preservice teachers to question how to connect what they had learned in the university classrooms with actual classrooms.

Summary

Through sharing their experiences as writers and teachers of writing, two themes surfaced: a) enhancers of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing and b) detractors of self-

efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. The enhancers of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing included three subthemes: positive experiences as elementary student writers, the power of choice in writing pieces, and feedback nurtures student growth. The detractors included two subthemes: lost years of writing instruction and limited preparation for teaching writing. Cindy summed up the experience for the preservice teacher participants as writers and teachers of writing most effectively when she stated, “It’s exactly that the concept of the more experience that I gain and the more I learn, the more I realize there is yet to learn. And that you never stop learning and finding new ways.” Amelia shared in her cognitive representation of herself as a writing teacher that she felt her own fifth grade teacher helped her see the writing process as exploratory. She chose clip art showing a girl with a magnifying glass carefully examining a document and carrying a satchel of books and rolled up paper. She gave further description in her writing prompt:

As a teacher of writing, I feel like an explorer. I know the destination that I want to reach.

I am not sure the journey to get there. And I am in it for the adventure. I am on for the ride.

These eight preservice teachers were motivated as writers and teachers of writing to provide a positive learning environment for their students to flourish as writers. Emily also described how she wanted students to know she was a part of their journey as writers. At this point in their journey as writers and teachers of writing, these eight preservice teachers recognized they wanted to continue to learn more tools to be effective writing teachers, but they were motivated to encourage, provide feedback, and offer choices to motivate their elementary students to enjoy the writing journey.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the self-efficacy elementary preservice teachers at a small private university in southern Missouri had for teaching writing. A hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted in order to understand the essence of the experiences of eight preservice elementary teachers who had completed their bachelors' degree in elementary education, had not started their first teaching position, and intended to teach in grades third through sixth (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990, 2014). The theoretical framework that guided this study included Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986b, 1992, 1993, 1997; Zimmerman et al., 1992) and Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998). For this study, eight individual interviews, writing prompts, Teacher Efficacy Scales (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993), and cognitive representations were conducted. The participants' narratives were guided by three research questions for this study:

RQ1: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy for teaching writing?

RQ2: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their self-efficacy as writers?

RQ3: How do preservice elementary teachers describe their preparedness for teaching writing after completing their university writing methodology courses?

From these narratives, two themes emerged that addressed the three research questions. This chapter presents a summary of findings and discussion related to each theme. This chapter also explains how the literature related to experiences of writers, experiences of teachers of writing, Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, and Mezirow's transformative learning theory supported the narrative provided by the participants. Last, a discussion regarding the study's

limitations, implications of the study, and recommendations for future research is included (Bandura, 1986b, 1987; Creswell, 2013; Mezirow, 1990, 1997, 1998; Riessman, 2008).

Summary of Findings

The elementary grades, which for the purpose of this study were bound to grades third through sixth, were crucial years in students' literacy development. Students were moving from the learning to read and write phase to the reading and writing to learn phase of instruction. Clay (2010) stated as children "write their earliest messages, children gradually begin to make links between speaking, reading, and writing. They may discover that: what I say, I can write. And, what I write, I can read" (p. 7). Amelia, Bethany, Cindy, Danielle, Emily, Felicity, Gina, and Heather all echoed this concept of the joy of discovering the processing between speaking, listening, reading, and writing at a young age. With these deep connections between reading and writing in the elementary grades, a better knowledge of how the next generation of elementary teachers reflected on their writing experiences was essential to better understand how to prepare preservice teachers to teach writing and how to support preservice teachers as they begin their first years in their own classrooms.

This hermeneutic phenomenological study sought to hear the voices of elementary preservice teachers in southern Missouri who were beginning their first years of teaching in the fall of 2015 in order to learn more about their level of confidence as writers and teachers of writing to better understand how teacher preparation programs and new teacher institutes could better support preservice teachers to positively impact elementary students' writing experiences. Data was collected from eight participants through writing prompts, Hoy and Woolfolk's Teacher Efficacy Scale (1993), cognitive representations, and interviews. The data were transcribed. The transcriptions were coded using open coding using the holistic reading

approach and selective reading approach, and the significant statements were listed for horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014). Additionally the detailed reading approach was applied to explore how information at the sentence level would reveal aspects of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014). The statements were combined into meaning units, and significant statements were synthesized to cluster significant statements into themes (Moustakas, 1994). This coding was guided through the theoretical framework of Bandura's (1986b, 1992, 1993, 1997) theory of self-efficacy and Mezirow's (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998) transformative learning theory described in Chapter Two.

Through the analysis of the participants' narratives, I synthesized the experiences into two overall themes to better understand the participants' experiences as writers and teachers of writing. This chapter contains my interpretations of the two themes through the connections with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1986b, 1992, 1993, 1997) and Mezirow's (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998) transformative learning theory. The two themes include the following: a) enhancers of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing, and b) detractors of self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing

Discussion

In the following section, I discussed findings of the two themes through the lens of the theoretical framework for this study. This study was supported by Bandura's (1986b, 1992, 1993, 1997) theory of self-efficacy and Mezirow's (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998) transformative learning theory. This section also provides support for the themes through the relevant literature on teaching writing and writing self-efficacy. These theories of self-efficacy, transformative learning theory, and relevant literature on teaching writing and writing self-efficacy were explored in greater depth in Chapter Two.

The first theme that surfaced was enhancers of preservice teacher self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. The participants shared that specific experiences increased how confident they felt as writers and teachers of writing. The first subtheme the data revealed was positive experiences as elementary student writers. In each of these positive elementary writing experiences, these eight preservice teachers began to see the connection between communicating the thoughts in their minds to words on a page. Calkins (1996) described the writing process for her as taking “a moment—an image, a memory, a phrase, an idea—and I hold it in my hands and declare it a treasure” (p. 8). A common experience of these positive elementary writing experiences was the preservice teacher participants felt their writing was treasured. Their teachers, parents, and grandparents validated the thoughts they had turned in to words, phrases, and sentences.

Amelia voiced this experience best when she described her elementary years as being able to “showcase” her writing. Calkins (1996) also wove another layer of beauty to these early writing experiences through expressing, “we write to hold our lives in our hands and to make something of them...Writing allows us to turn the chaos into something beautiful, to uncover and celebrate the organizing patterns of our existence.” When Amelia described her experience writing her first story about a spider, or when Bethany, Cindy, and Whitney described writing their first books as elementary students, they experienced the beauty of whittling down the myriad of thoughts in their minds down to words, sentences, and paragraphs that communicated the message of their stories.

Additionally, another aspect of the positive experiences the participants experienced as early writers related to their teachers. Daisey (2009) found the past writing experiences of students significantly impacted teachers’ enjoyment of writing throughout their lives. The

teacher participants in Daisey's study with higher rates of writing enjoyment shared they enjoyed the writing process, had received positive feedback from teachers to improve their writing, and enjoyed writing personally relevant and creative writing pieces (2009). The participants in Daisey's study who enjoyed the writing process also commented they could tell their teachers enjoyed writing. The participants' experiences in this study reflected the positive experiences of the participants in Daisey's study. Although only Heather reflected whether she felt her teachers enjoyed teaching writing as Daisey's (2009) participants reflected, the preservice teacher participants in this study offered examples of how their elementary teachers seemed positive and encouraged them as writers throughout the writing process.

Daisey (2009) found the opposite to be true for students who did not enjoy writing. Teacher participants in Daisey's study, who commented they did not enjoy the writing process, stated their teachers focused more on the mechanics of writing and the process of writing seemed too open-ended (2009). Some of the participants' experiences in this study found the same result to be true in their middle school and high school years, but none of the participants shared any negative experiences as elementary student writers. These negative experiences were further explored in the second theme.

Last, several participants in this study reflected they felt personal satisfaction as they published books in their elementary school experiences. Graves (2003) believed publishing a piece of writing "contributes strongly to a writer's development" (p. 54). Additionally, Bandura (1997) theorized people can overcome the possible intimidation they feel when encountering a challenging task when they experience mastery experiences. Through taking their writing through the complete writing process, Bethany, Cindy, and Emily shared how their published work was a mastery experience. Fisher (2012) and Ozturk (2013) also supported the concept of

shared student writing as being an essential component in the writing process, because as students shared writing pieces with their peers, students were motivated to continue to grow as writers in order to have something to share with their peers.

Also, the participants in this study all intended to teach elementary grades and had experienced positive writing experiences, and their level of confidence to teach writing to elementary students may have been positively affected by these experiences. The common subtheme the preservice teachers experienced was they were encouraged and supported by teachers who helped them grow as writers in their elementary school years. Through learning in a social environment with teachers who were building them up as writers, Bandura's (1986a) social learning also applied in the formation of the participants' self-efficacy as writers. Heather shared how she felt the opposite as a writer when she was homeschooled, because she did not have the social environment to share her writing with and after hearing the lectures on the computer, she was not sure if her writing measured up to what the teachers lectured. Through the social learning environment teachers and students provided feedback for writers to continue to hone their craft as writers to clearly communicate their message to their readers.

Another additional subtheme of enhancers for self-efficacy included the power of feedback through conferencing to move guide student writers. The preservice teachers described a common desire to create writing conferences helped student writers apply writing strategies beyond the piece of writing they were currently working with and apply the writing strategy to future writing pieces. As students become more confident as writers through taking the myriad of thoughts in their minds and transferring their ideas into words, they found effective feedback nurtured this developmental process to show students how to continue to transform their words to clearly communicate the message they want to share with their readers (Landon-Hays, 2012).

Timely and specific feedback allowed writers to authentically practice effective writing strategies in their own writing (Anderson, 2000). As teachers provided timely feedback for these preservice teachers, the preservice teachers experienced mastery experiences. Bandura (1993) theorized as individuals experience mastery experiences, they begin to feel confident they had achieved success.

Through providing timely feedback, teachers had the opportunity to think not only as “teachers talking with students” but “also writers talking with writers” (Anderson, 2000, p. 7). This mind-shift changed the conversation from the surface level discussions to more meaningful strategy discussions between fellow writers. The authentic exchange of different writing moves teachers made as they wrote with students transformed the writing conferences to take on a more personal and authentic conversation. For Anderson (2000), writing conferences were more like conversations between teachers and students about student and teacher writing pieces: “good writers use strategies and techniques thoughtfully, because they’ve learned to step back from their writing and reflect on what they are doing” (p. 9). Revising one’s writing is a metacognitive process where writers ponder their word choice and determine if their words reach their readers the way they intended (Calkins, 1996, 2006; Fletcher, 2013; Wood Ray, 1999). This mind-shift allowed students to see how this internal brainstorming, which results in a message on a page, contains so many layers of reflection. It is no wonder why students and teachers might be baffled with how to approach the writing process and how to continue to grow as writers on this cognitively demanding writing journey (Fletcher, 2013).

One way teachers provided content for the conferences was through the use of mentor texts. These mentor texts provided concrete examples of the genres they wanted students to master as writers. Through the exploration of mentor texts, the preservice teachers recognized

the connection between the reading and writing process. The teacher participants in this study reflected their “lost years of writing instruction” could have possibly been avoided if the strong reading instruction they were given was mirrored by a strong writing instruction.

As teachers began to read with the mindset of a writer, they began to write through the eyes of their readers (Anderson, 2011). As they experienced this mind-shift, they felt more comfortable sharing this mind-shift with their students. This mind-shift took ongoing, site-based professional development that allowed teachers to receive modeling in their classroom with their own students as they learned new strategies for teaching writing (Galligan, 2011; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Landon-Hays, 2012; Troia et al., 2011). Heather, Bethany, Danielle, and Emily shared through these positive relationships with their cooperating teachers or long-term substitute colleagues, they experienced this modeling and mind-shift change. Bethany described in her writing prompt: “Mentor texts (both implicit and explicit) give the writer various writing structures and language to manipulate in the forming of their ideas. What they read directly influences what and how they will think and write.” Bethany’s student teaching and long-term substitute experiences shaped the way she began to view reading and writing as interconnected processes and allowed her to begin reading with the eyes of a writer (Anderson, 2011; Calkins, 1996, 2006; Fletcher, 2013; Routman, 2005; Wood Ray, 1999).

Writers needed modeling for how to take the skills other authors have mastered and apply those skills in their own writing (Anderson, 2000; Calkins, 1996, 2006; Culham, 2014; Fletcher, 2013; Graves, 2003; Routman, 2005; Wood Ray, 1999). In the seminal work *Wondrous Words*, Wood Ray (1999) described a transformation in her life as a writing teacher when she conferenced with a fifth grade student. She learned through conferring with Jolene that providing only surface level tips for revising Jolene’s poem led to less than stellar revisions.

Wood Ray made several suggestions for Jolene to guide her writing as a poet, but the suggestions did not take Jolene to her fullest capacity as a writer. After three different conferences with Jolene about a dolphin poem, Wood Ray decided to gather as many mentor texts she could find that she thought would provide Jolene with the understanding of “how passionate people write poetry” (p. 303).

After leaving the mentor texts with Jolene’s classroom teacher, Jolene continued to work on her ideas for a poem about dolphins and sent the latest copy of her revised poem to Wood Ray. The effects of the latest revision left a lasting impact on Wood Ray. She reflected, “As a lady who loves writing, well, let’s just say you won’t catch her in a classroom anymore without her beloved books. She bought a cart to haul them in. She’s shopping for a bigger truck” (Wood Ray, 1999, p. 305). Wood Ray found through providing mentor texts as examples for students, the mentor texts provided concrete examples for teachers to use during their conferences.

Through using mentor texts, teachers provided authentic feedback that moved readers forward instead of focusing on parts of the text that did not translate to future writing experiences (Culham, 2014; Laminack & Wadsworth, 2013). Bethany described coming to the same conclusion as she reflected on the value of both implicit and explicit mentor texts. Students’ reading lives vastly impacted their journey as writers whether or not they realized the implications of how the words they read shape the words they write (Calkins, 1996, 2006; Culham, 2014; Laminack & Wadsworth, 2013; Wood Ray, 1999).

Teachers may feel challenged when they implement conferring as they learn how to provide feedback that leads writers to advancing their craft. Learning how to narrow their focus during writing conferences to help students grow as writers was one of the most challenging aspects of conferring for the preservice teacher participants in this study. Gulley (2012)

explained the importance of providing feedback highlighting student strengths and weaknesses during these conferring sessions. Both Gulley (2012) and Anderson (2000) explained while conferring with students, teachers should focus on the content of the writing and not only the grammar and style aspects in order to nurture writing skills.

Additionally as Morgan (2010) described how the participants in her study sometimes received inconsistent messages about their abilities as writers in their school experiences, Amelia also found those inconsistencies. Amelia's reflection brought another facet to the surface concerning feedback, because the inconsistencies of feedback she received revealed the inconsistencies of what teachers valued in student writing. During the "lost years of writing instruction" the participants described, Emily described how the feedback she was given was primarily concerned with grammar. The specific aspects of writing that teachers valued were likely to be what they choose to conference about with student writers (Anderson, 2000).

Gulley (2012) also encouraged teachers to provide similar feedback to focus on growing content skills for both high achieving writers and writers who struggled. Through exploring the types of feedback with which developmental writing class professors provided for students differed based on student writing abilities, Gulley (2012) found teachers gave more feedback on strengths and modeling for improving content for high ability students and focused more feedback on grammar and weaknesses for students who struggle with writing. Regardless of writing ability, students grew when given specific praise and were motivated to work on other areas of writing when feedback was effectively communicated (Anderson, 2000; Gulley 2012).

A third subtheme surfaced through the exploration of enhancers of preservice teacher self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing: the power of choice to motivate student writers to continue to grow as writers. Calkins (1996) stated "when we, as teachers, do not have good

memories of writing to draw upon, we are apt to accept our students' resistance to writing as a given" (p.11) and "when our students resist writing, it's usually because writing has been treated as little more than a place to display—to expose—their command of spelling, penmanship, and grammar" (p. 13). The preservice teachers in this study expressed the desire to make writing an enjoyable process for students, and they feel through offering choice, students will be motivated to grow as writers.

Through making the writing experience personal to each student and interpersonal through the shared experiences of writers, students were motivated to work through the tricky parts of organizing their thoughts to express their ideas through writing (Calkins, 1996). Calkins described how she grew as a writing teacher through learning from Donald Graves, a writing expert who revolutionized the way teachers look at writing instruction, about the power of motivating students through choice. Calkins (1996) recalled a time when Graves explained, "You can tell a good writing classroom by the presence of children's own interests in the room" (p. 233). Both Calkins (1996) and Graves (2003) supported the idea that when teachers provide choices for students to write about topics that matter to them, students were motivated to persevere through the challenges of organization of their thoughts to record their ideas on paper and revise these ideas to clearly communicate their message. The common subtheme described connects with Calkins' and Grave's beliefs. Culham (2014) further added to the reflections of participants:

This is how we get buy-in for writing. Whether a sentence, a paragraph, or a page, the child engaged in the tough but transformational work of writing is egged on by the motivation to reach his or her audience in some purposeful way. (p. 13)

Instilling a sense of purpose and drive to communicate their message to readers allowed students to see the power of the written word. Students felt they were compelled to communicate their thoughts to their readers (Calkins, 2006; Culham, 2014; Graves, 2003). Additionally, Daisey (2009) found preservice teachers were also motivated when university professors offered choice in their writing assignments. The preservice teachers all practiced the same genre of writing but had choice with what they wrote about. The same motivation of writing was applied to elementary students.

The participants in this study each shared a strong emotion when they reflected on their desire to provide writing instruction that allowed for choice and was purposeful. With the added emotion, Mezirow's (1990) theory of transformative learning suggested the preservice teachers may have had the motivation to overcome the challenges of learning something new that they may have not experienced as a student in order to fulfill the emotional drive they had experienced. These participants shared they were inspired to provide a motivating writing experience for their students. Although they recognized this process may not be easy, they shared they felt the extra effort is worth it.

The second theme surfaced as participants began to share experiences that detracted their self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. The first subtheme of detractors included lost years of writing instruction. The participants shared how their careers as student writers started off strongly but then tapered off as middle school and early high school students. When their writing instruction picked back up as they started taking college preparatory writing courses, they felt a sharp learning curve as writers. Disjointed writing instruction does not allow for students to continuously build upon writing skills.

Danielle expressed the lack of writing best as she reflected on her student teaching experience. She said, “We are going to do reading, and you can do a little writing on the side.” Culham (2014) echoed this sentiment by expressing, “writing has finally taken place at the big family table with reading and math. It’s long overdue...because quite frankly, we’re not doing a credible job of teaching writing in U.S. schools” (p. 10). The preservice teacher participants remembered their middle school years felt like writing instruction stopped and did not continue until their junior year of high school.

The participants desired for their students to experience a logical progression with writing instruction. They did not want to repeat their experience as students with silent years of writing instruction. The most difficult part about the silent years the participants shared was when writing instruction picked back up their junior year of high school; Amelia and Heather said it best when they voiced they felt lost as writers. Without experiencing what Mezirow (1991, 1997, 1998) theorized as a transformative learning experience, preservice teachers are likely going to repeat the same writing experiences as teachers they experienced as student writers. Additionally, Mezirow (1990, 1991, 1997, 1998) theorized that teachers had a more likely chance of persevering through the challenges associated with learning a new teaching methodology with an emotionally charged learning experience. Change is a difficult process and even more difficult when learning something new without modeling (Landon-Hays, 2012).

Another subtheme of detractors for preservice teacher self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing includes a limited preparation for teaching writing to elementary students. They expressed a stronger preparation for teaching reading than teaching writing or a balanced literacy approach. Teaching differently than they were taught was a challenging process, because teachers must learn a new way of thinking and modeling the writing process (Rapp,

2009). Mezirow (1990, 1997, 1998) theorized in his transformative learning theory, individuals change their practice through their inner thought life and determine what they would like for their future actions to be.

Additionally, Bethany, Felicity, and Gina shared they had limited experiences putting into practice what they learned in their university classes with upper elementary students. Danielle and Cindy expressed limited time with their cooperating student teachers. Cuenca (2010) found the cooperating teachers are often the ones who help student teachers feel they are officially a part of the teaching profession. With these limited interactions with upper elementary students and teachers, these participants shared they would have benefited from more writing experiences in upper elementary classrooms. Additionally, Cindy, Emily, and Heather shared their college experiences felt like a “blur.” Heather and Cindy felt they had learned a lot of good tools for teaching writing in their methodology classes, but they had trouble remembering what they learned. The other participants shared the courses for teaching writing were integrated into the teaching reading courses, so there was not enough time to fully explore how to teach writing effectively.

The experiences relate to Fisher’s (2012) findings as his participants did not remember learning writing pedagogy in college and had only vague memories of writing as students. For his participants, the lack of writing experiences affected their self-efficacy for teaching writing. The teachers in this study described their background in writing instruction as emphasizing spelling and presentation components instead of word choice and content. The preservice teacher participants also echoed these same experiences in their experiences as student writers and their university preparation to teach writing. Cindy, Danielle, Emily, and Felicity all voiced their concerns over the emphasis on grammar and spelling and had trouble figuring out how to

use these components correctly in their own writing or how to model these components authentically in their students' writing.

Additionally, the transformative learning process may occur after preservice teachers experience an intense emotional reaction to the new learning (Mezirow, 1990). Amelia, Bethany, Cindy, Danielle, Emily, Felicity, Gina, and Heather all expressed strong emotions when reflecting on what they did and did not want to repeat with their future elementary student writers. These strong emotional reactions allowed preservice teachers to have further motivation to move beyond their experiences to step outside of their comfort zones to try an alternative way to teach writing. Strong emotional reactions allow teachers to move beyond others telling them to try something new to providing motivation for teachers internally to try something new as teachers of writing.

Although the participants shared they had confidence overall in themselves as writers, only Bethany and Heather described a confidence in teaching writing. Bandura and Locke (2003) theorized a person's level of self-efficacy is a greater motivator for the person to persevere through challenging tasks than any other type of motivation. All of the participants had an average to high average overall self-reported self-efficacy on Hoy and Woolfolk's Teacher Efficacy Scale (1993), but as Bandura (1986b, 1997) theorized, an overall confidence in one's self-efficacy does not also mean preservice teachers would have high self-efficacy in specific content areas, such as teaching writing. Additionally, Bandura (1997) theorized individuals with high self-efficacy will exert greater effort to reach higher levels of success.

Amelia voiced these fears of teaching writing as she elaborated in her writing prompt, "As I start my career as an elementary classroom teacher, I am often caught in the middle of feeling confident in teaching writing or feeling very unaware or lost." However, what Bandura,

not knowing these participants, may not recognize was their self-proclaimed strong desire to preserve through the challenging aspects of teaching writing to meet the needs of their students. All of the participants voiced this desire to provide the best instruction possible to nurture their student writers even though these first years as teachers of writing would be challenging.

Implications

The findings in this study revealed for these preservice elementary teachers there were specific factors that enhanced their self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing and other factors that detracted their self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. The preservice teacher participants valued the positive experiences they had as elementary writers. They hoped to provide a sequential writing instruction that built in a progression and did not leave students with silent years of writing instruction. They also believed they were limited in their preparation as writing teachers and were motivated to continue to learn how to become more effective writing teachers. With this journey to continue learning, the participants recognized they valued feedback both as writers and teachers of writing. Additionally, the preservice teachers had the intrinsic motivation to seek continued learning opportunities to learn how to provide feedback for their students that would drive them forward as writers. Last, the preservice teacher participants desired for writing to be an engaging process for their students, and they strived to create motivational learning opportunities for their writers through providing choice and purposeful writing experiences. With these findings in mind, there are several implications for elementary education university professors, elementary instructional coaches, elementary principals, and elementary preservice teachers themselves.

Implications for Elementary Education Professors

This study demonstrated how preservice teachers need the opportunity to see the writing methodologies that are presented in their university classes also modeled in their field base and student teaching experiences. Two participants had cooperating teachers who were not present for the length of their student teaching experience. Three participants were not placed in upper elementary classrooms and did not have the practice experience of seeing how the methodologies they learned at the university level connect to real life classroom practice. The participants who were able to have these positive field base and student teaching experiences were able to voice how they wanted to repeat the practices they learned in their field base and student teaching classrooms in their own classrooms as they begin their teaching careers. Preservice teacher participants who were unable to experience this recognized they wanted to try something different with their writing instruction but were not sure what the more specific details of instruction would look like, because they did not have the opportunity to see it modeled firsthand. Preservice and inservice teacher preparation programs must consider whether the writing methodology they provide for teachers is being effectively implemented in preservice and inservice classrooms (Brimi, 2012; Copeland et al., 2011; Daisey, 2009; Haider, 2012; Street & Stang, 2009). If not, changes might need to be made to ensure what is being taught in universities is meeting student writing needs.

Implications for Elementary Instructional Coaches

With the experiences these preservice teachers shared, instructional coaches have the opportunity to discuss with the new teachers who enter their district the experiences shaping the beginning teachers as writers and teachers of writing. Instructional coaches have the opportunity to provide support through modeling and mentoring for their beginning teachers to help

beginning teachers feel more confident as writers and teachers of writing. The veteran teachers of Ozark Spring's Elementary provided mentoring to three of the participants in this study.

Instructional coaches have the opportunity to provide the same type of coaching and co-teaching experience for the new teachers in their buildings.

Implications for Elementary Principals

Through the experiences these eight preservice elementary teachers shared, elementary principals could offer professional development for new teachers in their district to continue to grow as writers and teachers of writing. In their role as the building's instructional leader, principals set the tone for what is important in their buildings and the philosophy of writing instruction. By opening the lines of communication with the beginning teachers in their buildings, elementary principals can develop a better understanding of the needs of their teachers and ultimately the needs of their students as writers. Having open lines of communication about experiences as writers and teachers of writing, beginning teachers may have greater support to ask questions when they are unsure of how to move students forward as writers.

Implications for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The university professors at Ozark Hills University follow the elementary education course requirements determined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The participants of this study and Fisher's (2012) participants had also shared a request to have more experiences in learning how to teach writing. Becoming literate is a process of becoming a fluent reader and writer; these processes are reciprocal. Students will experience plateaus in their instruction when reading is more heavily focused on one as opposed to a balanced literacy approach with quality instruction in both reading and writing (Clay, 2010; Laminack & Wadsworth, 2013). The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

should reexamine the courses they require preservice elementary education teachers to take to determine if these courses truly prepare students to be effective teachers of writing.

Implications for Elementary Preservice Teachers

Elementary preservice teachers can learn from these eight preservice teacher participants in that through reflecting on the experiences that have shaped them as writers, they can determine if they want to repeat those experiences for their students as they nurture their students' writing abilities. Upon further reflection of preservice teacher methodology courses, field base experiences, and student teaching experiences, preservice teachers also had the opportunity to decide if they wanted to continue with those teaching practices or choose an alternative writing instructional path. Although the process of learning a new way to teach can seem daunting, as these preservice teacher participants explained seeing students grow as writers, the difficulties associated with change were worth the extra time and effort. Preservice elementary teachers would benefit from the support of others to help them recognize they are not alone as they begin their journey as teachers of writing.

Limitations

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to describe the self-efficacy elementary preservice teachers at a small private university in southern Missouri had for teaching writing. With this purpose, I did not attempt to generalize the experiences of these eight participants as writers and teachers of writing to a larger population. The participants of this study were homeschooled or attended public or private schools across the state. The potential participant pool consisted of participants who were Caucasian females living in semirural locations. There were not any potential participants who grew up in the three larger cities of Missouri: St. Louis, Kansas City, or Springfield. I varied the participants by

demographics with the region in the state of Missouri they attended school before attending Ozark Hills University and the size of the community they attended school. If the potential participant pool would have consisted of male preservice teachers or preservice teachers of a different race or ethnicity, I would have attempted to include their voices in the research. This participant pool was also limited to graduates from one private university in southern Missouri. Other universities across the state may have different participant experiences. Finally, another limitation might be the lack of in-person individual sessions with three of the participants, because the sessions were conducted over Skype which may have led to a decreased comfort level for Gina as she did not share as many details about her experiences as compared to the other seven participants. Conducting the individual sessions via Skype with Felicity and Heather did not seem to affect their comfort level with sharing experiences; they were willing to share as detailed of experiences as the five participants who met in person with me.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should be conducted to describe the writing experiences of preservice elementary teachers in other parts of the country and in larger cities to determine if participants in other communities experienced similar or different experiences as writers and beginning teachers of writing. Additionally, researchers should reach out to preservice teachers of different ethnic and racial groups to determine if their experiences mirror the ones described in this study. A common theme for the participants was experiencing lost years in their writing instruction from middle school through their sophomore years of high school. Additional research could be explored to determine if other preservice teachers have experienced these lost years, why these lost years occur, and how schools can ensure writing instruction is gradually building each year

to ensure students have the confidence to write effectively in eleventh and twelfth grades and into their university experiences.

Additionally, more research could be conducted to better understand how to create university courses that prepare students to reflect on the experiences that have shaped them as writers and how to prepare to be effective teachers of writing. The background experiences of preservice and inservice teachers shape their philosophy for teaching writing (Daisey, 2009). The universities in Missouri have integrated courses to prepare students to be teachers of reading and writing. The participants in this study shared they felt there was too much information and not enough time to process and apply the information.

Also, the participants felt there was more of a focus on becoming a strong reading teacher than becoming a strong writing teacher. Essentially, if teachers want students to become stronger readers, they must ensure students continue to grow as writers. A study exploring how to prepare preservice teachers to be effective reading and writing teachers would be beneficial. Last, a longitudinal study exploring the experiences preservice writing teachers experience during their first five years in the profession and comparing their belief system on what matters as writers and teachers of writing would be helpful to see how increased experience shapes the way teachers teach writing.

Summary

With the increased expectations for writers in grades third through sixth required in the Common Core State Standards and preservice and practicing teachers sharing they do not feel confident in their ability to teach writing, instructional coaches, university professors, elementary principals, and the Missouri Department of Education need to provide support to enable teachers to have the tools they need to be confident in their ability to teach writing effectively. Whether

teachers reflect on their experiences as writers or not, these experiences shape the confidence teachers have as writers and teachers of writing. When I reached the end of the individual sessions, both Danielle and Heather expressed gratitude for the opportunity to reflect on their experiences as writers and teachers of writing. Danielle specifically stated she appreciated seeing how all of her experiences as a writer and teacher of writing shaped how she planned to teach writing to her future elementary students in the fall. She shared she did not realize how all of her experiences have led her to her current beliefs, and she stated, “It was cool to see how the experiences came together. I never thought of it like that before.” Sometimes people just need someone to sit down and reflect with them to see how the pivotal experiences of their journey as writers and teachers of writing shape their current journey as writers and teachers of writing. May educators continue to take the time to reflect, so that they ensure future journeys take the path they want to follow.

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Appendix A: Liberty University's IRB Approval

Dear Kallen,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases are attached to your approval email.

Your IRB-approved, stamped consent form is also attached. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Professor, IRB Chair

XXXXXXXXXX

(xxx) xxx-xxxx

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Director of Teacher Education

**Appendix C: Sample Letter Requesting Experts in the Field to Provide Feedback
Concerning the Readability of the Interview Questions**

Dear Expert in the field,

As a graduate student in the education department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction. The title of my research project is Preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing: A phenomenological study, and the purpose of my research is to describe the self-efficacy for teaching writing of elementary preservice teachers from a private university in southern Missouri. I will secure IRB approval from Liberty University and Ozark Hills University before any potential participants are contacted. I am happy to share the IRB approvals with you.

I am writing this request to ask if you would be willing to review the interview questions, writing prompt, and cognitive representation prompt which will be used in my study. This will take one hour or less of your time to review wording and provide feedback of any changes you feel need to take place to increase the readability of the prompts. Thank you for considering my request to ensure the questions and prompts I use are clearly understood by my participants.

Sincerely,

Kallen Dace

Principal Researcher

Appendix D: Sample Letter Requesting Preservice Teachers to Participate in a Small Field Study Concerning the Readability of the Writing Prompt, Cognitive Representation, and Interview Questions

Dear Preservice Elementary Teacher,

As a graduate student in the education department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction. The title of my research project is Preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing: A phenomenological study, and the purpose of my research is to describe the self-efficacy for teaching writing of elementary preservice teachers from a private university in southern Missouri. I am writing this letter to ask if you would be willing to participate in a small field testing group to ensure the interview questions, writing prompt, and cognitive representation prompt I will use in my study are clearly understood by preservice elementary teachers. This will only take one hour or less of your time to read through the prompts and provide feedback on any words, phrases, or sentences which seem unclear. Thank you for considering my request to help make my questions and prompts easily understood by your fellow classmates. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kallen Dace

Principal Researcher

**Appendix E: Letter for Contacting Ozark Hill's Education Department Chair to Request a
List of Students who Meet the Qualifications for the Study**

Dear Ozark Hills Education Department Chair,

As a graduate student in the education department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction. The title of my research project is Preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing: A phenomenological study, and the purpose of my research is to describe the self-efficacy for teaching writing of elementary preservice teachers from a private university in southern Missouri. I will secure IRB approval from Liberty University and Ozark Hills University before any potential participants are contacted. I am happy to share the IRB approvals with you.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research within the education department at Ozark Hills University. I would like to contact current elementary education majors and to invite them to participate in my research study. In order to contact these potential participants, with your permission, I would like to request ask a list of potential participants who have finished their coursework to become elementary teachers and plan on teaching grades third through sixth, but have not begun their first teaching positions. If you are willing, I would appreciate having these potential participants' email addresses as well, so that I can contact them about participating in the study. I will also share the consent form with you the potential participants will receive to provide you with as much information possible to make your decision.

Additionally, in order to make the participants feel comfortable with the data collection, I would also like to ask permission to conduct my study in the education department classrooms at Ozark Hills University. Participants will be asked to contact me to schedule an individual session

to complete an interview, writing prompt, Teacher Efficacy Scale, and cognitive representation expressing their self-efficacy for teaching writing. The data will be used to explore how current elementary education majors describe their self-efficacy for teaching writing to better understand how instructional coaches and universities can support teachers as they begin their elementary teaching careers. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on approved letterhead indicating your approval. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kallen Dace

Principal Researcher

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

Preservice Elementary Teachers' Self-Efficacy for Teaching Writing:

A Phenomenological Study

Kallen Dace

Liberty University

School of Education: Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Participant,

You are invited to be in a research study of beginning elementary teachers' confidence as writers and teachers of writing. You were selected as a possible participant because you have currently finished your bachelor's degree in elementary education. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Kallen Dace, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University is conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to describe the self-efficacy or confidence preservice elementary teachers have as writers and teachers of writing. This study will also explore how undergraduate writing methodology courses have shaped preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things: complete a writing prompt, Teacher Efficacy Scale, two visual representations, and an interview. The writing prompt will take less than twenty minutes to complete, and participants will have the opportunity to explain in writing the experiences that have shaped them as writers and teachers of writing. Next, participants will complete a Teacher Efficacy Scale detailing the overall confidence elementary teachers have for teaching, and this scale should take approximately five minutes. Then, participants will select an image that represents their self-efficacy as writers and self-efficacy as teachers of writing. Last, participants will complete an interview. This individual interview will last less than an hour and will provide participants the opportunity to explain orally their experiences as writers and teachers of writing. The interviews will be audio recorded for transcription purposes.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

The risks in this study are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. With this research including discussions of teaching experiences, it is possible the information participants share could trigger mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse or child neglect. There are no direct benefits to participants for participating in this study. The indirect benefits from participating in this study allow for instructional coaches and university teachers to better understand preservice elementary teachers' confidence as writers and future teachers of writing.

Compensation:

There will not be any financial compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

The electronic records of this study will be kept private on a password protected computer and paper copies will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Only the researcher, dissertation committee, and research consultant will have access to the data. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Any quoted statements in the dissertation will be entirely anonymous. The results will be presented in the dissertation. After three years, the raw data will be deleted from the researcher's computer, the paper copies of the writing prompt, Teacher Efficacy Scale, and visual representations will be shredded, and the audio recordings of the interviews will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Ozark Hills University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study:

Should you choose to withdraw from the study, you may withdraw within two weeks of when data collection begins. Data collection is tentatively scheduled to begin May 26, 2015. Any collected data will be shredded or deleted. Please contact the researcher by June 19, 2015 if you would like to withdraw from the study.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Kallen Dace. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at xxxxxxxxxxxxxx or the dissertation committee chair Dr. Deanna Keith at xxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

**Appendix G: Letter for Contacting the Elementary Education Professors at Ozark Hill's
University**

Dear Ozark Hills Education Department Professor,

As a graduate student in the education department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction. The title of my research project is Preservice elementary teachers' self-efficacy for teaching writing: A phenomenological study, and the purpose of my research is to describe the self-efficacy for teaching writing of elementary preservice teachers from a private university in southern Missouri. I will secure IRB approval from Liberty University and Ozark Hills University before any potential participants are contacted. I am happy to share the IRB approvals with you.

I am writing this request to ask if you would be willing to encourage potential participants to participate in this study. The participants' privacy will be protected at all times and pseudonyms will be used to the university and the participants. I would like to contact current elementary education majors who have finished all of their coursework and plan on teaching grades third through sixth and invite them to participate in my research study. In order to contact these potential participants, I have asked the department chair at Ozark Hills University to provide a list of potential participants who have finished their coursework to become elementary teachers, but have not begun their first teaching positions. If you are willing, I would appreciate you either verbally or through email to encourage these potential participants to take part in the study. I will also share the consent form with you the potential participants will receive to provide you with as much information possible to make your decision.

Additionally, in order to make the participants feel comfortable with the data collection, I will conduct my study in the Education Department classrooms at Ozark Hills University.

Participants will be asked to contact me to schedule an interview, be a part of a group session to complete a writing prompt, and complete a cognitive representation that expresses their self-efficacy for teaching writing. The data will be used to explore how current elementary education majors describe their self-efficacy for teaching writing to better understand how instructional coaches and universities can support teachers as they begin their elementary teaching careers. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request for encouraging potential participants to take part in this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kallen Dace

Principal Researcher

Appendix H: Table for Scheduling Individual Sessions with Each of the Participants

Participants' Pseudonym	Date	Time
Amelia	Wednesday, May 27	2:30 p.m.
Bethany	Friday, May 29	8:00 a.m.
Cindy	Friday, May 29	11:30 a.m.
Danielle	Wednesday, June 3	2:30 p.m.
Emily	Monday, June 8	9:30 a.m.
Felicity	Thursday, June 11	3:30 p.m.
Gina	Monday, June 15	5:00 p.m.
Heather	Thursday, June 18	9:00 a.m.

Appendix I: Participants with Pseudonyms to Correspond with Data Collection

Participant's Name (Pseudonyms)	Assigned Number to Track Data Collection
Amelia	1
Bethany	2
Cindy	3
Danielle	4
Emily	5
Felicity	6
Gina	7
Heather	8

Appendix J: Writing Prompt Script*Writing Prompt*

To explore the experiences which have shaped you as a writer and a teacher of writing, please describe your thoughts on the lines below any memorable experiences you have experienced as a student writer, how to you plan teaching writing to your future elementary students, and which writing skills you feel are important for instruction for students in grades third through sixth.

Appendix K: Script for Cognitive Representations

Cognitive Representations

To explore the experiences which have shaped you as a writer, please select one image representing your experiences either through taking a photograph using the provided digital cameras, find clip art using the provided computers, or create an illustration using the provided colored pencils and markers. If you choose to take a photograph or use clip art, please email the image to the researcher (xxxxxxxxxxx). Once you have an emailed or illustrated image, please write a caption detailing why you selected or created the image to represent the experiences shaping you as a writer. Then, please repeat the process focusing on the experiences which have shaped you as a teacher of writing. Feel free to select the images at the same time to maximize your time or complete the images separately. Once you complete the images and captions, please bring your final product to the researcher. Thank you for your willingness to represent your experiences through pictures.

Appendix L: Individual Interviews Questions for Preservice Elementary Teachers

Table 2

Individual Interview Questions for Preservice Teachers: Writing Experiences from Preschool to the Student Teaching

Questions	
1	Please describe why you decided to become an elementary teacher. Also, describe how you chose your second area of emphasis.
2	Please describe your earliest experience writing.
3	In your childhood memories, who did you see modeling writing and what were they writing?
4	Please describe your writing experiences in elementary school.
5	Please describe your writing experiences in middle school.
6	Please describe your writing experiences in high school.
7	Please describe your writing experiences at the university level.
8	During these experiences, describe how confident you felt in your ability as a writer.
9	Please describe the writing methodology courses you have taken. Describe how well you feel these courses have prepared you to teach students in elementary grades to write effectively.
10	What elements of writing instruction do you value and plan to include in your writing instruction? What elements of writing instruction do you personally value from your school experiences prior to college and plan to include in your writing instruction for your own students? What elements of writing instruction were gleaned from your methods courses that you plan to include in your writing instruction?
11	What successes have you experienced as a writing teacher during your field experiences or student teaching experience with elementary students?
12	What challenges have you experienced as a writing teacher during your field experiences or student teaching experience with elementary students?
13	What personal experiences have shaped the way you want to teach writing to your elementary students?

- 14 After reflecting on these prompts, how do you feel about yourself overall as a writer?
How do you feel about yourself as a teacher of writing?
-

Appendix M: Sample Observation Notes

Participant Name (pseudonym)	Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
Emily	<p>The participant did not have any questions about the wording of the writing prompt. As she started writing, she paused and said, “I’m sorry. Sometimes I have to pause and think.”</p> <p>She also asked, “is it okay to spell something wrong? I always forget if “easel” is “el” or “le”.</p> <p>As she was writing she erased her thoughts twice and continued writing.</p> <p>She also asked, “Is it okay to put bad memories about writing.” I shared with her she could put any memorable experiences either positive or negative.</p> <p>Later while writing, she paused, looked up, and whispered, “I am trying to think of which word I want to use.”</p>	<p>The participant seemed to reveal the thinking that was taking place as she was writing, because she needed time to pause and reflect before continuing to respond in writing.</p> <p>By asking it if is okay to have a spelling error, this seems to reveal spelling has been an emphasis in writing instruction in the past.</p> <p>The erasures seem to be a visible representation of how the participant’s thoughts that changed over time as she wrote her responses.</p> <p>By asking if it is okay to include bad memories in the writing prompt, the participant could be sharing that she has bad memories that stand out in her memory of writing. She could also be determining if it is okay to share negative memories. I wonder if she might have been afraid to share that she had a negative memory associated with writing or if she was afraid I was only looking for positive writing experiences.</p> <p>This statement revealed the inner thinking of the participant as she tries to capture the right word to express her thinking. Later in the interview she shared an experience of modeling how to choose the right word using word choice lessons. She seems to be applying</p>

	<p>The participant did not have any questions about the self-efficacy scale prompts. She did erase one of her answers.</p> <p>The participant chose to select two images from clip art to represent her experiences as a writer and teacher of writing.</p>	<p>the idea of choosing words carefully in her own writing.</p> <p>The participant seemed confident in her answer choices.</p> <p>The participant selected the images from Google. The images seemed to connect with the other forms of data she shared through the writing prompt, interview questions, and self-efficacy scale.</p>
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Appendix N: Hoy and Woolfolk's Short Form of the Teacher Efficacy Scale Responses

Participant	Prompt 1	Prompt 2	Prompt 3	Prompt 4	Prompt 5	Prompt 6	Prompt 7	Prompt 8	Prompt 9	Prompt 10
Amelia	3	3	1	4	4	1	2	2	1	5
Bethany	3	4	1	5	3	2	2	3	1	5
Cindy	3	5	2	3	4	4	2	3	4	5
Danielle	4	5	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	5
Emily	3	4	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	5
Felicity	5	1	1	5	2	2	2	4	1	6
Gina	3	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1	6
Heather	4	5	1	2	5	3	2	2	2	6

KEY: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = moderately agree, 3 = agree slightly more than disagree, 4 = disagree slightly more than agree, 5 = moderately disagree, 6 = strongly disagree

Interpreting Teacher Efficacy Scale Responses

Prompt 1: 6 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 2: 6 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 3: 1 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 4: 6 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 5: 6 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 6: 1 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 7: 1 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 8: 1 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 9: 1 = higher efficacy
 Prompt 10: 6 = higher efficacy

Overall Efficacy:

Amelia: high average self-reported self-efficacy
 Bethany: high average self-reported self-efficacy
 Cindy: average self-reported self-efficacy
 Danielle: average self-reported self-efficacy
 Emily: average self-reported self-efficacy
 Felicity: average self-reported self-efficacy
 Heather: average self-reported self-efficacy

Appendix O: Sample Writing Prompt

Participant 5: Emily's Writing Prompt

Participant #5

Writing Prompt Script

Writing Prompt

To explore the experiences which have shaped you as a writer and a teacher of writing, on the lines below, please describe your thoughts of any memorable experiences you have had as a student writer, how you plan to teach writing to your future elementary students, and which writing skills you feel are important for instruction for students in grades third through sixth.

My earliest memory of writing is from before I started school. My older sister and I would sit on a 2-sided easel and we would "write" things back and forth to each other. Then when I was in primary school I loved entering pieces into the language arts fair and getting ribbons. Through middle school writing was pretty boring to me because I hated all the journal entries that we had to do. I hated it because I felt like our teachers never actually read them. It felt like it was a pointless time filler. When I got into high school writing became more difficult because the mechanics of writing became a very important aspect. Through my early years of high school I struggled with the grammar aspect and no matter how many grammar worksheets our teacher had us do, I still struggled with it. It wasn't until my senior year that it all started coming together. I

Participant 5

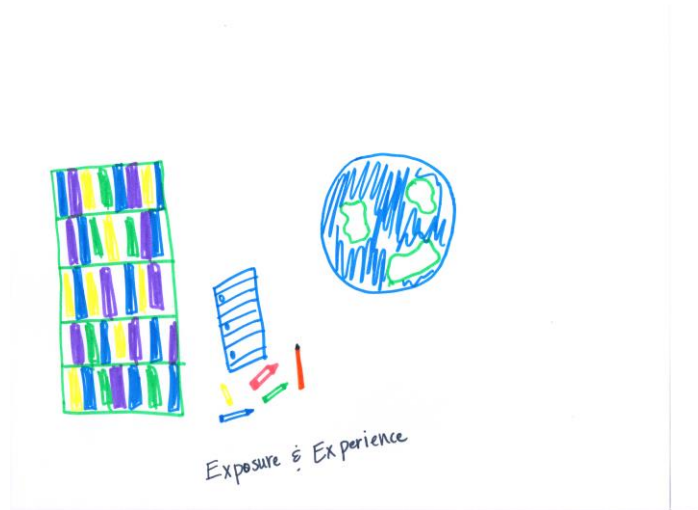
had a WONDERFUL teacher who helped me improve my writing. She really encouraged us to use our voice which made it more fun for me. She also taught us about our grammar mistakes through our own writing which made it more real for me. What I learned my senior year definitely helped me through college.

I plan to make writing a real and personal thing for my students. I don't want them to feel like their writing is pointless. I want them to be proud and take ownership of it and realize there is always room for improvement. I think it is important to teach students about writing through their own writing and not make them do worksheet after worksheet.

I feel that for the grades of 3rd through 6th it is important to teach the students to find their voice as a writer. Once they have found their voice and style I think that makes writing more fun. I think the more advanced mechanics of writing should be saved for later.

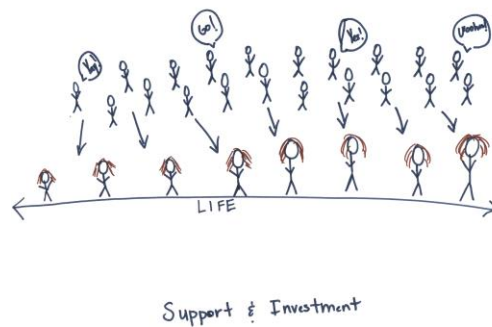
Appendix P: Sample Cognitive Representations

Participant 3: Cindy's Cognitive Representations



Experiences as a Writer Caption:

This illustration represents my experiences as a writer through a literature rich environment and being exposed to seeing lots of things in the world.



Experiences as a Teacher of Writing Caption:

This illustration represents my experiences as a teacher of writing. I have had a great support system to bounce ideas off of; I am not alone in this process. My teachers, parents, peers, and colleagues are part of this support system.

Appendix Q: Sample Transcript of Interviews

Participant 5: Emily's Transcript

Researcher: Alright, please describe why you decided to become an elementary teacher.

Participant 5: Um, well I have always, when I was a kid and stuff, I always liked helping people learn things, and I have always enjoyed learning, and I have a younger brother, and I have always helped him a lot, too. My mom is actually a teacher. She used to be a second grade teacher for the local elementary school, but now she teaches in preschool. And I just kind of saw as a kid what it was like you know going to her classrooms and stuff and I just always really liked it. So, I just always wanted to be a teacher I guess.

Researcher: Okay and in this university you get to pick a second area, area of emphasis, so describe how you chose your second area of emphasis.

Participant 5: Um, I went with early childhood, because I've always, I always thought I would like the younger kids better, and I still do, and I really um...I don't know there is just something about it. They have a lot you can be teaching them, which at any age they can. But I've kind of now leaned towards...I'm going to be teaching fourth grade and now I'm kind of like, I like that better, but someday I might like to go back down and teach preschool, because I feel like I can do a lot of creative things in that as well, so...

Researcher: Okay, please describe your earliest writing experience.

Participant 5: Um well, I have an older sister, and she was always you know ahead of me and doing things, and so I was always wanting to do what she could do. So you know when she started school, I would want to be doing, whatever you know at home what she was doing at school and um I remember we had a two sided easel and so like my sister would sit on one side and I would sit on the other side. And we would just like write letters or you know just whatever

like write notes to each other even though it wasn't real writing, but it was already getting us in the idea, "Oh I'm thinking it. I can write it down," and you know and express it to someone else. So, that's probably some of the earliest I can think of.

Researcher: Okay, and then in your childhood memories, who did you see modeling writing and what were they writing?

Participant 5: Hmm... (Pauses for three seconds.) Well I do remember my mom a lot would write. She would like write notes to people in the mail. And my grandma especially like, um, she would write cards and everything on everybody's birthday, we had tons of grandkids, and we would all have cards. That's really the first thing I can think of when I think about writing is when I would get a card from my grandma or something, and even if I couldn't read it at that time, but just knowing that you know she wrote this note to me. And it was really special, so...

Researcher: Okay. Um please describe your writing experiences in elementary school.

Participant 5: Um, when I... yeah...elementary school, I really liked writing at that time. I liked entering my stuff into the Language Arts Fair. I remember, you know, that was cool. But um, that was a long time ago. I am trying to think. I liked any time that we got to do anything on the computer. I remember there was this thing, I can't remember if it was called Storybook Weaver or Story Weaver or something like that, and you could add pictures with it and then type underneath it. I really liked that aspect of it, too. I don't know why. I just always kind of liked technology, but... Hmm...that's kind of all I can think of right now. (Laughs)

Researcher: It's okay. It's okay. Um... please describe your writing experiences in middle school.

Participant 5: Middle school I would say they were...that was some time when I really did not like writing. I felt like we did a lot of journal entries, and I felt like our teachers never would

probably read most of it, because I know that they had a bunch of kids. But it was like I'm, you know, to me it felt like it was a time filler, and it didn't have purpose. You know... if I am... I don't know... this... but when I am writing, I would want somebody else to read it, and I love feedback. And I don't feel like we got much feedback. You know they might write, "Oh, great story," or... but that was it, and I wanted more. Like what could I do to improve or what did you actually like about it? Not "Oh, it was a good story." You could have went through and wrote that on everybody's. So, I mean I just don't really remember caring about it too much in middle school, and I don't remember there being a lot of writing. But... again, that was a long time ago, so I am not sure. But... (Laughs)

Researcher: (Laughs)

Participant 5: But I do remember I wasn't thrilled with writing at that time. So...

Researcher: Okay, and then describe your writing experiences in high school.

Participant 5: Um to start out high school I would say it was pretty rough. Like you know we really got into like the mechanics of it and grammar, and I just remember these grammar worksheets that we had to do and I absolutely hated them. I did bad on them, because like I don't know. It was terrible. I didn't feel like it was actually helping me as a writer, because it wasn't applied it to my own writing. You know it was like, "oh here is a sentence, how would you fix this," and I might fix it on the paper, but I wouldn't really think about it when I am doing it in my own writing. But um, when it was my senior year, um I took the dual credit, the DC comp and I had Mrs. Johnson, a pseudonym, and she was amazing. Like she helped me um with my writing and because she would... we had, you know, several papers that we wrote, and she really like loved it when we would write with our own voice or whatever. You know and then I could just really express myself, and just you know, I just really like to express myself in things.

And it just made it better. Then I remember we would all say when we would get our paper back that it looked like it had bled, (Laughs)

Researcher: (Laughs)

Participant 5: because she would like go all over, because you know I felt like a lot of us at that time would really...you know we had been through the grammar worksheets, but we didn't, you know, know how to do it in our own writing and so you would get it and you would think, "Oh my goodness, this is terrible," but she would always then come back and teach us exactly, you know, how we could fix that in our writing. And she would give us a second chance. It wasn't like that first chance was all you're getting. You're getting it for a grade. You know she would give us the chance to fix it, and she would...I appreciated that, because otherwise I wouldn't have learned. I would have got that and that's the end of that. We would go and fix it and that's...you know by fixing my own writing kind of helped me think later on when I am writing later on, "Oh, I should do it this way," or you know whatever. So, it got better in high school.

Researcher: Good. Then transitioning to the university level, describe your writing experiences at the university level.

Participant 5: To be honest, I feel like in all my classes, it was all about like how could you fluff it up kind of, you know. They...I feel like they want fluff sometimes and so you just kind of like have to put it...I mean, let's see...In my like gen. ed. classes a lot of times like that stuff, I don't remember having to write a lot, because I had my writing class already in high school, but you know then it was like what can I put in this to you know the required length and then like kind of when I got into my elementary classes then I could you know that's when I could that's what I was learning. That's what I was here to do, so I could put more in of what I learned, and I got better about being able to reword things to make it sound a little more professional than just how

I probably did in high school. Well, I went back one time and read one of my high school papers and I was like, “Yikes, I thought this was good at the time and now it’s like, oh my!” But I don’t, I mean yeah we wrote papers for our classes, but we didn’t really learn about writing a lot. I don’t think, so...

Researcher: Okay, during these experiences describe how confident you felt in your ability as a writer.

Participant 5: Um...I felt fairly confident like I never really struggled anymore in college I guess. You know if...I could just sit down and get a paper wrote pretty fast you know and felt like I addressed everything I needed to and above and beyond. You know I would always go and try and do better than I had to. But I would say I felt pretty confident. I never felt like I really ever struggled in college; writing a paper was easy for me, so.

Researcher: Okay...Okay, this one... um please describe your writing methodologies courses that you have taken and describe how you feel these courses have prepared you to teach writing to students in elementary grades effectively.

Participant 5: Okay, um we didn’t have like a specific writing course. It was just like in language arts class, like I can’t even remember like reading or something and I mean we kind of...we learned about like kind of writing within it, and again I think writing is kind of one of those things you have to learn about in whatever school you are going to be teaching at, because they all have different curriculums and you could learn one thing in college and that’s not going to be possibly what you do and I don’t know...I mean college sometimes is a blur. But I don’t really remember a lot learning about how to teach writing. It wasn’t really until I had student teaching when I had to start teach writing that okay, I was scared to death to start teaching it,

because I didn't feel confident in it. And um...I don't know, but...yeah, I guess that's it for now. I can't really think of doing a lot of writing stuff, so.

Researcher: Okay, and I kind of think we will come back to it...do you... because we will talk about student teaching...Is there anything you feel like you really learned..., because you said student teaching was like okay, now I have really got to...could you kind of describe that experience for me?

Participant 5: Yeah, um, I'll start at the beginning. But...

Researcher: Thank you!

Participant 5: They uh...I was at Ozark Springs Elementary, and the writing curriculum they had was Lucy Calkins, and um I only taught a few lessons out of hers, which she made it very personal to the kids, you know like it applied to their writing. It wasn't like as much as teaching out of the book really..., but then when I taught, when it was my turn to teach we did a wonder unit and that was their nonfiction writing and it...um...let's see we kind of like started brainstorming ideas. Like kind of how the kids had to brainstorm ideas was good. They just did multiple activities to try to help them come up with something instead of here you have to write about this. You know, they...I learned that you have to make it, like the kid has to be interested in it for sure. Otherwise they are not going to really want to write. If we were going to write about animals, if I would have picked their animals for them, they wouldn't have really enjoyed the writing or wouldn't have wanted to do it. And I think it's important that they enjoy it, because it was something they wanted and they were interested about researching and stuff, and I also learned, um, we...after we got started on their writing, finally, you know we conferenced with all of them. I was in a classroom where, it was two classes combined. They did team teaching and there were two other teachers and then me, and we just, whoever we would go to

we would just meet with different kids every day, and um I learned it was important to meet with the kids. I learned about them as a writer and how I could just sit with them. You know we would just meet with them for five or ten minutes. You could see what they were struggling with. Help them, point them in the right direction and then you could come back later and see if that helped or if you need to help them a little more, so I... One major thing I learned was to talk with each of them and see how they are doing and then you can apply, like differentiate it, I guess for each student. So, I think...did that answer it?

Researcher: Uh-huh. Thank you!

Participant 5: You're welcome!

Researcher: I appreciate that. What elements of writing instruction do you value and plan to include in your writing instruction?

Participant 5: Um... (Pauses for four seconds)

Researcher: And this could be...I broke this question up. So it could be something as a student of writing when you were learning to write, you know anywhere from preschool on to university, like things that you were like I really want to include this or something from university or student teaching, any of those.

Participant 5: Okay, uh, one thing I can think of is we would always start out as a whole group and have a little, like a mini-lesson whole group and which I liked that, because then they could see and when we were doing the research writing about animals I was doing my own and showing them like what our focus was that day in my own writing, and then after that they would break off individually and you know we would conference with each kid, and they all had a writing binder that I really liked and a writing notebook. And in the notebook, um that's something I have already thought I would use this in my classroom and um (clears her throat)

they...it like had all like their brainstorming ideas in it and you know they would write in it. You know they had Chromebooks which I think I am going to have in my classroom, too, that they could write you know their stuff on and so one thing that I mainly want to include is always start out whole group and like break off and talk with kids individually, and I guess using a writing notebook. And their binder, they had it set up where like here's your brainstorm, your rough drafts...you know each folder was where they were on their writing, and they would move it through, and it just helped the kids stay organized instead of just shoving it all in their desk. It was all in. They could always go get their writing binder I guess. (Pauses for two seconds.) So, I guess....I don't know...I just don't feel confident teaching writing still, so that's still something I am learning. So, yeah...

Researcher: Okay. Thank you. What successes what you experienced as a writing teacher in your field experiences or student teaching with elementary students?

Participant 5: Okay, um like I said I was nervous about teaching writing, but once you know I started doing it, I got more confident and then when I saw what they were actually, like their writing was coming along, it wasn't just, you know they weren't actually writing, it was...I could see that they were actually writing, and they were progressing, so that made me feel better knowing, "Oh they are actually getting better and something is coming out of this." One thing in particular like I just love when you would talk to them and you know... One day we were talking about word choice or something and some of them didn't take it. You know it was like their first time like really talking about much of it, and there was this one kid, I taught him about a thesaurus and he was so excited. And he would use it every time in his writing to help him think of different words to use. So, that was one thing that was fun. Just when you give them ideas of

how to do something and they are like “Oh!” and they run with it. So that was one thing that I can think about.

Researcher: Cool! What challenges have you experienced as a writing teacher during your field experiences or student teaching experiences with elementary students?

Participant 5: Um...It was all a challenge I guess, you know because it's...It still is. I won't go off on that, but starting off at first, like getting up there and just writing in front of them was like weird at first, and then you know I had like the two teachers that were in there, too, and then we had a couple kids with two aides that helped them. So, it was like I have to write in front of all these people and all these kids and it just kind of seemed like kind of weird, but I knew they didn't...the kids didn't really think anything about it. So a challenge was just kind of getting started, and then uh also when we first started meeting individually with the kids, I didn't really know what to talk to them about, and then one of my teachers told me about what she did. She would, like they used sticky notes. Each kid, they would write a sticky note for that day and you know they would be like make sure you highlight something good that they are doing and then give them a point as something you see in which they can improve, which is something I still feel like I challenge...you know, I look at this. Okay what can I help them improve? You know sometimes it's hard to see it. So I guess that's something I have to work on for sure is like okay there is always room for improvement. I just need to find what they can improve on. So, yeah those might have been the challenging or challenges: just starting out, getting them going, and then helping them get their writing better. So I think that's it.

Researcher: Okay. I...you have just done a great job describing several of these so if there is anything else you want to keep adding...wonderful. Uh, what personal experiences have shaped the way you want to teach writing to your elementary students?

Participant 5: Um well kind of like I want to make it personal for them and seem real. Like their writing has a purpose. You know I want to get them feedback, like in high school Mrs. Johnson, a pseudonym, would give us feedback on our writing and it made us better and I knew somebody was reading. It was just, I wasn't just writing it and nobody was going to read it. So I want them to feel I'm part of their writing journey I guess; you know like helping them through it, and I want them, you know, to have a positive experience and know that I want them to do the best that they can and just help them find their voice in writing which I think would be hard. Because you know how do you teach somebody their voice, you know, it's their own? So that's something, you know, I might now get it to every kid, because it might not yet develop for them until later, but I just want them to you know have, like see writing as a way to express themselves and make it their own I guess. So...

Researcher: Okay, so after reflecting on these prompts, how do you feel overall about yourself as a writer?

Participant 5: Um...I feel like I can do it. You know, like I am good at writing papers for classes, but if you probably ask me to write a book, I feel...I don't think I could do that. Sometimes I feel like I can be creative in writing, but I don't, I don't know if I have the stamina to write a whole story, you know. But if, if it's writing about something like that's happened to me, like an experience, then I feel pretty strong in that, because I love to tell stories about stuff that has happened. But, I would say I have problems coming up with ideas sometimes, but overall, I could do it if I had to. (Laughs)

Researcher: Okay and the second part: how do you feel about yourself overall as a teacher of writing?

Participant 5: I have a lot of learning to do. I definitely don't feel completely confident. You know it will be my first year of teaching writing. I definitely feel like I have a lot to learn, and I have talked to other teachers, and I guess writing is one of the things a lot of us don't feel as confident about, because I don't feel like it is as concrete. It's definitely more abstract, so yeah, I'll just say I feel like I have a lot that I can learn about it, so.

Researcher: Okay, so is there anything else that you want to share, but didn't get the opportunity?

Participant 5: Um, I can't think of anything.

Researcher: Okay. Thank you!

**Appendix R: Sample Email for Follow-up Contact with the Participants after the
Individual Interviews**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in the study exploring preservice elementary teacher self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. I am contacting you to schedule a time to review the transcript of your interview. I want to allow participants to participate in a time that works best for them, so I will attach the transcript to this email and after reading through the transcript, please respond through email by Friday, June 19 with whether you would like to approve the transcript as recorded, make minor revisions, or schedule an additional interview to allow me to better capture your experiences shaping you as a writer and teacher of writing.

Thank you again for participating in this study. I am blessed to learn from your experiences. If you need any further information, you can contact me (Kallen Dace) at xxxxxxxxxxxx. Thank-you for sharing your experiences with me.

Sincerely,

Kallen Dace

Principal Researcher

Appendix S: Email Expressing Gratitude to the Participants for Being a Part of the Study

Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in the study exploring preservice elementary teacher self-efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. I greatly value the insights you have shared describing the experiences shaping you as a writer and teacher of writing. Your sacrifice of time is greatly appreciated. I hope that the time spent reflecting on the journey preparing you to be an elementary teacher of writing has also been beneficial. If I can help you in any way as you continue to process your experiences as a writer and teacher of writing, you can contact me (Kallen Dace) at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Thank you for sharing your experiences with me.

Sincerely,

Kallen Dace

Principal Researcher