Bridging the Gap between Secondary Writing Instruction and Post-Secondary Writing Needs

A Thesis Submitted to

The Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

In Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Professional Writing

By

Elexcia Washington

June 3, 2021

Liberty University

College of Arts and Sciences

Master of Arts in Professional Writing

Student Name: Elexcia Washington

_____

Tess Martinus, Ph.D., Thesis Chair   Date

_____

Sarah Rice, Ph.D., Reader   Date

Abstract

Secondary students across the United States often graduate without the prerequisite writing skills needed for post-secondary education and employment success. This thesis examines the history of U.S. writing instruction and the influential figures that have influenced writing instruction across secondary school classrooms. It also explores the effects of teacher education and legislation like the Elementary and Secondary Education and No Child Left Behind acts on writing outcomes. This thesis also identifies the most effective evidence-based writing interventions before concluding with recommendations and a teacher's guide.

Keywords: Secondary school writing, No Child Left Behind, Standards, Common Core, Writing outcomes, Teacher's guide

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my sustainer and very present help, Jesus Christ. The Lord beckoned me to prove him, and throughout this educational journey, I found the Lord of Hosts to be faithful. I also dedicate this paper to my boys (Joshua and Caleb) because their maturity allowed me to focus on my schoolwork. Lastly, I dedicate this paper to my granny and grandma (Lenora and Palestine) because seeing them do hard things, I knew I could do hard things too.

Acknowledgements

I would be remiss not to acknowledge Dr. Martinus and Dr. Rice for their patience and encouragement through this process. I also want to acknowledge the faculty who make the Professional Writing program possible; I fell in love with the intricacies of my native tongue because of your choice of assignments. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents (Michael and CaSandra), my sister (Alexandria), and my boys for their flexibility and support as I worked to accomplish one of my long-term goals.

Contents

Introduction

I recently read an article on Aleteia, a website for news and information for the global Catholic community, where a writer stated that "the way you write says as much about you as the way you dress — if you're careless, or pay attention to details, or go the extra mile to seek elegance" (Fuentealamo, 2019). I would agree that a certain level of vanity accompanies writing. Vanity is one reason why I meticulously comb through work emails before clicking send, and it is why I nearly hyperventilate if I later find that I have used the wrong word. However, beyond vanity, Fuentealamo further posited that language in its written form "is a tool for transmitting concepts. The more correct the manner of expression is, the more accurately the content will be passed" (Fuentealamo, 2019). The transferring of ideas and information is, in essence, the purpose of education. While transferring ideas and concepts through written media is a growing sector of the economy, so many US students struggle to learn how to write well.

In 2015, as a youth service coordinator for a housing authority in Southeastern Virginia, I helped students complete their job applications and college essays, which were often filled with grammatical errors and issues with mechanics. However, worse yet, they were also disjointed and confusing. At first, I judged their teachers harshly, thinking that they were intentionally not teaching students how to write well, and I often lamented the challenges that underfunded schools face. However, as I looked for solutions, I discovered that students across all economic backgrounds struggle with writing (NAEP, 2011) – and not just academically. Business leaders also have expressed that many employees enter the workforce with limited writing ability (Moore, 2016). Once I understood that the writing quality of the youth I worked with was not solely because they attended underfunded schools, I was led to ask: Why do American students struggle with writing?

This is not a particularly unique question; others have asked about US writing instruction before. Over the last decade, the comment sections of articles and blogs discussing the problem often offer the common refrain that it is because of technology – the quick nature and limited characters of social media (Holland, 2013). Others point to the reduction of reading high-quality literature, which tends to be whatever fiction was read during the commenter's secondary school years (S., 2017). While what one reads does influence how one writes and technology does influence how people communicate, research shows that issues within writing instruction predate Twitter and its counterparts, and students struggle to write well even when they read Shakespeare.

Bridging the Gap between Secondary School Writing and Post- Secondary Needs is an attempt to understand why students struggle to write well after high school. This is accomplished by reviewing the history of writing instruction and the influence of the academy on secondary schools, as well as by examining other factors that affect writing outcomes. The formulation of this project was guided by four main questions:

Question 1: What is the history of writing instruction within the United States? Specifically, who were the key players and what events shaped writing pedagogy?

Question 2: How do teacher preparation and beliefs affect writing instruction?

Question 3: What are the legislative and policy impacts on instructional priorities?

Question 4: What instructional strategies are proven to improve writing outcomes?

The answers to those four main questions led to a fifth question: how can information be synthesized to help secondary teachers help students write better? The attempt to answer this resulted in a chapter of a teacher's guide.

Chapter One

Historical Influences on US Writing Instruction

A system-wide problem with writing instruction exists in secondary education. Respected education reform activist and advocate, Andrew Rotherham, described the result of inadequate writing education in an opinion piece for US News & World Report: "Even students from elite schools often struggle to write clearly and get from one end of an argument to the other …[and] they're really seriously good at deploying adverbs and throat-clearing phrases like confetti" (2017). Rotherham's sentiments are supported by teacher surveys, standardized test results, and gubernatorial pushes for Common Core standards in writing. Despite initiatives to improve writing outcomes, student writing has not improved. The popular college-readiness exam company, ACT, showed that only 40% of students who took their exam possessed college-ready writing skills (Goldstein, 2017). Both the ACT and the 2011 National Report Card examined students across the country, and unlike other education subjects, such as reading, writing deficiencies could not be isolated to urban or rural students; suburban students cannot write either (Goldstein, 2017; NAEP, 2011). This section examines the history of writing instruction in secondary education.

Brief Review of American Writing Instruction from the 1860s to 1960

Before 1862, one purpose of college was to refine the knowledge and rhetorical abilities of the religious and secular elite (Renker, 2000). Colleges emphasized oral above written rhetoric because the focus was on preparing orators such as pastors and statesmen for public speaking (Katz, 1983). While men of different occupations may have attended college, a college education was not a prerequisite for employment (Renker, 2000) but a badge of personal achievement.

Professional training was acquired through the hands-on learning experience of apprenticeships (Katz, 1983).

In 1862, the nature and purpose of college began to change following the passing of the Morrill Act, which laid the foundation for state-supported higher education. This new form of federal aid for colleges and universities allowed segments of the growing populace, such as farmers, to attend once-inaccessible higher education (*Colleges of agriculture at the land grant universities: a profile*, 1995). Not only were more people given entry into university, but also more study opportunities were available. The high-society finishing prelude to apprenticeship study had become a prerequisite to a career (*Colleges of agriculture at the land grant universities: a profile*, 1995). These new career opportunities had communication needs that exceeded the rhetorical exercises rehearsed and used before the Morrill Act. The changes were solidified as more institutions began to adopt a German approach to higher education, which involved scientific research and more specialized subjects (Herr, 2019). This increased accessibility and the growing fields of study exposed gaps in instruction at the secondary school level (*Colleges of agriculture at the land grant universities: a profile*, 1995).

Since their inception, while secondary schools have been preparing grounds for college entry, accessibility was only available to the elite. During the 1860s, against the backdrop of the Civil War and Emancipation, a separate revolution was taking place in education. Increased accessibility to a college education, coupled with the varying needs of specialized interests, significantly changed writing expectations. By the 1870s, parents and professors were voicing their concerns over secondary student writing instruction (Connors, 1991). In response to the public uproar, institutions of higher learning began to require first-year writing courses to teach students how to write for university coursework. Harvard gave students English entrance

examinations. In the first year, 60% of applicants failed the test, including students from elite secondary schools. Thus began the more explicit relationship between college professors and high school English teachers. Instructors at elite institutions publicly advocated for "better training on the secondary level and for more effective writing instruction on the college level" (Bazerman, 2005). For the premiere educators of the time, the college-ready high school curriculum mirrored the practice of literary critique used in college and university English departments.

Beginning in the 1930s, English education professionals advocated for a new learning approach called writing across the curriculum (Harris, 1991). In 1935, college English professors proposed moving the first-year writing courses to sophomore year and supported the idea that other fields incorporate writing instruction into the curriculum of their disciplines (Harris, 1991). The arguments and positions that emerged from that meeting were published in the English Journal under the title "Symposium Bazerman, 2005). In 1939, the Symposium director Oscar Campbell wrote accompanying remarks of support, which stated:

> What your students need is not more instruction in writing but a few teachers of
> geology who are capable of describing not only geological phenomena but also of
> teaching their students how to think consecutively and logically about geology
> […]. Since most teachers of geology, history, or economics find themselves
> incapable of it, they conceal their incompetence from themselves by shifting the
> responsibility of their failure upon the harried instructor in Freshman English,
> who labors valiantly to accomplish the impossible (Bazerman, 2005).

It was almost 30 years before interdisciplinary writing instruction was welcomed as a strategy to improve the writing of secondary school students. Campbell was not alone in his

recognition of writing instruction's need to adapt (Harris, 1991). As more colleges and universities offered degree programs that were more specialized, university students needed to write more frequently and for purposes that required nonliterary writing skills. Therefore, writing courses began being offered outside of English departments (Bazerman, 2005). Rudolf Flesch, a notable author, readability expert, writing consultant, and author of *The Art of Readable Writing* in 1949 also advocated for non-literary—plain English—writing instruction, specifically for advanced adults. Flesch's opinion was not well received and was often ridiculed and misrepresented by his academic peers and, ultimately, his suggestion, like Oscar's a decade before, was unimplemented (Maguire, 2018).

Project English

As the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik1 into orbit around the earth, the United States frantically responded to the space defeat with mass attention on the education system in America. New science and math programs were implemented and, soon after, the nation turned its attention towards writing and language arts.

In 1961, Sterling McMurrin, the United States Commissioner of Education "testified before a Senate appropriations hearing that instruction in reading and in written and oral communication was a matter of national importance" (Donlan, 1978). Five months later, under Public Law 531, Congress approved funding to improve English instruction. This funding was used to create Project English, the purpose of which was to research the English curriculum from 1961 to 1968. The initiative started curriculum studies at universities across the country and funded "demonstration centers [and] centers for teacher preparation" (Donlan, 1978). They set out to define English but, similar to other attempts, proved unsuccessful for various reasons,

including "attacks from within the profession, the lack of credibility of the educational system in the late 1960s, and the fact that its efforts were largely unknown to English teachers" (Harris, 1991). Project English was largely viewed as unsuccessful, but it did set the stage for future reforms and understanding learning and instruction.

Modern Writing Instruction

Despite its reputation for being unsuccessful, one of the fruits of Project English was the Dartmouth Seminar of 1966 (Donlan, 1978), a conference attended by English professors and teachers across the English-speaking world, primarily from the United States and the United Kingdom. The conference was held in rural New Hampshire and was called the Anglo-American Conference on Teaching and Learning (Donahue, 2016). The small and world-class group of educators met to discuss the need to improve English writing instruction.

In 1966, Dartmouth Seminar was a microcosm of the social and education reforms occurring in the larger Anglo-Western world. Productivity at the conference was difficult because the only common ground among those in attendance was the fact that they all spoke English. The British in attendance identified as teachers and advocates for student-centered learning and were proponents of personal expression. Their mission was to save the English from the disciplinarian strongholds of the elites. One of the most prominent voices at the conference was James Britton, a prominent progressive educationalist and critic of prescriptive instruction. He was also an outspoken anti-disciplinarian, who did not want English to be defined as a separate subject to be studied. He believed that language was a tool that belonged to all the people and that defining it would create a type of language caste (Harris, 1991). He and his colleagues advocated for writing instruction to be included across all subject areas in college and

secondary school classrooms. The British crossed the Atlantic to do battle over writing instruction.

However, the Americans arrived at Dartmouth for an academic discussion. Those in attendance identified themselves as scholars and academics whose primary purpose was helping their country climb their way out of an issue that impeded national defense. They wanted to clearly define what English was and create a sequence of instruction and curriculum of writing instruction. They were not prepared for the British onslaught against what the British perceived as American preoccupation with the use of transactional writing assignments and projects. Britton believed such overemphasis deprived children of being able to write in an authentic and meaningful way. The English researcher, John Dixon, wrote that Britton believed that "students use [..] an informal language for individual development, a view that would prove influential in the early years of composition studies. He argued against the prevailing US vision of English as a formal discipline in which students mastered genres, standard grammar, and critical approaches to literature" (Dixon. 1969).

Britton emerged as the de facto leader and face of the British faction of English educators, and they performed, in essence, an intellectual coup d'état at the Dartmouth Seminar, discussing his idea for writing in every discipline. While their takeover, and Britton's work, did not prevent English departments from defining their field of study, he and his British colleagues did transform the way writing instruction was conducted in British and American secondary classrooms (Harris, 1991). Furthermore, while the Dartmouth Seminar did not conclude with every attendee in agreement, it set the groundwork that led to the creation of the foundation for present-day writing instruction in American secondary education, including new attention to process, growth, development, and student-centered learning.

By the 1970s, Britton had become, arguably, one of the most influential persons on writing instruction in primary and secondary education in the United States had fully developed his categorization of student writing products, and had fleshed out his ideas regarding writing across the curriculum (see Figure 1) (Harris, 1991). Though some attribute Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) to the aftermath of the writing crisis of 1870 (Bazerman, 2005), Britton is its modern champion and is often referred to as the "father of writing across the curriculum". WAC is defined as the "notion that writing should be an integral part of the learning process throughout a student's education, not merely in required writing courses but across the entire curriculum" (Bazerman, 2005).

Figure 1 Britton's Transactional Theory Chart

Mature Writer

↑

Learner

(Writing to Learn, n.d.)

As Britton was advocating for student-centered and personal expression in secondary classroom writing, Donald Murray was advocating for a change of teacher focus (Murray, 1972). Donald Murray, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, presented his 1972 piece, "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product," at the convention of the same year for the New England Association of Teachers of English. Murray wanted teachers to stop grading or evaluating students' finished work but, instead, guide them through the process of writing. He described the process as "discovery through language ... the process of exploration of what we know and what we feel

about our world, to evaluate what we learn about and communicate what we learn about our

world" (Murray, 1972).

Murray's process had three phases instead of the more common five-part writing process

cycle. The first phase was prewriting, which is anything that takes place before the first draft,

including research, which Murray calls "awareness from which the subject is born" (Murray,

1972). During this phase, the writer determines his audience, decides which form or means he

will use to deliver his thoughts to his audience. The second, or writing, phase consists of writing

the first draft. The third phase, rewriting, is the "reconsideration of subject, form, and audience"

(Murray, 1972). Like Britton, Murray's approach is student-centered and student-led. The

teacher is a passive actor, a reader, giving minimal guidance through the process.

By the 1980s, many English and language arts educators, along with other subject

teachers, followed the leads of Britton and Murray. School districts implemented a modified

version of WAC and the related practical application Writing to Learn (Bazerman, 2005; Humes,

1983). Writing to Learn is, in some ways, the opposite of what has previously been described as

transactional writing, and it results in teachers offering students opportunities "to order and

represent experience to [their] own understanding" (Bazerman, 2005), such as journaling during

reading or after lessons. Teachers use a mixture of theories and approaches in their writing

classrooms. Charts that detail the writing process often line the walls. Composition notebooks

are on most school supply lists so students can capture their daily journal entries and combine

them with writing-to-learn activities (Kruse, 2019). Some districts incorporate writing to

communicate activities that prepare students for college-level coursework, known as Writing in

the Disciplines (Bazerman, 2005).

Some educators started using writing for enriched learning and understanding. Building on the work of Bodong Chen, Marlene Scardamalia, and Carl Bereiter, Writing to Engage challenges students to solve problems through their writing by providing students with writing opportunities for building memory skills, comprehension, application, analytical ability, evaluation, and creativity (Palmquist, 2020). Thus, it prepares them for the critical thinking skills needed to produce transactional projects such as reports and persuasive products (Writing to Engage, n.d.).

Writing for Understanding is a similar approach to Writing to Engage in "that at the heart of effective writing, by any accepted definition, is the building of meaning and expression so that others can follow the writer's thinking" (Writing for Understanding, n.d.).Writing for Understanding postulates that if students are to write effectively and be engaged, whether for exams, personal development or personal interest, academics, or career, they need fundamental abilities. These are described as "knowledge and understanding which can be articulated in spoken and written language; an appropriate focus for thinking about and synthesizing that knowledge and understanding; a structure through which to clearly develop and present that knowledge and understanding; and control over conventions" (Writing for Understanding, n.d.).

As the twentieth century ended, the use of transactional writing assignments was reduced and the use of more expressive activities with lessened prescriptive grammar instruction increased, and educators experimented with freewriting and creative spelling. However, the student-centered and student-led approaches did not improve overall academic achievement. Achievement gaps between socioeconomic classes and racial minorities continued to widen (Klein, 2015). Civil rights groups and business leaders collaborated to lobby for more regulation within public education, with an emphasis on creating standards of in-class instruction and

teacher preparation (Klein, 2015). In 2001, President George W. Bush responded to the academic

achievement gap with the No Child Left Behind legislation (U.S. Department of Education,

2001).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB) updated President Lyndon B. Johnson's

Elementary Secondary School Act of 1965, which funded a billion dollars to the Title 1 school

program (U.S. Department of Education, 1965). NCLB mandated that states and school districts

receiving federal funding were required to test students in math and reading annually in grades

three through eight and once during their high school years. Their writing was not tested and,

therefore, writing instruction dwindled, further exacerbating problems with American student

writing. Overall, NCLB has been criticized as having "an outsized effect on teaching" (Klein,

2015). NCLB also tracked outcomes but states were able to create their own standards, which

meant that students across the country were not learning the same thing, and the achievement

gaps were not shrinking (Klein, 2015). Once again, the nation was in an education crisis. In

2009, similar to the 1875 and 1966 meetings before, governors and school superintendents met to

discuss how they could nationalize education standards (About the Standards, n.d.). What

resulted from that meeting became the Common Core State Standards Initiative, which included

writing instruction that aimed for teachers to teach all students to write effectively, clearly, and

thoughtfully (*Grade 11-12*. English Language Arts, n.d.) Then, in 2015, the federal government

corrected some of the constraints of NCLB with the Every Student Succeeds Act (U.S.

Department of Education, 2015; "The difference between the Every Student Succeeds Act and

No Child Left Behind", 2021). This gave states and school districts flexibility with hiring,

approaches to the curriculum, as well as requirements for graduation rates and testing for English

proficiency (Lee, 2021). The legislation also gave districts the freedom to explore new

approaches to education, especially writing instruction (Lee, 2021).

Summary of History

A crucial point in any discussion surrounding secondary education, but specifically

writing, is that it does not happen in a vacuum. Academics, politicians, and policymakers have a

significant effect on what does and does not transpire in the secondary school classroom.

Understanding the history of English writing instruction is important for addressing the concerns

with writing proficiency among students and writing instruction preparation among teachers

because both are dependent on a consensus of the academy. However, as evidenced before, there

have been few moments of consensus among English scholars, even with regard to determining

the purpose of writing as well as defining college-level writing (Fanetti et al, 2010). This

situation leaves teachers, who often are inadequately prepared to teach students how to write or

how to use the different writing approaches described in this section, without direction or

strategy.

Chapter 2 more closely examines the current state of writing instruction. Student writing

outcomes and the effects of education legislation on the writing classroom, teacher preparation,

and teacher attitudes are also examined

Chapter Two

Problems within Secondary Writing Instruction

Chapter 1 described and summarized the history of U.S. writing instruction. Scholars, policymakers, and educators have theorized and examined ways to best improve American secondary student writing so that students can be competent communicators when entering employment and post-secondary education, regardless of whether it is a two or four-year college. However, despite numerous conventions, councils, and studies, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) signaled in 2012 that secondary writing instruction was not particularly successful. The last fully published national report card on writing, which surveyed 4th, 8th, and 12th grade public and nonpublic student composition skills, found that only 30% were assessed as proficient writers of English (3% of these students were considered advanced) (NAEP, 2011). Similarly, the ACT, an American college testing company, reported data that 40% of the students who took the writing exam were not ready for college-level discourse (Goldstein, 2010). This chapter examines the current research problems with writing instruction in the United States. The primary focus is the four factors that affect secondary student writing instruction: standards, legislation, teacher attitudes, and preparation.

Education organizations are not alone in questioning the efficacy of writing instruction. In 2013, the Association of American Colleges and Universities released a report compiled by Hart Research Associates. They surveyed 318 corporate recruiters, and 80% of participants identified communication, both speaking and writing, as most lacking in recent college graduates (Holland, 2013). In the same article, business experts differed in explanations that contribute to the lack of writing skills. One blamed technology, specifically texting, for the current writing deficiencies. While technology may influence the modern aesthetic of poor writing (Holland,

2013), Chapter 1 addressed the negative or unsatisfactory student writing outcomes that predate

text messaging and emojis.

In recent years, numerous articles and blog posts have lamented the current state of US

writing ability. However, this is not a new area of concern. In 1976, a popular Newsweek article

titled Why Johnny Can't Write laments the woes of recent graduates writing skills. This was

followed by more fictional "Johnny" articles. Such as "Johnny with an MBA" and "Johnny with

an Ivy League Degree" (Skapinker, 2013; Bartlett, 2003). Recently, companies such as T. Rowe

Price have created professional development programs for their new hires to improve their

written communication skills. Employers often screen job candidates for writing ability

(Holland, 2013). Columnist Jason Fried, the founder of Basecamp and author, prioritizes writing

skills when hiring.

> If you are trying to decide among a few people to fill a position, hire the best
>
> writer. [His/her] writing skills will pay off. That's because being a good writer is
>
> about more than writing clear writing. Clear writing is a sign of clear thinking.
>
> Great writers know how to communicate. They make things easy to understand.
>
> They can put themselves in someone else's shoes. They know what to omit. And
>
> those are qualities you want in any candidate. Writing is making a comeback all
>
> over our society...Writing is today's currency for good ideas (Fried as quoted in
>
> Moore, 2016).

The fact that writing is considered "currency" shows the value of well-developed writing

ability and the importance of effective writing instruction. If every American student is required

to take four years of high school English, why are students struggling to write in college and at

work?

Legislation

Legislative impacts on education predate the most identifiable NCLB Act of 2002. Lyndon B. Johnson's Elementary and Secondary Schools ACT (ESEA) of 1965 is probably the educational decision with the greatest and longest reach. The legislative measure was part of Johnson's Great Society vision, which aimed to close the achievement gap between suburban, mostly white, students and the poor, often part of a racial minority, urban and rural counterparts (U.S. Department of Education, 1965). The ESSA sent federal dollars to local school districts but left the decision-making to the states. That decision resulted in Title 1 funding for schools with high impoverished student populations, as well as Title 2, 3, and 4 (U.S. Department of Education, 1965).

The act was routinely renewed with new regulations about the distribution of funding until the 1980s. In 1980, the conversation around closing gaps between certain groups of American students were, in general, struggling academically. In 1983, America would enter its next education crisis with a National Commission on Excellence in Education report titled A Nation at Risk (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). The report listed several problems with US academic achievement, for example: "Many 17-year-olds do not possess the 'higher order' intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay, and only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps" (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). This report unsettled the public and politicians. A few months later, an investigation report showed that the main conclusion from the NCEE was erroneous. Nevertheless, the picture of a failing educational system was drawn and initiated new regulations for federal education funding

(Ansary, 2007). Congress, in response, passed several acts related to student achievement. Since the 1980s, the federal government has required states to provide standards for learning. Then, in 2002, President Bush signed into law the NCLB, which had a significant effect on student learning and teacher instruction.

Similar to the acts of the 1980s and 1990s, NCLB aimed to tie government funding to student achievement. For a state's schools to receive federal funding, they were required to:

(a) have statewide academic content standards, (b) conduct standard assessments in reading-language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8, (c) employ a single statewide accountability system that measures and reports adequate yearly progress of all schools, (d) identify schools for improvement or corrective action, and (e) require teachers to be highly qualified in their subject area (McCarthey, 2008).

While NCLB did require these measures to receive federal funding, states did not have to participate. Moreover, even though funding criticisms existed, funding was not the primary issue. ESSA was created to close achievement gaps and target funding to previously excluded students, but the NCLB, while intending to achieve the same, did not. The NCLB created more inequities in education. The policy's primary formula AYP (annual yearly progress) created barriers for economically challenged districts. According to a 2006 study that surveyed teachers from Utah and Illinois, the group with teachers from high-income districts saw little effect from the NCLB measures because their students performed well on literacy and mathematics assessments (McCarthey, 2008). Under NCLB, teachers from low-income school districts lose instructional freedom (McCarthey, 2008). NCLB funding tied to testing related to improving literacy and mathematic ability; subjects, writing, science, and social studies were not included (U.S.

Department of Education, 2021). Furthermore, while writing is traditionally viewed as an

essential component of literacy, NCLB's Reading First program, which funded participating

English and language arts teachers, did not pay for writing instruction (Shanahan, 2006;

McCarthey, 2008). Additionally, if teachers identified opportunities to include writing

instruction, eventually those opportunities were limited due to "evidence that NCLB had

encouraged schools to devote more time to 'narrow test preparation activities" (Has No Child

Left Behind Worked, n.d.). While the NCLB did require states to test students at least once in

high school, the focus was on elementary and middle grades – in terms of standards and funding.

By hyper-focusing on reading and mathematics, legislators created a situation that excluded

other subjects that provided students opportunities to apply the reading and mathematical skills

organically in the classroom during elementary and middle school. This practice

disproportionately affected teachers from low-income school districts and prevented them from

teaching basic writing skills during elementary and middle grades (McCarthey, 2008). When

students reached high school, they were unprepared for the writing curriculum designed for life

beyond 8th grade, let alone college or career.

The latent impacts of NCLB were not so prominent in high-income districts. Teachers

had the flexibility, or what Foucault called the governmentality, to resist NCLB requirements

because their students fared well regardless. However, the NAEP report showed that students

from all demographic backgrounds struggled with writing. Thus, the problem was not isolated to

urban or rural locales; according to the report suburban kids could not write either (NAEP,

2011). Employers also complained that students from elite universities also failed to write well.

An evidenced-based curriculum was required under the legislation, specifically for mathematics

and reading, but penalties and direct oversight only took place when a school failed to meet the

standard (Smith, 2009). Unless schools were under direct supervision, their classroom instruction

was not closely monitored, so evidenced-based instructional practices were not enforced. As

noted from the standards section, few teachers presented grammar lessons or direct (explicit)

instruction in ELA classes. Fewer offered extensive writing opportunities for students to practice

the skills needed for college (Kiahura et al, 2014). Also starting in the 1980s, but the standard by

the 2000s, the process-oriented writing methods were selected as the sole writing curriculum

(Bazerman, 2005), which critics, such as Daniel Horowitz, described as an incomplete approach

to writing (Horowitz, 1986). Horowitz claimed that the process approach did not help students

with exam essays because there was (Horowitz, 1986) no opportunity to rewrite, nor was it

suitable for all writers, as not everyone needs an outline. He also asserted, "the process-oriented

approach gives students a false impression of how university writing will be evaluated" because

future professors only cared about the final paper (Horowitz, 1986). Horowitz took issue with the

dogma that held that writing made "good writing." He warned teachers to be wary of using

process-oriented writing as a complete writing program because it would not prepare students for

real writing experiences (Horowitz, 1986). Horowitz's warning went unheeded. Thus, students at

high-performing schools did not necessarily receive writing instruction that would produce

proficient writers.

Noticing the gaps in instruction at both high-performing and low-performing schools,

governors and educators across the US convened to establish a set of standards for ELA and

mathematics, which became known as the Common Core. In 2008, "a student might have been

considered *proficient* (or pretty good) in reading in one state. But the same student might not

have even met *basic* reading standards in another state Lee, 2020). The Core's standards were

created to alleviate that reality. The ultimate purpose "was to determine what students need to

know and demonstrate the ability to do in order to be prepared for an entry-level college course"
(Rotherman, 2016).

The Common Core was developed within the context of NCLB, not as a replacement.
While it does not require additional testing, it does request that participating states add writing
instruction to ELA priorities. At its inception, it "articulat[ed] that writing is a critical component
for communicating knowledge" (Sundeen, 2015). The standards required that students learned
how to compose argumentative and persuasive writing (Sundeen, 2015; "*Grade 11-12*. English
Language Arts", n.d.), and not just once a year, as the 2006 Applebee study showed. The 2003
National Commission on Writing emphasized that devoting extended time to writing instruction
was critical to students developing the communication skill necessary for success in employment
and college. A collaborative report by the National Writing Project, College Board, and the
Center on English Learning and Achievement, showed that the length of time students spent on
writing activities increased between 1978 and 2002. However, student writing time declined
between 2002 and 2005 (Applebee and Langer, 2006). That guided the decision to have
Common Core standards explicitly state, "Write routinely over extended time frames (time for
research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a
range of tasks, purposes, and audiences" (*Grade 11-12*. English Language Arts, n.d.).

However, the Common Core has attracted criticism regarding writing instruction. All
states that adopted the CC program do not fully apply all recommendations of standards. For
instance, eight of the 36 states that still participate in the CC (all but Virginia, Texas, Nebraska,
and Alaska adopted standards) (corestandards.org) have modified the curriculum. Other writing
scholars found that the Common Core failed to "explicitly" (Sundeen, 2015) address rhetoric and

claimed the absence weakened the ability of students to attain college-ready writing proficiency (Rives and Olsen, 2015).

Overall, Common Core elevated the conversation of writing instruction and shed light on the need for universal guidance and practices across the US. However, it lacked – and still lacks – the authority to mandate such policies, and the new Every Child Succeeds Act reduction in federal interference regarding education (Lee, 2020) essentially removes some of the key structures that were in place to help lessen the gaps between the academic quality of various American students.

Standardization

The previous section discussed the impact of legislative and policy decisions on education and, more specifically, on writing instruction. It briefly examines some of the resulting standards birthed from Common Core and NCLB. In contrast, this section examines the flaws within writing instruction standards as well as factors that contribute to the flawed standards.

What is college-level math? If one were to Google that question, it would be some variant of "(a) Algebraic Operations, (b) Solutions of Equations and Inequalities, (c) Coordinate Geometry, (d) Applications and other Algebra Topics, (e) Functions, and (f) Trigonometry" (College-Level Mathematics Test, 2018). Even if a student could not perform the applications described above, he or she would at least be able to determine what they are. The same cannot be said for college-level writing. In 2010, the English Journal featured a collection on college writing by Jason Courtmanche. He states, "[t]here is no simple answer to the question, ―What is college-level writing? Even at the university level, the answer is going to vary from college to college, from major to major, and even from professor to professor within the major" (Courtmanche, 2010). The National Council of Teachers of English, publishers of the English

Journal, also published the 2010 book *What is College-level Writing? Volume 2*, and the book's

editors opened with "in this volume and its predecessor, authors trying to define 'college-level

writing' have had to admit the elusiveness of such a definition" (Sullivan et al, 2010). It is

important to note that the Council, which began in 1915, is the premier organization for English

teachers and it includes primary education through post-secondary education. If English teachers

and professors cannot define college-level writing, how can teachers properly prepare students

for postsecondary writing experiences? They cannot, or rather, many cannot do it well. This

raises the question of why?

Business communications expert William Ellet said, "no one takes responsibility for

writing instruction" (Holland, 2013). Ellet's words may have been unforgiving, but he was not

referring to individual teachers; he was referring to flaws in the overall system from grade school

through university-level instruction. Sullivan attributed the vagueness or the imprecise definition

of college-level writing to the "lack [of] standardization in college classes" (Sullivan et al, 2010).

One reason standardization is lacking is because the writing process cannot be reduced to a

formula. After all, it is based on the individual writer's preferences. For instance, prewriting can

include a variety of steps and exercises that work for the writer; there is no way to create a

formula that works best for everyone. It is also difficult to standardize because some professors

turn writing from a science to an art (Courtmanche, 2010). Courtmanche's piece perfectly

demonstrates this. He previously admitted that college-level writing differs between professors.

Then he later claimed that everyone knows what college-level writing is. However, he did not

give a definition; he redirected with what he felt was the better question: "What is good

writing?" (Courtmanche, 2010). As discussed in the previous chapter, other academic disciplines

do not experience this problem, as there is no such thing as "good" calculus or "good" chemistry.

It is this particular type of pivot from forming a concrete definition or description to focusing on "good writing" that allows for "subjectivity of evaluation" (Sullivan et al, 2010). The first chapter of Sullivan's work "When a College Professor and High School Teacher Read the same papers", is an example of the subjectivity of evaluation and the gap between high school and college writing standards. The chapter details how a high school teacher and college English professor evaluate student writing. They are given the same three papers, one below average, one above average, and one average. In each paper, the two educators focused on different things. For example, in the case of the above-average paper, the college professor focused on style issues. He stated that the "writer writes with an authority not seen in the other papers" (Courtmanche, 2010), while the high school teacher focused on the rubric for the assignment. The high school teacher acknowledged that the student-writer had an advanced command of language and content but thought the writer did not address what was assigned. The college professor never mentioned that issue. The high school teacher focused on assignment directions. The editors noted that the differences of focus between the educators were because high school teachers had to follow state standards and guidelines about student writing, while college professors were able to grade based on personal preferences. The college professor is looking for sophistication – writing that will make him or her want to reread, not because of confusion but for the joy of reading a sentence or point again (Courtmanche, 2010). While moving students from competent writers to sophisticated writing is a noble goal, school districts and high school educators cannot create a curriculum based on noble goals nor mercurial professor preferences.

ACT Writing Requirements	SAT Writing Requirements

• Clearly state your perspective on the issue and analyze the relationship between your perspective and at least one other perspective • develop and support your ideas with reasoning and examples • organize your ideas clearly and logically • communicate your ideas effectively in standard written English	• Show that you understood the passage, including the interplay of central ideas and important details. Demonstrate effective use of textual evidence • Show your understanding of how the author builds an argument by examining the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and other stylistic and persuasive techniques; support and develop claims with well-chosen evidence from the passage • Produce writing that is focused, organized, and precise, with an appropriate style and tone that varies sentence structure and follows the conventions of standard written English.

Figure 1(ACT and College Readiness)

College testing companies also face challenges because they must rank student writing, but neither the ACT nor SAT mentions sophistication as a criterion. Similar to the SAT and

ACT, high school English classrooms also do not require sophistication. Students are evaluated on their ability to write explanatory texts, narratives, and arguments. Teachers expect them to support claims with evidence and analyze complex texts and topics. They expect student writing to be clear, well-organized, and informative, even when explaining complex ideas (corestandards.org). Virginia's 12th-grade students are expected to learn how to write expository and informational works (Virginia Department of Education, 2010). As part of that process, they should demonstrate the ability to

a) Generate, gather, and organize ideas for writing, b) Consider audience and purpose when planning for writing, c) Write analytically about literary, informational, and visual materials, d) Elaborate ideas clearly and accurately, e) Revise writing for depth of information and technique of presentation, f) Apply grammatical conventions to edit writing for correct use of language, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, g) Proofread final copy and prepare the document for publication or submission (Virginia Department of Education, 2010).

These standards do not describe what Courtmanche regards as sophistication or "good writing"(Courtmanche, 2010), nor can standards guarantee that.

Furthermore, neither American employers, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), nor all college professors have complained solely about sophistication. Employers have voiced concern over employees who are unable to write cohesive and coherent emails. Seventy percent of American 12th graders were not proficient in writing English (NAEP, 2011). While much debate exists over the word proficient, specifically regarding NAEP, the rating of "proficient" meant the student writer "demonstrate[d]a grasp of writing skills that are essential for success in most walks of life; these skills include the use of transitional elements and the

ability to select language appropriate for the intended audience" (Indicator Writing Proficiency,

n.d.). Transitional elements are simply words, clauses, and phrases that connect one paragraph to

the next; the grade-level standards do include them (Transitions, 2021). If those standards, and

all the other components listed in various standards, were taught, students would be able to

produce a work-appropriate email, even if it occasionally includes an emoji, but they cannot.

Therefore, having learning standards is not a panacea for educational outcomes in general or

writing instruction in particular. The problem lies in our understanding and implementation of

standardization.

Standardization, or standards, generally refers to learning goals and learning assessments.

However, a substantial gap exists between standardized learning goals and standardized learning

assessments– and between the two are unstandardized assignments. Standards providing

agencies offer assignment suggestions, and specifications on how to meet the standards are state-

directed and district-directed. in the case of the types of assignments given, teachers have leeway

or freedom to make those decisions, and the assignment types that students participate in or are

offered vary between teachers. In a 2009 survey of teachers (Kiuhara et al, 2009), researchers

reported that most secondary English teachers only assigned research papers to students once or

twice per year, and only about 8% of teachers assigned research papers quarterly. Nineteen

percent of teachers surveyed assigned persuasive essay assignments more than four times a year

and 30% of teachers assigned persuasive essays once per semester (Graham et al, 2009). The

survey also showed that most teachers assigned short answers, reading responses, journal entries,

and worksheets weekly (Kiuhara et al, 2009). Moreover, the report revealed that teachers rarely

require business-writing assignments; business writing was addressed by most teachers only

once or twice a year, usually in the form of a business letter or a how-to-write email assignment (Kiuhara et al, 2009).

However, teacher-assigned writing opportunities are not the only area lacking standardization, as teacher-led instruction also varies. The majority of teachers only gave direct instruction a few times a month or once a year, and 3% never gave direct instruction. Similarly, only 20% of teachers gave grammar instruction weekly (Applebee et al, 2006). Overall, about 59% of teachers taught grammar less than once a month. While most teachers were not providing evidenced-based direct instruction or grammar instruction regularly, between 45% and 40% were (Graham et al, 2014). While the common consensus is that grammar instruction is ineffective, studies have demonstrated that it is productive when explicitly taught (Fogel & Ehri, 2006). Poor grammar is a common complaint among employers and first-year college writing instructors. The lack of standardization among in-class instruction and assigned writing opportunities has tangible costs for students. Employers have publicly voiced that they will hire the better writer over the more technically skilled (Holland, 2013). Additionally, substandard writing instruction and ability cause many students to become trapped in the expensive, and often difficult to escape, remedial non-credit course cycle. Remedial classes, in general, prevent students from attending credit-earning courses and impede their ability to move into degree programs or matriculate from community college to attend universities, which often negates the savings of community college and impedes future earnings (Jimenez et al., 2016). Therefore, in addition to employer and academia frustrations, these writing instruction decisions have real effects that have the potential to economically impact generations and entire communities.

Though disparities between writing instruction are concerning and affect student writing, it would be misleading to blame teacher decisions. Teachers may have the freedom to choose

assignments, but the lack of class instruction standardization is not the sole cause or issue within writing instruction. Legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Every Student Succeeds Act, as well as initiatives like Common Core and other state education standards affect writing instruction by influencing teacher focus (Applebee and Langer, 2006).

Preparation and Attitudes

Since 1872, problems within writing instruction have been addressed by closely examining how and what students are taught to write. This emphasis has led politicians to focus on legislation, education policymakers to study standards, and education scholars to examine methodology or process. However, over the last twenty years, researchers are increasingly interested in who is teaching. NCLB notably added the requirement of highly qualified teachers to its funding mandate (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The US Department of Education defines highly qualified as "a teacher who is fully licensed by the state, has at least a bachelor's degree, and has demonstrated competency in each subject taught (Virginia Department of Education, 2010). What does demonstrated competency mean in the case of teaching writing? A 2009 survey of high school teachers across the nation showed that 71% of participants found that their "formal preparation for writing instruction in their college teacher preparation programs was negligible" (Sundeen, 2015). A 2014 survey showed that only 36% of middle school teachers felt their college programs equipped them to teach students how to write and only 9% reported that they had been prepared for writing instruction in their college teaching program (Myers et al., 2016). Most writing instruction is embedded in literacy coursework. A 2013 Brenner survey of undergraduate literacy course titles found that across the surveyed states, only five courses were dedicated to writing instruction (Myers et al, 2016).

Unfortunately, most English teachers are not prepared to teach writing, and some scholars questioned whether Common Core would make a significant difference in student writing outcomes. In 2014, a Shanahan and Shanahan study emphasized, "the CCSS are explicit in requiring teachers to teach the literacy (including writing) of science, literature, and history, and states that did not adopt the CCSS are making this shift as well" (Myers et al., 2016). While the need for teacher preparation has been clear, it has remained unheeded. The National Writing Commission in 2003, and over the subsequent five years, said that preservice teacher programs needed to include writing instruction in the pedagogy (Myers et al., 2016). Writing is a complex skill, and without proper preparation or explicit instruction (Totten, 2005) teachers will not be able to effectively implement any writing standards in their secondary classrooms.

The effects of inadequate teacher preparation have costs, and despite repeated studies showing the need to include explicit writing in preservice teacher programs (Gavigan, 2017), academia has been slow to change. Therefore, the responsibility falls on school districts to bridge the gap and supplement writing during professional development. Scholars, like Richard Andrews argue "that teachers' writing identities shape their literacy instruction (Myers et al, 2016). When the teachers feel unprepared to teach writing, they lack the motivation to incorporate writing assignments that secondary students need for success. Other studies, some as far back as 1996, showed that when teachers identify as writers and can model the process, their students become better writers (Myers et al., 2016). However, when teachers had a negative attitude regarding their writer identity, they did not give their students sufficient opportunities to become writers. Moreover, they failed to implement new strategies in their classrooms (Doubet & Southhall, 2018).

This situation results in teachers incorporating writing in their instruction but failing to teach students the skills to write for academic purposes and college success (Fanetti et al, 2010). Nevertheless, effective professional development provides explicit instruction (Sundeen, 2016) and onsite training to its teachers. The training also needs to be ongoing (Doubet & Southhall, 2018). Teachers must be accountable to ensure proven writing strategies are effectively incorporated into the curriculum. Moreover, teachers need access to writing instruction resources, as many teachers are unfamiliar with teacher guides or have trouble accessing them (Burdock & Greer, 2017). However, national organizations, such as the Council of Writing Program Administrators and the National Writing Project, have published frameworks to supplement teacher writing education. Lack of guidance leads teachers to rely on their undergraduate writing experience to teach their students. The problem with teachers relying solely on personal experience is that, given the U.S history with writing instruction, the teacher may not write well, and he or she may not be able to explain the process of how or why to students. Teachers may also improperly use writing techniques. A 2008 Graham and Cutler study showed that 72% of the teachers surveyed used fragmented writing techniques in their curriculum (Cutler & Graham, 2008).

Examining the current problems that hinder secondary student writing is essential to providing sustainable and applicable solutions. While the problems appear to be continuous and insurmountable, educators and school districts across the US are working to improve secondary student writing and prepare their students for higher education and employment. Chapter 3 explores programs and examines the methods that might improve writing outcomes for high school students.

Chapter 3

Strategies that Improve Secondary Writing Instruction

Noted literacy and educational psychology researcher Steve Graham said in an interview, "We are really at the very beginning of understanding writing" (Liu, 2016), which is true. Writing is complex, and much of the research about it "has focused on the processes that take place after content has been generated" (Galbraith & Baaijen, 2018). Galbraith and Baaijen posited that writing is the result of two processes: one being knowledge-constituting and the other knowledge-transforming (Galbraith & Baaijen, 2018). They assert that the popular approach to writing, and the expectation thereof, is similar to a self-regulated general rallying the troops – void of passion but brimming with efficiency – to enact a strategy against an enemy. The researchers acknowledge that this is true to a point, but they also explain that writing involves

> [a] different kind of difficulty […] that is intrinsic to the process. It arises from the implicit nature of much of our knowledge. The content that we write about is not pre-stored, waiting only on us to decide how best to deploy it, but is instead something that is constituted as we write. And the process of constituting this content is not straightforward but is instead a matter of trying to capture our understanding as it unfolds in the text (Galbraith & Baaijen, 2018)

In other words, writing is difficult, and teachers are asked to guide students to produce composition products even though scholars, policymakers, and the public do not fully understand the process by which writing products are made. Recognizing that writing is more than simply putting pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard is the first step to understanding there is no one magical formula to craft a well-written final product, even though some have attempted to do so.

While scholars and the public tend to be beholden to their education traditions, overlooking the benefits of other perspectives (Liu, 2016), there are "[many] different tools [to] help children become better writers" (Liu, 2016).

The last chapter examines current problems within secondary writing instruction, and it included the impact of not having a clear and concise definition of college writing. Chapter 2 also discussed the negative effects of legislation and policy, teacher attitudes, and teacher preparation on secondary student writing outcomes. While national data (NAEP, 2011) (Kiahura et al, 2014) indicate that, overall, US secondary student writing instruction does not meet the requirements for college course work or employment, there are tools, interventions, and strategies that have positively affected student writing. Chapter 3 introduces the effective evidence-based methods that have improved student writing outcomes. This chapter also discusses effective professional development methods for schools by examining the successful implementation of a writing program at a low-performing school.

Evidence-based practices

In other words, writing is difficult, and teachers are asked to guide students to produce composition products even though scholars, policymakers, and the public do not fully understand the process by which writing products are made. Understanding that writing is more than simply putting pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard is the first step to understanding that there is no one magical formula to craft a well-written final product, despite some attempting to do so. Even though scholars and the public tend to be beholden to their particular education traditions and overlook the benefits of other perspectives (Liu, 2016), since the signing of the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers have been required to use evidence-based practices. As discussed by Steve

Graham, evidence-based is not a panacea for all writing woes. A 2015 study of evidence-based

practices in writing instruction included 50 strategies from 20 meta-analyses (Troia et al, 2015),

which is data from independent studies, articles, or dissertations (Tao & Ke-Qin, 2016). In the

study, researchers measured the strategies' effects on the following outcomes: writing quality,

adherence to conventions, text length, motivation, metacognitive effect, writing length, academic

achievement, genre elements, and frequency of revision (Troia et al, 2015). This section

discusses the four most impactful interventions that improve student writing quality.

Comprehensive Writing Program

What exactly is a comprehensive writing program? According to a 2001 study, a

comprehensive writing program requires that the explicit teaching of (a) the steps of the writing

process and (b) the critical dimensions of different writing genres be provided, as well as (c)

structures for giving extensive feedback to students on the quality of their writing from either

teachers or peers (Baker, Gersten, & Graham, 2003). When researchers call for explicit

instruction, they mean the teacher needs to present the objective or purpose of the assignment

clearly and divide the lesson into small sections, each with a clear explanation. Teachers also

need to model the process so that students know exactly what they are to do. Furthermore,

teachers must provide students opportunities to practice. This step is followed by instructive

feedback, which shows each student how to fix their mistakes by explaining why their original

choice did not quite fit (if applicable) (Lee, 2020). Explicit instruction regarding writing would

entail teachers explaining the three components of writing (planning, writing, rewriting)

separately.

Planning instructional lessons requires the teacher to use a mnemonic aid to prompt the

student to plan before writing. They can also use think sheets or planning pages, as described in a

2003 article about writing applications (Anderson and Hidi, 1988) and examples. These types of

aids help students to brainstorm their ideas. Planning aids are important because poor writing

quality often stems from disorganization, which results from unfocused content. When modeling

the process, the teacher needs to select a topic, complete the think sheet, and brainstorm his or

her ideas in front of the class so that students can model that action. After completing the

planning step, teachers must explain how to write, which includes explaining different text

structures (description, sequence, problem and solution, cause, and effect, and compare and

contrast) and provides the student with a framework for their writing. Teachers then use an

example topic and model how they would approach that topic using the different structures.

Finally, students need multiple opportunities to practice writing different text structures with

feedback before being assigned to a particular graded assignment. Once the writing step is

completed, the student must attend a feedback conference with their teacher before revising or

rewriting the assignment. Lastly, the student must turn in an independent assignment.

Admittedly, this approach to writing is work-intensive and is often bypassed for less time-

consuming approaches. However, comprehensive teaching has a strong influence on student

writing quality outcomes (.81 means effect rate) and is effective for students with learning

disabilities and students with an average ability (Baker et al., 2003).

However, the writing process is not the only criterion for a comprehensive writing

approach; the teacher must also explain the different genres of writing. In the secondary school

classroom, there are typically four genres discussed: explanations, narratives, arguments, and

reports (Beck & Jeffrey, 2007) (Some offer five genre classifications: expository, persuasive,

narrative, descriptive, and business –journals and letters). In expository writing, the student must

explain why something exists or works in a rational order, and the writing is usually divided into

sections based on how it relates to or falls in the sequence (Beck & Jeffrey, 2007). Narrative

writing "begins with an orientation to characters and setting and establishment of point of view;

Subsequent sections are usually temporally organized in chronological order" (Beck & Jeffrey,

2007). When writing reports, students are expected to present factual information in

chronological order. Moreover, reports typically have a statement that introduces the topic or

subject to be discussed. Argument writing usually requires students to take a position, provide a

thesis statement, support their position with evidence, and draw a conclusion (Beck & Jeffrey,

2007). Teachers are expected to provide examples and model what each genre looks like. They

should also provide "extensive feedback" to students. Therefore, they are expected to dialogue

with students about their writing throughout the process. For example, the teacher could draw

attention to connections between ideas or have the student explain the connection during

brainstorming. The teacher could also include feedback in the form of peer reviews. Provided the

feedback offers "frequent comments, thoughts and suggestions, missing elements, observed

problems, and specific strengths," it will help the student unravel what Englert called the

"mysteries of writing" (Englert, 1990).

Summarization Instruction

        Another evidence-based practice is summarization instruction, which involves "teaching

students how to concisely and accurately present information read in writing (Graham & Perin,

2007). Teaching students to summarize is a difficult task, primarily because the skills needed for

summary writing are different from most other forms of writing. To properly write a summary,

students be able to reword text and eliminate unnecessary information while maintaining the

original meaning of the author (Anderson & Hidi, 1988). In the past, scholars have typically

adopted three approaches to summary writing: teaching a set of summarization rules, using

summary writing to confirm confirmation, or actively teaching content through summarizing

with charts, graphic organizers, and matrices (Anderson & Hidi, 1988). Teachers can guide

students through the process by helping them create a framework by asking, "a) what are the

main ideas? b) what are the crucial details necessary for supporting the ideas? c) what

information is irrelevant or unnecessary? (Summarizing, 2021). Research demonstrates that

summarization instruction is one of the most effective ways to improve student writing as well as

their reading comprehension (Anderson & Hidi, 1988) (Graham & Perin, 2007). This practice

means the effective rate in the 2007 study was .82, which is slightly better than the

comprehensive approach's effect (but it should be noted that the summarization writing is a more

targeted intervention).

Peer Collaboration

While some teachers may avoid engaging fully with the comprehensive writing program,

they may be more inclined to use peer collaboration or collaborative writing practices as a form

of group work. This intervention is appealing because, as one teacher wrote, "when the

classroom expectation is that students will be collaborating about their writing and sharing what

they have written with others, they begin to take ownership of their written pieces (Schneider,

2018). Collaborative writing can be defined as "teachers developed instructional arrangements

where students worked together to plan, draft, revise, and/or edit their compositions (Graham &

Perin, 2007). In a 2009 national survey of US secondary teachers writing instruction practices,

between 42% and 43% of ELA teacher participants used some form of collaborative writing

practices at least one to two times a month as part of their writing strategy. Overall, 28% of

secondary teachers used peer collaboration for writing products (Kiahura & Graham, 2009).

Collaborative writing can include students sharing work with peers or conferencing with another

student. Feedback is essential and it is a distinguishing feature that separates collaborative

writing from cooperative writing (Kiahura & Graham, 2014).

For this strategy to be effective, teachers have to guide students through the process of

collaborative writing by carefully assigning groups and fully explaining how each should engage

their classmate's writing, in other words, show how a student should read a peer's work and

explain their responses. Far too often, students "try to emulate their teachers or respond as

editors" (Collaborative Learning/Learning with Peers,*2020*), which is ineffective. "Students

should be taught four reading perspectives for effective peer collaboration: reading as a common

reader, reading to know the writer, reading to improve the paper, reading to diagnose the

problem" (*Collaborative Learning/Learning with Peers,2020*).

Understanding these reader stances or perspectives gives direction to the group and

facilitates discussion. When a student reads like a common reader, he or she is thinking about

how the work resonated personally and track those feelings (*Collaborative Learning/Learning

with Peers,2020*). Were they excited or happy? "A negative response to a paper reflects a

problem with the writing. If a reader is bored, the paper is likely unfocused" (*Collaborative

Learning/Learning with Peers,2020*). When reading to know the writer, the student "should try

to determine what feelings, values, opinions, and assumptions might be undermining a text. They

should also try to determine what the writer does (and does not) know about academic writing"

(*Collaborative Learning/Learning with Peers,2020*). For instance, if the writer is using the lower

register or nonacademic words in a piece, such as describing garments during colonial times as

"drip", it gives peers a place to start during the editing process. If given proper direction,

students are typically able to tell their peers about problems within the paper. However, they

have trouble explaining how to improve it. This would require teachers to model general areas of

improvement for this step to have a maximum effect (*Collaborative Learning/Learning with Peers,2020*). Students do not just need to know how to read others' work, but also how to deliver their responses, which can include asking questions, summarizing, and labeling problems. Teachers can help students identify which is most appropriate.

Peer collaboration has also been shown to increase student motivation, which Boscolo and Hidi's 2007 study revealed was one of "the many culprits for the failure of students who struggle in writing classrooms" (Darrington & Dousay, 2015). Students "are motivated by an improvement in their writing competencies in collaborative writing [often because] the products that were created surpassed their expectations" (Talib & Cheung, 2017). Teachers "can make efforts to scaffold the writing process for these students, but that alone does not seem to increase students' motivation to write," but collaborative writing does. It is vital to remember that while peer collaboration is easier to implement than a comprehensive writing plan, it only has a .75 mean effect rate (Graham, 2009) and should be used as part of secondary teachers' writing instruction strategy and not as the only strategy.

Strategy Instruction

Of the four evidence-based practices discussed in this chapter, strategy instruction helps student writing improve the most with a 1.04 mean effective rate. Strategy instruction includes all the elements described in the comprehensive intervention but also teaches the student how to learn and how to choose the right strategy for writing assignments (Lee, 2020). A popular strategy instruction method is the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), which requires teachers to provide their students with a plan to complete argumentative writing assignments and show students how to control or regulate their behaviors regarding writing. It also addresses teacher behavior when teaching students how to write. SRSD's teacher instructional stages

consist of "(a) developing background knowledge, (b) discussing the strategy, (c) modeling the

strategy, (d) memorizing the strategy, (e) supporting the strategy, and (f) independent

performance" (Ray et al., 2018).

The teacher-provided writing strategy is typically a mnemonic device to help students

remember their goals for an assignment and how to organize their writing. A 2015 study on

teaching children to write history essays used the mnemonic prompt of TACKLED to help

students organize their writing. TACKLED reminded students to find or make (a) topical focus,

thesis, and timeframe (b) arguments, analysis, or assertion, (c) conceptual focus, counter

argument or criteria, (d) keywords, (e) logic, (f) expectation of question or evidence, (g) details

and data (Tze, 2015). In the 2019 study, researchers used participants of the 2019 study that

measured the success of SRSD on college entrance writing assessments. They used HIT SONGS

as the mnemonic. The first word HIT reminded students to write a "(a) hook, (b) introduce the

topic, and (c) thesis", which are the key components needed to develop a paragraph. The second

word, SONG reminds students to:

> (a) State the perspective, (b) Outlook on the perspective, (c) Need examples, and

> (d) Give your opinion. The final portion of the mnemonic, S3, reminded students

> what [must] be included in the conclusion paragraph: (a) Support your thesis, (b)

> State the relationships between your thesis and the perspectives given in the

> prompt, and (c) Summary (Ray et al., 2018).

After providing students with a writing strategy, teachers must equip students with self-

regulation skills. Students are taught how to plan goals, evaluate their own writing against

prompts, encourage themselves to follow writing plans, and to "self-reinforce". Students often

lack these skills and require explicit instruction on how to do them. Students are expected to

assess some of their needs and use appropriate self-talk strategies. In an example used in the study, "a student who tended to rush through work, instructed himself to take his time when writing" (Ray et al., 2018)

However, the SRSD approach requires teachers to incorporate the six strategies in their approach. Teachers are expected to help the students gain the background knowledge of argumentative writing and not just provide them with a mnemonic device. The teacher must also discuss each step and explain to the student why each step in the chosen writing process is important. This knowledge is reinforced through reading and analyzing the steps by reviewing successful essays (Ray et al., 2018). Once establishing the importance of the steps, teachers must model that process for students, which is strategy three, and demonstrate self-regulation techniques. For example, in the study, the teacher "modeled self-evaluation by changing ideas from the notes to make a stronger argument when composing the essay and by rereading the completed essay and correcting any mistakes" (Ray et al., 2018). Teachers should also help students create their own self-rules for writing. To complete strategy four, teachers help students memorize the lessons learned during strategies one through three. The fifth strategy requires teachers to work collaboratively with "the [student] to use self-instruction and self-reinforcement when working through the writing process and evaluated and graphed their progress on a goal-setting sheet" (Ray et al., 2018). The last strategy allows teachers to let the student independently complete a writing assignment.

Similar to the comprehensive approach, strategy instruction is an involved teaching method, but it is the most effective at improving struggling writers' content quality, including those with learning disabilities. The co-designer of the method noted that he does not expect teachers to do every step because while that is optimal, it is also unrealistic. Teachers need the

freedom to "use their own words when they teach, modify instruction based on their own circumstances and students, and blend it into what they are currently doing" (Lui, 2016).

This section provides examples of effective evidence-based writing interventions that require a varying degree of involvement. Unfortunately, most teachers do not use these practices for various reasons: Firstly, "study success" does not always equate to classroom success and, secondly, teachers do not always have access to quality teacher training that prioritizes writing instruction.

Successful professional development for writing instruction

If researchers have identified more than 15 different evidence-based writing interventions to improve content quality, why do so many students struggle with writing? Chapter 2 explains various factors that negatively affect secondary student writing instruction, including the lack of writing instruction in most pre-service programs and in-service professional development. While teacher programs appear to be slow to include explicit writing instruction pedagogy, there are active measures to include and improve writing instruction in teacher professional development programs to improve secondary student writing outcomes (Lui, 2017). This section examines successful teacher professional development practices by examining the implementation of a writing program at a Long Island, New York, high school.

A revolutionary approach

In 2008, New Dorp High School students were family; only 67% of its students could pass the English Regents, a New York state standardized exam, and only 63% of its students graduated (Tyre, 2012). After a years-long investigation, the principal, Deirdre DeAngelis, and her teachers concluded that students were failing because "translat[ing] thoughts into coherent, well-argued sentences, paragraphs, and essays was severely impeding intellectual growth in

many subjects" (Tyre, 2012). DeAngelis also decided that in the following school year, New

Dorp students were going to learn how to write.

The process to transform writing at the school started only once they focused on teacher

instruction, as previous attempts with learning pods and after-school programs did not work

(Tyre, 2018). The education consultant that DeAngelis hired found that most of the teachers,

even after getting rid of "bad apples," approached the goal of improving student writing with

negativity; teachers felt that their students were not capable of writing well (Tyre, 2018).

Teachers thought students were lazy and "rarely communicated in full sentences, much less

expressed complex thoughts"(Tyre, 2012). In a group setting, the consultant challenged the

teachers' ideas by asking them to think about the majority of students who struggled, not the

student that misbehaved. The teachers were then able to examine possible factors beyond

laziness that impeded student writing. For example, a history teacher noted that struggling

student writers' sentences were short and disjointed (Tyre, 2012). Students had trouble with

transitions such as *however* and *despite* and coordinating conjunctions such as *yet* and *but* (Tyre,

2012).

DeAngelis took a few of her teachers to a private school, Windward, for students with

learning disabilities and average learning ability, which was known for improving student

writing (Tyre, 2012). Students at Windward are "explicitly taught how to turn ideas into simple

sentences, and how to construct complex sentences from simple ones by supplying the answer to

three prompts—*but*, *because,* and *so*." They also teach writing across all subjects (Tyre, 2012).

After seeing the Windward faculty in action, DeAngelis sought to bring their program back to

New Dorp, and with the help of Windward's head of school, who frequently visited New Dorp

and advised teachers, they did. Teachers at New Dorp had to revamp their curriculum. Every

class had writing instruction except for math (Tyre, 2012). For example, the chemistry class had

a "lesson on the properties of hydrogen and oxygen, [which] was followed by a worksheet that

required [them] to describe the elements with subordinating clauses" (Tyre, 2012). Students were

expected to begin sentences with a word like "despite." They were also challenged to be more

precise with words during class discussions. Teachers explicitly taught parts of speech and what

constituted a paragraph. Two years after making changes, New Dorp students demonstrated

improved writing ability and their English Regents pass rate went from 67% to 89% (Tyre,

2012).

How was this possible? New Dorp's principal understood the need for teacher

professional development. As discussed in Chapter 2, teacher attitude negatively affects writing

instruction. According to the article, New Dorp secondary teachers "never connected that failure

to specific flaws in their own teaching" (Tyre, 2012). Good teacher professional development

programs, especially as they concern writing, address teacher attitudes. This is an important first

step because the teacher's attitude will determine whether teachers fully implement evidence-

based writing instruction interventions (Doubet & Southall, 2017).

The New Dorp Principal also roughly followed a four-phase teacher collaboration model,

which requires teachers to identify and explore the problem, hypothesize, and implement,

analyze and examine the data, and reframe and sustain progress (Forrest & Moquett, 2016).

DeAngelis began the process in 2006, reframed (looked at what needed to be revised) in 2008,

and subsequently started over in 2008. The education consultant helped the teachers identify and

explore the problem and possible solutions before implementing the Windward plan (Tyre,

2012). DeAngelis also offered her teachers support, a critical factor in any good professional

development program (McKeown et al., 2016). By visiting Windward and subsequently having

their head of school implement and monitor the change in curriculum and overall approach to in-

class instruction, DeAngelis also fulfilled most of the objectives of practice-based professional

development, which requires:

> (a) collective participation of teachers within the same school with similar needs;
>
> (b) basing PD around the characteristics, strengths, and needs of current students;
>
> (c) attention to content knowledge needs of teachers, including pedagogical
>
> content knowledge; (d) opportunities for active learning and practice of the new
>
> methods being learned, including opportunities to see and analyze examples of
>
> these methods being used; (e) use of materials and other artifacts during PD that
>
> are identical to those to be used in the classroom; and (f) feedback on
>
> performance while learning, prior to classroom use, so that understandings and
>
> skills critical in implementation are developed (McKeown et al., 2016).

This is also supported by a Doubet and Southall study that analyzed the factors that

encouraged or discouraged teachers to implement new strategies in their instruction. Teachers in

this study were more likely to adopt integrative literacy interventions when they involve

modeling and hands-on practice (Doubet & Southall, 2017). DeAngelis instructed her teachers to

use a method of instruction that aligns with the objectives of SRSD by specifically including

strategies for genre-specific and general writing employed across the writing process, the

knowledge (such as vocabulary, background knowledge, declarative knowledge, procedural

knowledge, and conditional knowledge) needed to use these strategies, and strategies for self-

regulation (McKeown et al., 2016).

While there are many exceptional administrators like DeAngelis, who provide effective

professional development opportunities for teachers, most teachers do not share that experience.

A 2017 paper showed that organizations like the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) and the National Writing Project publish frameworks to supplement teacher writing education, but they are unknown or inaccessible to many teachers (Burdick & Greer, 2017). This is an unfortunate reality because the same study also demonstrated that 54% of teachers, who knew about the CWPA framework, referred to it for class instruction. It should be noted that a teacher referring to a framework does not mean that the teacher is fully or correctly implementing a writing strategy.

This chapter examined effective evidence-based writing instruction interventions that improved writing outcomes. It also highlighted effective professional teacher development practices by examining how one low-performing school improved writing. Again, it is important to acknowledge that writing is complex and often difficult for many students (Galbraith & Baaijen, 2018). For many teachers, it is also difficult to teach. However, instruction and writing products improve when effective strategies are modeled for teachers and students and opportunities for guided practice are offered. The following section concludes with recommendations to assist in improving secondary writing instruction, and it is followed by the Bridging the Gap Teacher's Guide. The guide provides administrators and teachers with a roadmap for writing instruction that will help them appropriately address the needs of the students with evidence-based interventions for improved secondary student writing outcomes.

Conclusion

From my research, I was able to understand the history of writing instruction within the United States by examining how the expectations, theories, and approaches to writing, developed by university professors, affected not only students pursuing higher education but also students within the high school English classroom. This historical review revealed that a significant factor that contributes to ineffective writing is the lack of consensus regarding what college-level or college-ready writing is. This lack of consensus coupled with disparate voices concerning the purpose of writing and correct emphasis for its instruction resulted in limited writing instruction coursework in teacher preparation programs. This subsequently leaves many teachers feeling ill-equipped to assign and grade writing activities and, at times, contributes to negative feelings regarding student writing ability.

My research also showed how education policy analysts and political decisions affect student writing outcomes, both indirectly and directly. The passing of 2002's No Child Left Behind legislation changed the way the federal government interacted with local school districts by tying funding to measurable academic achievement, most commonly through the form of standardized testing in mathematics and reading. The intense focus on math and reading literacy caused teachers to spend less time on untested subjects and led to a reduction in classroom time devoted to writing (Applebee and Langer, 2006). The National Commission on Writing warned that student communication abilities were at risk (Applebee and Langer, 2006), and in 2011, their predictions became reality with the writing results on the National Report Card, which revealed less than 73% of 8th-grade and12[th] -grade students were proficient writers (NAEP, 2011).

However, there have also been positive advances concerning writing education. While there is a fair amount of research that analyzes the shortcomings in secondary school writing instruction, there are also researchers and educators who have found methods and strategies for writing that work, from comprehensive writing programs to strategy instruction combined with peer collaboration. Organizations such as the National Writing Project have developed training, workshops, and programs to help, but they cannot help everybody.

It was the understanding that every guide and program is not accessible to every school and teacher that guided my research and my teacher's guide which follows. While researching writing instruction history, the factors that impede positive writing outcomes and successful writing programs were essential to understanding why American students struggle with writing that was not the sole goal of my research. I set out to provide teachers with an easy-to-implement plan that used familiar concepts and tasks to improve student writing outcomes. I combined my understanding of the factors that contribute to gaps in writing secondary school writing instruction with the best evidence-based practices that address the most common writing problems voiced by teachers to produce a guide for teachers to help their students develop college-ready writing skills to prepare them for the post-secondary writing needed for higher education or employment.

In addition to directing the focus of the teacher's guide, the research also shows that there are changes that can be implemented at the local or even individual teacher level that can make a difference to the delivery of writing instruction in the secondary classroom. Therefore, I will conclude Bridging the Gap between Secondary School Writing Instruction and Post-Secondary

Writing Needs with recommendations that will equip secondary school teachers to deliver effective writing instruction.

Recommendations

Recommendation One: Standardization

With the introduction of 2002's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and 2009's Race to the Top (RTTT), schools were incentivized to have students complete more standardized tests to receive additional federal funding. Over the years, parents, students, and even teachers have expressed outrage over increasing standardized testing, often charging that it diverts attention from learning to test preparation. Concerning education, people automatically equate the topic of standardization, within the educational context, to the negative aspects associated with testing, but standardization is not a negative thing. In fact, standardization ensures quality. Therefore, while school districts and some teachers may want to reduce the amount of testing overall, they should embrace standardization in writing instruction.

What do I mean by standardization within writing instruction? In Chapter 3, we were introduced to New Dorp High School, which transformed its English test past rate from 67% to 89% in two years. Its success was largely due to following a specific writing plan appropriate for each subject. Teachers were not left to guess or rely on their creativity to add writing assignments to their lesson plans, nor were they required to select which writing genre was most effective. However, that is not the case for most schools. For instance, 12th grade Common Core Writing standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7 lists that students should "conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate" (*Grade 11-12*. English Language Arts, n.d.). What is a well-sustained research project? What does this mean to a first-

year teacher without formal and direct writing education, as opposed to a 10-year veteran teacher? The answer: it depends on the teacher. Moreover, this reality means that students will continue to receive inequitable writing instruction and poor writing outcomes because the data shows that many teachers do not always select the most effective writing activities that support students gaining the skills for post-secondary success.

I recommend that schools and educational agencies pair current skill-based standards with specific assignment requirements. Schools, particularly curriculum developers, need to incorporate a variety of writing genres and writing products, with explicit guidelines, into the curriculum. For instance, instead of having the vague standard that suggests "more sustained research", the requirement should stipulate that 10 to 15 sources are needed as well as a defined page length. In addition to research papers, teachers should be required to regularly utilize five-paragraph essays for writing-to-learn assignments, as they are short enough to be assigned frequently but long enough to allow students to practice key writing skills such as transitional elements, which is an area of concern for many teachers.

Recommendation Two: Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

As discussed in Chapter 1, writing instruction has been a concern among secondary and post-secondary teachers since the nineteenth century. However, teacher programs have not universally provided writing pedagogy as part of preservice teacher training. Additionally, schools do not always offer adequate professional in-service development to equip teachers with the necessary skills for delivering writing instruction. Research shows that when teachers feel ill-equipped and lack confidence in their ability to teach students how to write, they harshly judge their students' writing abilities and limit student writing opportunities.

I recommend that school administrators support teachers by providing a two-week intensive writing instruction training for all secondary teachers that resembles not only the training faculty received at New Dorp High School in Long Island but also an adapted jumpstart described in the Bridging the Gap Teacher's Guide. This will allow teachers to understand the versatility of the five-paragraph essay, review writing conventions, and understand which writing genres and activities best bring about the desired writing outcomes. Teachers should then attend a workshop that explicitly demonstrates how they can modify writing assignments based on their respective subjects. Then, as supported by the data, administrators should conduct bi-weekly check-ins and monthly in-class evaluations to ensure that writing tasks are given and that the comprehensive plan is followed. While schools could decide to use strategy instruction, it is more time-consuming and would require a commitment to support teachers to fulfill it.

Recommendation Three: Defining College-Level English

One of the most surprising topics I encountered while researching is the lack of consensus over what signifies college-level student writing. While I posit in the thesis and the guide that the goal should be for students to be college-writing ready as opposed to writing on college-level, I also realize that the goal may be a minority position. Therefore, if schools and English educators insist on students writing at college-level, then writing expectations – at least the first and second years of post-secondary writing – should be adapted to be defined as a student's ability to present written information in the assigned genre style (Indicator Writing Proficiency, n.d.), use the appropriate audience register for word choice, properly use transitional elements, follow the common grammar and mechanic conventions, and submit in the proper format. This definition addresses the most common teacher writing complaints and will ensure that students are college-ready and have the foundational skills to support sophistication.

Bridging the Gap Teachers Guide

Over the last decade, there has been a growing conversation surrounding writing

instruction in the US. With the introduction of No Child Left Behind in the early 2000s,

emphasis was placed on reading and mathematics. As classroom teachers focused on subjects

that would be tested, across the country, less time was spent on writing. In 2011, a national

report showed that less than 27% of tested 8th and 12th graders were considered to have proficient

writing ability. In addition to students struggling with writing, teachers often reported that they

received little to no writing instruction in their pre-service education and limited writing

instruction as part of professional development after they started teaching. Studies indicate that

in-service writing programs are generally successful in training teachers to be successful writing

instructors because they allow teachers to build confidence and give them tools to help struggling

students, but oftentimes they are cost-prohibitive. Other surveys show that some of the more

useful digital writing frameworks are not readily accessible or are not easy to implement into

classroom instruction.

While teacher training and shifting priorities regarding educational policy affected

writing outcomes, another contributing factor to the underdevelopment of postsecondary writing

readiness is the predominance of literary analysis assignments to the detriment of learning other

writing categories commonly used in college and employment. In secondary English classrooms,

the most heavily weighted assignments are usually those associated with literature. In addition to

unfamiliarity with other writing categories, secondary teachers also express concern over

sentence structure and grammar errors, as well as more subjective complaints regarding the lack

of writing sophistication. In 2018, the New York Times ran an article, "Why Kids Can't Write"

that sparked a conversation amongst teachers and non-educators alike. Nonteachers often

focused on technology differences as the source of poor student writing performance,

particularly text language such as emoticons and acronyms. However, teachers most often

commented on grammar and sentence structure errors within student writing. Errors related to

grammar and sentence structure are common areas of concern on teacher blogs and in surveys,

which mirrors what I experienced most as a youth coordinator.

The Bridging the Gap guide aims to be accessible and easy to use and, therefore, utilizes

writing tools and formats with which educators and students are most familiar. For instance,

Bridging the Gap is a proponent of the five-paragraph essay despite it being loathed by college

and high school teachers. Often, opponents lament that the five-paragraph essay is formulaic and

"prone to produce papers with stilted organization" (Guzik, n.d.), which is a hollow complaint.

In Russell Bertrand's five-paragraph autobiography, the second paragraph states the following:

> I have sought love, first, because it brings ecstasy—ecstasy so great that I would have
>
> sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy. I have sought it next because it
>
> relieves loneliness—that terrible loneliness in which one's shivering consciousness looks
>
> over the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss. I have sought it,
>
> finally, because in the union of love I have seen, in a mystic miniature, the prefiguring
>
> vision of the heaven that saints and poets have imagined. This is what I have sought, and
>
> though it might seem too good for human life, this is what—at last—I have found
>
> (Russell Bertrand).

This essay was chosen because it follows a five-paragraph essay scheme, and its content

proves that this format does not automatically come across as formulaic or disorganized. It is

also important to state there is nothing wrong with students using formulas, as they are tools for

learning (Tyre, 2012). For students to be competent writers, they must be equipped with tools that allow them to communicate information. The five-paragraph essay, in some ways, can be likened to a Swiss army knife, which can be used in a variety of situations, even if it is not always the preferred tool.

The construction theme of Bridging the Gap is intentional and essential to the successful execution of this program, partly because this guide aims to lower the stakes for secondary students and teachers by providing a new lens through which to view student writing. The Bridging the Gap guide requires that writing instructors view students as apprentice writers. To clearly understand, let us examine the definition of an apprentice. An apprentice can be defined as a beginner or one "who is learning by practical experience under skilled workers a trade, art, or calling." By the 12th grade, student writing tasks should resemble the types of writing assignments required in college or the workplace, but as apprentices, they should not be expected to produce work that reflects expert-level sophistication that compels the professor to reread. The word *apprentice* comes from the Latin word *apprendere,* which means "to lay hold of, [to] grasp" (Perrin, 2017). The primary goal of secondary writing instruction is for students to lay hold grasp the rules, appropriate structures, and systems of writing so they can be prepared for either professional communication or higher education assignments. They need to be college-ready but not necessarily at the college level. Nevertheless, some students may demonstrate that level of writing ability. Understanding this gives students more confidence to take risks with their writing, and teachers have the freedom to challenge students with more complex writing activities because the purpose is to learn, not to perfect.

The topics covered in the guide were the result of textual analysis of educator discourse, specifically comments from the "Why Kids Can't Write" and "The Writing Revolution" as well

as teacher blogs (Tyre, 2012; Goldstein, 2017). Then Common Core and Virginia's English

instruction standards were examined to understand grade-appropriate writing goals. Once grade

expectations and teacher interests were determined, Backward Design was used to design the

Bridging the Gap Teachers Guide program. Backward Design is an approach to teaching and

lesson planning that starts with the intended outcome (Dorman, n.d.). For writing, teachers want

their students to be able to communicate their ideas clearly in the appropriate writing style.

   The Bridging the Gap Teacher's Guide is designed to provide educators with a road map to

introduce and reinforce the foundational components of college-ready writing for secondary

students. It adheres to and aligns with Common Core Standards and the Virginia Department of

Education's guidelines for English instruction. The guide is divided into five sections, each

anchored by one of the five categories of writing:

- Persuasive (Argumentative) Writing: "Persuasive writing is a form of nonfiction

   writing that encourages careful word choice, the development of logical arguments,

   and a cohesive summary" (Pircon, 2020).

- Narrative Writing: "Writing that is characterized by a main character in a setting who

   engages with a problem or event in a significant way. As writing instruction goes,

   narrative writing encompasses a lot: author's purpose, tone, voice, structure, in

   addition to teaching sentence structure, organization, and word choice" (Pircon,

   2020).

- Analytical Writing: Writing that "assesses *the* ability to articulate and support

   complex ideas, construct and evaluate arguments, and sustain a focused and

   coherent discussion. It does not assess specific content knowledge*.*" (Pircon, 2020).

- Expository Writing: Predicated on exposition, or the description and explanation of a particular idea. Topics cover most of the gamut of human experience, from inventions to nature, emotions to politics, family to hobbies, and more.

- Business Writing: Any written communication used in a professional setting, including memos and reports It is direct, clear, and designed to be read quickly.

Each chapter allows students to explore the writing category by writing a five-paragraph essay. Teachers will guide students through appropriate parts of the common five-step writing process:

- Prewriting

- Planning and outlining

- Writing the first draft

- Redrafting and revising

- Proofreading and editing

In addition to learning and using the writing process, teachers will help students understand what constitutes complex and logical sentences, determine the correct register and word choice, as well as how to avoid common grammatical errors. Each chapter is structured to fit a standard 50-minute class as part of an eight-day jumpstart or it can be modified to block a schedule (80–100-minute classes). Teachers can also select appropriate activities for their individual classrooms. Chapters include "set the tone" teacher reminders, teacher examples, in-class activities, and at-home assignments.

Chapter 1: Persuasive and Argumentative Writing

In this unit, through the components of a five-paragraph essay, teachers will help their students do the following:

- Understand why writing is important

- Identify parts of speech in their writing

- Recognize successful sentence structures

- Understand what constitutes a good paragraph

- Identify the components of the writing process

- Select words for academic register

Students entering the jumpstart may or may not have had any practical writing instruction in any of their English classes previously. Therefore, it is crucial to their future success for them to learn under a skilled teacher who is committed to imparting the needed knowledge for writing success, which includes a strong why.

Day One: Why must we write?

Students must write because writing is one of the most effective and efficient ways to communicate. Save for some customer service positions, business communication will come in text form, whether email, memos, reports, proposals, resumes, or letters. If higher education is the next step, college students prove their understanding of the material through the written word.

After explaining the necessity of writing, students may also resist the style requirements of school writing. They may not understand or feel that the particulars of prescriptive grammar are necessary, especially given the influence of social media. This is the ideal time to introduce a little fun into a mixed messages activity.

Activity 1
Divide the class into three groups. Each group has a sheet with the emojis and their meanings. Each sheet has the same emojis, but they mean different things. Each group sends an

ambassador with a message. Students from each group guess what the other group's message says. The students will most likely understand some of the other groups' messages, but not completely.

Activity 1 demonstrates the importance of common rules for communication, which is what prescriptive English grammar rules are. Following grammar rules is an act of courtesy when writing. It shows respect for another's time and demonstrates that the writer considers others. Following grammar rules also reduces the frustrations that arise due to miscommunication.

Students are asked to be courteous to their classmates and their teacher by following the grammar rules discussed during their current class. During this time, teachers may also want to explain that while some writers may occasionally break grammar rules, as apprentices for the argumentative assignment, grammar rules need to be followed.

Assignment Example 1

Students are asked to select any topic that does not break any school rules that they would like to learn more about. Then, they must find four sources about the topic and select two quotes from each that will help them answer the following prompt: "Blank" is good or not good for society because of the following three reasons. Wikipedia can be used to find sources but it cannot be a source. The topic and sources should be typed in MLA format.

Assignment Example 1 is not meant to be prescriptive. If the prompt elicits persuasive or argumentative writing, it will work. However, allowing the student to select his or her assignment is highly recommended. Many studies have found that students are more motivated

to write when they are allowed to write about what interests them. It is also suggested that you

select a medium to publish the final products, whether an online blog or website because

research also indicates that students write better when the

audience is not solely comprised of their teacher (Darrington and

Dousay, 2015). It is also important for students to become

familiar with citations. This is also a good place to discuss

plagiarism and its consequences.

Day Two: Writing Process

What is the writing process? The writing process is a

system that allows people to organize and complete their writing tasks. It usually is listed as

having between three and five steps. This guide follows a five-step process: prewriting, planning

and outlining, writing the first draft, redrafting and revising, and proofreading and editing.

Students often struggle to organize their work when writing, which leads to disjointed paragraphs

and misunderstanding.

Setting the tone

Teachers should use the review of the previous day's assignment to introduce the writing

process. This will lower the immediate stakes and encourage students who are skeptical or

insecure about their writing abilities because they have successfully started the writing process

with the first step of pre-writing. As part of lowering the stakes, teachers should explain that this

is a step where students can have fun. Prewriting allows students to explore their topics, organize

their thoughts and ideas, and plan what they want to say (Evmenova &Regan, 2019). Teachers

should tell students as they walk in to have Assignment 1 on their desks. The teacher can begin

the class with the following:

> **Jumpstart Reminder!** To add variety and keep students interested, teachers can collaborate with the school librarian or media specialist to discuss the different aspects of research, while specifying the differences between primary and secondary sources. Teachers should also explain why sites such as Wikipedia, are problematic.

Teacher: *Who did the assignment last night?*

(ask while walking around the room to check)

Good. *I want you to know that you have successfully begun the writing process. Who is*

familiar with the writing process or can tell me the steps?

Pause and allow students to answer before listing the steps: prewrite, plan, and outline, write the

first draft, redraft and revise, and proofread and edit. Thereafter, explain a few ways to pre-write,

such as brainstorming, freewriting, listing, and clustering. This guide recommends that this unit

use a list featuring points that stood out to the students. The teacher should call on two to three

students to share their topic and a few facts they learned about their topics. It is then the teacher's

turn to share and write the teacher's example on the board or use their own.

Teacher Example 1
Topic: Free college - *New York and California used to have a free college option* - *Some southern states make community college free for students with B averages* - *Student debt restricts after-college choices* - *It is not good for the fiscal (financial) health of the country*

Forming the thesis statement

After modeling the listing, it is time to explain what a thesis statement is. For instance,

the teacher can say the following:

Okay, class. We are moving to the next step in the pre-writing phase: Thesis

statements. We might be familiar with thesis statements, but we are going to review them

anyway. So, I like to think of the thesis statement as a roadmap for our papers

(Transitions, 2021). *It is also where I stake my claim and make my point.*

The process is then explained. Most thesis statements start with a question. However, this guide already provides the direction the paper should take. Nevertheless, teachers can still model the process by formulating a few questions and then choose a prompt that best fits. As this guide's topic is Free College, teachers could write the following questions:

1. *What changes would happen on college campuses if college tuition was free?*

2. *Does free college make college less attractive?*

3. *How does free college make society a better place?*

At this point, students should be reminded of the prompt, "Explain why your topic is or is not good for society," and that they must use evidence to support their positions. Explain to students that they should start by reviewing their research. They should identify the controversy around their topic. Thereafter, they should discover the why on each point. Teachers should direct students to take 15 minutes to review their points and research and then choose three that interest them.

At the end of the 15 minutes, the teacher should instruct the students to compose a

---

Teacher Example 2

Thesis statement: While some see college as a personal choice that should be personally funded, examining the history of free college, free higher education models, and the economic effects on graduates will show that tax-funded college will make society a better place.

---

working thesis. Explain what a thesis statement is again and write it on the board.

Students should be given the reminder handout and then required to formulate a thesis statement, which must be typed and two copies printed. Teachers can also offer students sample thesis statements or work through student thesis statements.

Day Three: Reviewing Parts of Speech

Students should be asked to have homework on their desks. Before starting the writing process, the teacher will conduct a grammar review. After reviewing the different parts of speech, the teacher will instruct students to label the different parts of speech within their thesis statement.

Setting the tone

This is a review and is intended to be light. It is also meant to function as a barometer of learning. Give students seven minutes to complete

> **Jumpstart Reminder!** Practice doing this beforehand.

this task before moving on to having each student read his or her thesis statement aloud in front of the class. Studies show that reading aloud helps students find errors in their work (Reading Aloud, 2021). The teacher should project the "Parts of Speech Chart" thesis statement in front of the class and begin labeling the parts of speech.

Chart 1

Parts of Speech Chart		
Parts of Speech	Function	Example
Verb	State of being or action	We ran all the way to school.
Noun	Object or subject	Leah went to the store.
Pronoun	Substitutes an object or subject	She went to the store.
Adjective	Modifies pronouns and nouns	The bread was stale.
Adverb	Modifies verbs, adjectives or clauses	It was very fun trip.
Conjunction	Serves as a connector	Please, come with me.
Preposition	Used with a noun or pronoun to create phrase	He played for four hours
Interjection	Expresses emotion	Well, they left.

Teacher Example 3: Parts of Speech or word classes

Thesis statement: While some see college as a personal choice that should be **personally** funded, examining the history of free college, free higher education models, and the economic effects on graduates will show that tax-funded college will make society a better place.

(If teachers chose to use Example 1 for their thesis statement, they can use Example 2 for this exercise.)

Understanding a word's function – what it does in the sentence – helps one understand it

meaning. A common writing-related complaint among companies is that students use too many

adverbs in their emails. Learning the different word classes is foundational to learning proper

Chart 2

I. Roman Numerals

A. I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, etc.

B. Represent main ideas to be covered in the paper in the order they will be presented

II. Uppercase Letters

A. A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, etc.

B. Represent subtopics within each main idea

III. Arabic Numbers

 A. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, etc.

 B. Represent details or subdivisions within subtopics

IV. Lowercase Letters

 A. a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, l, m, etc.

 B. Represent details within subdivisions

sentence structure.

For the final 15 minutes, teach students how to plan and outline their essays. The teacher

should model using an outlining system of their choice or the teacher can walk the students

through the process of making an alphanumeric outline using Chart 2.

For homework, students should create an outline of their topics. Remind them that the

three points in their thesis are the main ideas represented by the Roman numerals. Homework

should be typed, and they only need one copy.

Day Four: Writing the Draft

Students must report to the computer lab and begin typing their first draft paper. For homework, students must complete their essays.

> **Jumpstart Reminder!** The teacher should walk around and check outlines and determine whether students are working or if they are stuck.

Day Five: Sentence Making

Students are assigned to their peer conference groups. The teacher should assign groups and not allow students o make the choices. The groups should consist of four students. Each paper must be read by all students and each student must complete an evaluation form, which includes a summary. This will take up all but 20 minutes of the class, which will be spent revising sentence structures.

Teachers should briefly revise the four types of sentence structures:

- Simple Sentences

- Compound sentences

- Complex sentences

- Compound-complex sentences

However, teachers should focus on either complex or compound-complex. The varied use of sentence structures keeps writing from sounding elementary.

What makes a sentence complex? It has one dependent clause and at least one independent clause that is connected by subordinating conjunctions such as while, after, although, and before. Subordinating conjunctions create a transition between the clauses that will involve a "*time*, *place*, or a *cause-and-effect* relationship" (A guide to sentence structure, n.d.).

What makes a compound-complex sentence? This type of sentence has one dependent clause and at least two independent clauses. Teachers should give students an example based on their topic.

Teacher Example 4 Sentence Structures

Complex Sentence

<u>While some college students get scholarships to pay for college, other students must borrow money.</u>

Compound-Complex Sentence

<u>*Though some college students get scholarships,*</u> *other students borrow money when they go to college.*

<u>*(dependent clauses are underlined)*</u>

Students should each present a complex sentence and a complex-compound sentence before leaving class.

For homework, students should complete a rewrite taking into consideration their peer conference notes. They also must be directed to use at least one complex and one complex-compound sentence in each of their paragraphs. Please provide students with a Bad Sentences handout.

Day Six: Final Touches

The Bridging the Gap guide is meant to review and reinforce writing foundations so that students have college-ready writing skills. Students will hand in their revised drafts to the teacher for him/her to make suggestions and then have a conference with the student to make edits.

However, on day six, the teacher will emphasize the points of good paragraphs. Teachers can start the class by saying:

> *Hello. You have all turned in your second drafts today; I will be reviewing them over the next two days and making suggestions for your final draft. Today we are going to review what makes a good paragraph.*

Teachers should then inform students that all paragraphs should include a topic sentence and a concluding sentence or one that transitions to the next paragraph. In addition to having a topic and a concluding sentence, a good paragraph needs to be:

- Coherent – the sentences and paragraphs connect

- Organized – a logical order and a case is being built

- Complete – there are enough sentences to fully support the point

- Unified – there is a topic sentence, which is support by all other sentences.

Use Chart 3 as an example of a bad paragraph and Chart 4 as a good example.

Chart 3

> **Disjointed Paragraph**: The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by making mummies of them. Mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. The skin, hair, teeth, fingernails and toenails, and facial features of the mummies were evident. It is possible to diagnose the disease they suffered in life, such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies. The process of was remarkably effective. Sometimes apparent were the fatal afflictions of the dead people: a middle-aged king died from a blow to the head, and polio killed a child king. Mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages.

(Lohkande, 2015)

Chart 4

Coherent Paragraph: The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by making mummies of them. In short, mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages. And the process of was remarkably effective. Indeed, mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. Their skin, hair. teeth, fingernails and toenails, and facial features of the mummies are still evident. Their diseases in life¸ such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies, are still diagnosable. Even their fatal afflictions are still apparent: a middle-aged king died from a blow to the head, and polio killed a child king.

(Lohkande, 2015)

These charts should be projected and the teacher should point out complex and compound sentence structures within the paragraphs. They should also point out adjectives and adverbs used throughout the paragraph because it provides a transition to discuss academic language. Another component of a good paragraph is using proper diction or word choice. This usually requires students to write in a register different from their register for speech. Give each student 15 minutes to summarize this paragraph in a register appropriate for friends their age and the class. Then review the changes as a class discussion.

Activity 2: Summarize for Friend and Summarize for Class

Punctuation has varied over time and space, and, to talk about it, it is best to find a point at which to start. That might be with the Greeks and it could be with the Romans who took what punctuation they had (not a lot) from the Greeks, but it would be better to start with Saint Jerome, some 50 years or so before the English language had reached the island, we now call Britain. In the year 400, Jerome produced the first complete translation of the Bible into Latin. To ensure that the Word of God was read aloud correctly, he encouraged those who copied his bible to adopt a practice used for the education of Roman schoolboys. Classical Roman script had no word breaks and no small letters. Rather, it was an uninterrupted stream of capitals. Because that flow was difficult for the boys to handle, Roman schoolmasters would break the letters into sections and subsections – 'per cola et commata' – into colons and commas. The Christian monks found those breaks as useful as the Roman schoolboys did. Jerome was satisfied that the Bible had a good chance to be read out intelligibly. Jerome's Latin remained the Latin of the Church for the next thousand and more years. However, already Latin was evolving into Italian, Spanish, French. Italian, Spanish, and French, and monks were content with Jerome's colons and commas, his sections and subsections, but this was not the case in the British Isles. Jerome's Bible arrived in Ireland in about the year 500, and, as conversion proceeded, Celtic monks struggled to master the sacred language of Rome. They needed all the help that Jerome's 'cola et commata' could give them, but before they could make sense of the colons and commas, they needed to know where one word ended and another began.

(Mulvey, n.d.)

Day Seven and Eight: Teacher conferences

These two days will be spent meeting with each student individually to go over edits and suggestions. The students will then be required to hand in their assignments two days after their conference.

This concludes Chapter one of the Bridging the Gap Guide. The purpose of this chapter was to use a common task in the English classroom to establish college-ready habits for competent writing.

References

A guide to sentence structure (With examples & tasks)n.d. Literacy Ideas. (n.d.).

https://www.literacyideas.com/a-guide-to-sentence-structure.

Act of July 2, 1862 (Morrill Act), Public Law 37-108, which established land grant colleges,

07/02/1862; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-1996; Record Group 11;

General Records of the United States Government; National Archives

Anderson, V., & Hidi, S. (1988). Teaching Students to Summarize. *Educational Leadership, 46*(4),

26. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Ftrade-

journals%2Fteaching-students-summarize%2Fdocview%2F224858805%2Fse-

2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Ansary, T. (2007, March 9). *Education at Risk: Fallout from a Flawed Report*. Edutopia.

https://www.edutopia.org/landmark-education-report-nation-risk.

Applebee, A., & Langer, J. (2006). The State of Writing Instruction in America's Schools: What

Existing Data Tell Us. *Center on English Learning & Achievement*.

https://doi.org/https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.541.4136&rep=rep

1&type=pdf

Baker, S., Gersten, R., & Graham, S. (2003). Teaching expressive writing to students with learning

disabilities: Research-based applications and examples. Journal of Learning Disabilities,

36(2), 109-123. https://doi.org/10.1177/002221940303600204

Bartlett, T. (2003, July 23). *Why Johnny Can't Write, Even Though He Went to Princeton*. The

    Chronicle of Higher Education. https://www.chronicle.com/article/why-johnny-cant-write-

    even-though-he-went-to-princeton/.

Bazerman, C. (2005). WAC: Chapter 2. West Lafayette, IN; Colorado State University

Beck, S. W., & Jeffrey, J. V. (2007). Genres of high-stakes writing assessments and the construct of

    writing competence. Assessing Writing, 12(1), 60–79. Retrieved from

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2007.05.001.

Burdock, Melanie, and Jane Greer. "Paths to Productive Partnerships: Surveying High School

    Teachers about Professional Development Opportunities and 'College-Level' Writing."

    WPA, vol. 41, no. 1,2017, pp. 82-101.

Changing More than Test Scores: NWP's College, Career, and Community... National Writing

    Project. (2019). https://www.nwp.org/stories/changing-more-than-test-scores-nwps-college-

    career-and-community-writers-program.

Cato.org. (n.d.). https://www.cato.org/testimony/has-no-child-left-behind-worked.

Collaborative Learning/Learning with Peers. Institute for Writing and Rhetoric. (2020, November

    19). https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/teaching/first-year-writing-pedagogies-methods-

    design/collaborative-learninglearning-peers.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d.). *English Language Arts Standards " Writing "*

    Grade 11-12. English Language Arts Standards " Writing " Grade 11-12 | Common Core

    State Standards Initiative. http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/.

Core Knowledge Foundation. (2016, December 28). *Writing for Understanding*. Core Knowledge

Foundation. https://www.coreknowledge.org/blog/writing-for-understanding/.

Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, & National

Writing Project. (2011). Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing. Council of

Writing Program Administrators.

Courtmanche, J. (2010). Writing on the Same Page. In P. Sullivan (Ed.), *What is College-Level

Writing? (Volume 2)*. essay, NCTE.

Cutler, L., & Graham, S. (2008). Primary grade writing instruction: A national survey. Journal of

Educational Psychology, 100(4), 907–919. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012656

Darrington, B., & Dousay, T. (2015;2014;). Using multimodal writing to motivate struggling

students to write. Techtrends, 59(6), 29-34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-015-0901-7

Diablo Valley College. (2018). College-Level Mathematics Tes. San Roman.

Dixon, John. "Conference Report: The Dartmouth Seminar." Harvard Educational Review, vol. 2,

no. 39, 1969, pp. 366–72

Donahue, C. (2016, May 15). *A Brief History (from the US perspective)*. 50th Anniversary

Dartmouth Institute and Conference. https://dartmouthwritinginstitute.wordpress.com/1966-

seminar/a-brief-history/.

Donlan, Dan, University of California Riverside (1978) Project English (1961-1968): Conception--

Birth--Life--Death--and Who Cared?

Dorman, J. (n.d.). *Using Backward Design to Improve Student Writing*. Maine Teacher of the Year.

 https://www.mainetoy.org/blog/post/using-backward-design-to-improve-student-writing\.

Doubet, K. J., & Southall, G. (2018) Integrating reading and writing instruction in middle and high

 school: The role of professional development in shaping teacher perceptions and practice. Is.

 Literacy Research and Instruction, 57(1), 59-79.

 https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2017.1366607

Evmenova, A. S., & Regan, K. (2019). Supporting the Writing Process with Technology for

 Students with Disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, *55*(2), 78–85.

 https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451219837636

Englert C.S. (1990) Unraveling the Mysteries of Writing Through Strategy Instruction. In:

 Scruggs T.E., Wong B.Y.L. (eds) Intervention Research in Learning Disabilities.

 Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-3414-2_8

English Language Arts Standards " Writing " Grade 11-12. English Language Arts Standards "

 Writing " Grade 11-12 | Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d.).

 http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/.

Fanetti, S., Bushrow, K. M., & DeWeese, D. L. (2010). Closing the gap between high school writing

 instruction and college writing expectations. English Journal, 99(4), 77-83.

Fogel, Howard, and Linnea C. Ehri. "Teaching African American English forms to Standard

 American English-speaking teachers: effects on acquisition, attitudes, and responses to

student use." Journal of Teacher Education, vol. 57, no. 5, 2006, p. 464+. Gale In Context:

Biography,

Forrest, S. N., & Moquett, K. D. (2016). Improving Writing of College-Bound Students with

Rubrics: An English Department's Collaborative Journey through Teacher Leadership. *The

Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas*, *89*(6), 179–184.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2016.1196103

Fuentealamo, M. (2019, June 30). *Why writing well is more important than ever*. Aleteia.

https://aleteia.org/2019/06/30/why-writing-well-is-more-important-than-ever/.

Galbraith, D., & Baaijen, V. M. (2018). The Work of Writing: Raiding the Inarticulate. *Educational

Psychologist*, *53*(4), 238–257. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2018.1505515

Gavigan, K. (2017). The School Librarian's Role in Writing Instruction: Research, Perceptions, and

Practice. *Libri.*, *67*(4). https://doi.org/10.1515/libri-2017-0034

Goldstein, Dana. "Why Kids Can't Write." The New York Times, The New York Times, 2 Aug.

2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/education/edlife/writing-education-grammar-

studentschildren.html.

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., Fishman, E., Houston, J., Wijekumar, K., Lei, P., & Ray, A. B. (2019).

Writing skills, knowledge, motivation, and strategic behavior predict students' persuasive

writing performance in the context of robust writing instruction. The Elementary School

Journal, 119(3), 487-510. https://doi.org/10.1086/701720

Graham, S., Liu, X., Aitken, A., Ng, C., Bartlett, B., Harris, K. R., & Holzapfel, J. (2018).

Effectiveness of literacy programs balancing reading and writing instruction: A

Meta-Analysis. Reading Research Quarterly, 53(3), 279-304. https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.194

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students.

Journal of Educational Psychology, *99*(3), 445–476. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-

0663.99.3.445

Guzik, E. (n.d.). Problems With the Five Paragraph Essay and Ways To Write a Better Kind of

Essay. https://web.csulb.edu/~eguzik/fivepara.html.

Harris, Joseph. "After Dartmouth: Growth and Conflict in English." *College English*, vol. 53, no. 6, 1991,

pp. 631–646. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/377888. Accessed 4 May 2021.

Harris, K., Graham, S., Aitkens, A., Barkel, A., Houston, J., & Ray, A. (2017). Teaching Spelling,

Writing, and Reading for Writing Powerful Evidence-Based Practices. *TEACHING*

Exceptional Children, *49*(4), 262–272.

Herr, M. (2019). The Rise of the Research University: A Sourcebook ed. by Louis Menand, Paul

Reitter, and Chad Wellmon (review). *Review of Higher Education, 42*(2), E-7-E-10.

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1353/rhe.2019.0019

Horowitz, D. (1986). Process, Not Product: Less Than Meets the Eye. *TESOL Quarterly*, *20*(1), 141.

https://doi.org/10.2307/3586397

Howell, E., Butler, T., & Reinking, D. (2017). Integrating multimodal arguments into high school

writing instruction. Journal of Literacy Research, 49(2), 181-209.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X17700456

Indicator Writing Proficiency. American Academy of Arts & Sciences. (n.d.).

https://www.amacad.org/humanities-indicators/k-12-education/writing-

proficiency#:~:text=(Within%20the%20NAEP%20framework%2C%20a,appropriate%20for

%20the%20intended%20audience.).

Jimenez, L., Sargrad, S., Morales, J., & Thompson 2016, M. (28AD). *Remedial Education*. Center

for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-

12/reports/2016/09/28/144000/remedial-education/.

Katz, M. (1983). The Role of American Colleges in the Nineteenth Century. *History of Education

Quarterly, 23*(2), 215-223. doi:10.2307/368160

Kiuhara, S. A., Graham, S., & Hawken, L. S. (2009). Teaching writing to high school students: A

national survey. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *101*(1), 136–160.

https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013097

Klein, A. (2020, December 7). *No Child Left Behind: An Overview*. Education Week.

https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/no-child-left-behind-an-overview/2015/04.

Kruse, M. (2019, October 23). *Using Anchor Charts in Middle and High School: Why and How*.

Reading and Writing Haven. https://www.readingandwritinghaven.com/using-anchor-charts-

in-middle-and-high-school-why-and-how/.

Lee, A. M. I. (2020, October 22). *Common Core State Standards: What You Need to Know*.

    Understood. https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childs-

    school/tests-standards/common-core-state-standards-what-you-need-to-know.

Lee, A. M. I. (2021, May 5). *What is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)?* Understood.

    https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-

    rights/every-student-succeeds-act-essa-what-you-need-to-know.

Lokhande, Vishal. 2015 Paragraph writing (slideshare.net)

    https://www.slideshare.net/mkvl/paragraph-writing-52538785

Lokhande, Vishal. 2015 Paragraph writing (slideshare.net)

    https://www.slideshare.net/mkvl/paragraph-writing-52538785

Liu, X. (2017). Writing Instruction, Writing Research, and Educational Psychology: An Interview with

    Steve Graham. *Educational Psychology Review, 29*(1), 175-187. Retrieved June 3, 2021, from

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/44956369

Maguire, J. (2018, June 4). *The Forgotten Man We Need Now for College Writing Reform*. The

    James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal.

    https://www.jamesgmartin.center/2018/06/the-forgotten-academic-who-made-students-

    better-writers/.

McCarthey, S. J. (2008). The impact of no child left behind on teachers' writing instruction. Written

    Communication, 25(4), 462-505. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088308322554

McKeown, D., Brindle, M., Harris, K. R., Graham, S., Collins, A. A., & Brown, M. (2016). Illuminating growth and struggles using mixed methods: Practice-based professional development and coaching for differentiating SRSD instruction in writing. Reading & Writing, 29(6), 1105-1140. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-016-9627-y

Moore, K. (2016, April 7). *Study: 73% of Employers Want Candidates With This Skill*. Inc.com. https://www.inc.com/kaleigh-moore/study-73-of-employers-want-candidates-with-this

Mulvey, C. (n.d.). The English Project's History of English Punctuation. The English Project. http://www.englishproject.org/resources/english-project%E2%80%99s-history-english-punctuation. skill.html.

Myers, J., Scales, R. Q., Grisham, D. L., Wolsey, T. D. V., Dismuke, S., Smetana, L., Yoder, K. K., Ikpeze, C., Ganske, K., & Martin, S. (2016). What About Writing? A National Exploratory Study of Writing Instruction in Teacher Preparation Programs. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, *55*(4), 309–330. https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2016.1198442

National Academy Press. (1995). *Colleges of agriculture at the land grant universities: a profile*.

National Center of Educational Progress. (2011). The Nation's Report Card: Writing 2011. National Center of Education Statistics.

Palmquist, M. (2020). A Middle Way for WAC: Writing to Engage. *WAC Journal*, *31*, 7–22. https://doi.org/10.37514/WAC-J.2020.31.1.01

Paul, C. (n.d.). *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*.

      Socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu.https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/programs/education/eleme

      ntary-and-secondary-education-act-of-1965/.

Perrin, C., Borowiec, S., Carr, J., McClure, T., & Dukes, D. B. (2017, January 12). *The*

      Apprenticeship Model: A Journey toward Mastery. ClassicalU. https://classicalu.com/the-

      apprenticeship-model/.

Pircon, B. (2020, December 24). *The 5 Most Commonly Taught Writing Styles*. The Graide Network.

      https://www.thegraidenetwork.com/blog-all/types-of-writing-styles.

Ray, A. B., Graham, S., & Liu, X. (2019). Effects of SRSD college entrance essay exam instruction

      for high school students with disabilities or at-risk for writing difficulties. Reading &

      Writing, 32(6), 1507-1529. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-018-9900-3

Reading Aloud. The Writing Center • University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (2021, March 2).

      https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/reading-aloud/.

Renker, E. (2000). "American Literature" in the College Curriculum: Three Case Studies, 1890-

      1910. ELH 67(3), 843-871. doi:10.1353/elh.2000.0027.

Rives, Ashley, Olsen, Allison Wynhoff. (2015). Where's the Rhetoric?: Exposing the

      (Mis)Alignment in the Common Core State Writing Standards. *Journal of Adolescent &*

      Adult Literacy, 59(2), 161– 170. doi: 10.1002/jaal.443.

Robravvo Follow. (n.d.). *Parts of speech chart*. SlideShare.

      https://www.slideshare.net/robravvo/parts-of-speech-chart.

Rotherman, A. (2016, September 1). *Written Off*. U.S. News & World Report.

    https://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2016-09-01/the-fundamental-reason-american-

    students-arent-good-writers.

Rubin, B. C. (2003). Unpacking detracking: When progressive pedagogy meets students' social

    worlds. American Educational Research Journal, 40(2), 539-573.

    https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312040002539

S. (2017, August 6). Reading [Comment on the article "Why Kids Can't Write"]. *Nytimes.Com*.

    https://nyti.ms/3vFypaX#permid=23592742

Schneider, J. (2018, July 10). *Student Collaboration Strategies for Writing Workshop*.

    TeachWriting.org. https://www.teachwriting.org/blog/2018/3/3/student-collaboration-

    strategies-for-writing-workshop.

Shanahan, C., Shanahan, T. (2014). The Implications of Disciplinary Literacy. *Journal of Adolescent &*

    Adult Literacy, 57(8), 628-631. Retrieved May 30, 2021, from

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/24034748

Skapinker, M. (2013, June 27). *Why MBA-bound Johnny can't write*. The Globe and Mail.

    https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/business-education/why-mba-

    bound-johnny-still-cant-write/article12830500/.

Sullivan, P. (ed.). (2010). *What is "college-level" writing? (volume 2)* (Vol. 2). National Council

    Teachers of English.

Sundeen, T. (2015). Writing Instruction for Adolescents in the Shadow of the Common Core State

   Standards. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 59*(2), 197-206. Retrieved May 30, 2021, from

   http://www.jstor.org/stable/44011240

Talib, T., & Cheung, Y. L. (2017). Collaborative writing in classroom instruction: A synthesis of recent

   research. The English Teacher, 46(2), 43-47

Teo, T. K. (2015). What made your essay successful? I T.A.C.K.L.E.D' the essay

   question! *Teaching History,* (159), 36-43.

   http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-

   journals%2Fwhat-made-your-essay-successful-i-t-c-k-l-e-

   d%2Fdocview%2F1702626291%2Fse-

   2%3Faccountid%3D12085https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/10/the-

   writing-revolution/309090/.

Totten, S. (2005). *National Writing Project*. Writing to Learn for Preservice Teachers - National

   Writing Project. https://archive.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2231.

Troia, G. A., Olinghouse, N. G., Mo, Y., Hawkins, L., Kopke, R. A., Chen, A., Wilson, J., &

   Stewart, K. A. (2015). Academic standards for writing. The Elementary School Journal,

   116(2), 291-321. https://doi.org/10.1086/683984

Tyre, P. (2012, May 3). *The Writing Revolution*. The Atlantic.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (2021, March 2). *Transitions*. The Writing Center •

   University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-

   tools/transitions/.

Virginia Department of Education. (2010). English Standards of Learning for Virginia Public

      School: Grade Twelve. Richmond.

What is Writing to Engage. The WAC Clearinghouse. (n.d.).

      https://wac.colostate.edu/resources/wac/intro/wte/.

Why Writing? National Writing Project. https://www.nwp.org/why-writing.

Writing to Learn. writingtolearn. (n.d.). http://www.liketowrite.com/writingtolearn.html.

Zeng, T., & Xie, K.-Q. (2016). Cytochrome P4502E1 Gene Polymorphisms and the Risks of

      Ethanol-Induced Health Problems in Alcoholics. *Molecular Aspects of Alcohol and Nutrition*,

      231–245. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-800773-0.00019-7