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WRITING ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF CONTENT AREA TEACHERS  
AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE CENTRAL UTAH WRITING  
PROJECT SUMMER INSTITUTE

by

Joseph P. Anson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
Of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In

Education

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Logan, Utah

2017

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## ABSTRACT

Writing Attitudes and Practices of Content Area Teachers After Participating  
in the Central Utah Writing Project Summer Institute

by

Joseph P. Anson, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2017

Major Professor: Sylvia Read, Ph.D.  
Department: Teacher Education and Leadership

The Central Utah Writing Project (CUWP) was created in 2009 and, following the National Writing Project's model of professional development, has held a 3- or 4-week summer institute each subsequent year. This training includes collaborative, constructivist, teacher-led training to improve the teaching of writing in schools. Multiple qualitative and quantitative studies have shown the effectiveness of this professional development in the language arts classroom. This multiple-case study of four secondary teachers, whose individual content areas lie outside English or language arts (math, music, science, and social studies), used data from interviews, observations, and artifacts to provide a description of each case and how each teacher has personally and professionally incorporated the training gained from the CUWP. The study also synthesized common themes across the cases. These themes, necessary for professional development included a participant's personal interpretation of the experience

(phenomenon), construction of one's own learning, active learning/ participation in the professional development, the inclusion of authentic tasks, collaborative support community, inclusion of prior knowledge and/or experience, self-efficacy regarding one's own writing and the teaching of writing, motivation as a teacher, motivation as a student, scaffolded modeling, teacher expertise in professional development, and the use of writing in the content area. In short, the study investigates how the CUWP summer institute influences the attitudes and classroom writing practices of teachers whose primary content area is not English or language arts. Results showed that only one of the case studies changed their attitudes about writing from neutral to positive. The other three already possessed positive attitudes toward the use of and the teaching of writing in their own classrooms. All four participants changed their classroom practices as a result of participating in the CUWP summer institute and also deemed the results on student performance beneficial. Each of the four constructed a separate takeaway that they implemented in their respective classrooms.

(161 pages)

## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Writing Attitudes and Practices of Content Area Teachers After Participating  
in the Central Utah Writing Project Summer Institute

Joseph P. Anson

This study of four case studies looks at how secondary math, music, science, and social studies teachers' attitudes and classroom practices were affected by their participation in the Central Utah Writing Project (CUWP) summer institute. Participant interviews, observations, and artifacts were analyzed by looking at themes for effective professional development: a participant's personal interpretation of the experience (phenomenon), construction of one's own learning, active learning/participation in the professional development, the inclusion of authentic tasks, collaborative support community, inclusion of prior knowledge and/or experience, self-efficacy regarding one's own writing and the teaching of writing, motivation as a teacher, motivation as a student, scaffolded modeling, teacher expertise in professional development, and the use of writing in the content area. Results point toward favorable outcomes in all cases but with mixed results because each individual interpreted his or her own experience and constructed learning for his or her own situation (content area and classroom practices). These positive results suggest that the CUWP summer institute or a similar training is beneficial to participants of all content areas.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation would never have come to fruition without the patience and encouragement from my wonderful wife, Amy. She and our five amazing children Sariah, Zac, Ally, Brooklyn, and Sam, have been my inspiration and drive, especially when drudgery sat in. I know it took longer than I thought it would, but they endured right along with me. I also want to dedicate this publication to my parents, siblings, and in-laws, who are always a source of motivation. Simply, thank you.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and perseverance of Dr. Sylvia Read, my doctoral committee chair. Chance put us together at the beginning of the program, but it was definitely a mentoring relationship that favored me. She answered many inane questions and dealt with the minutia while I trudged slowly forward.

I also owe thanks to my committee members, Dr. Amy Alexandra Wilson-Lopez, Dr. Cindy Jones, Dr. Brock Dethier, and Dr. Amy Piotrowski who came on board at the last minute. Thanks also to Dr. Virginia Exton who started on this committee with me but retired before I fulfilled my part of the bargain.

Much appreciation goes to all the professors at Utah State University, as well as my doctoral cohort who prodded and encouraged and supported me.

Without a doubt, however, I owe gratitude to the Central Utah Writing Project, its directors and fellows, whom I can without reserves call my colleagues and friends. This dissertation would not exist without your hard work and dedication to the improvement of the teaching of writing.

Specific thanks goes to the teachers who participated in this study and the principals and districts who allowed me to conduct this study.

General thanks goes to all the students who ever stepped foot in my classroom. I do all this for you and your future. Thanks for the inspiration. It has been a long but rewarding journey.

Joseph P. Anson



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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Problem**

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for curriculum include literacy standards across all disciplines (CCSS, n.d.). Although standards for literacy are described in more specific detail within the field of language arts, they are not restricted to this field. Standards for teaching reading and writing are also addressed in social studies, science, and technical subject areas as well. Even before the CCSS outlined literacy standards for various content areas, though, reading and writing were recommended as integral parts of content area learning (Graham & Perin, 2007; Moje, 2008; Strong, 2006). In my 17 years of experience teaching in public junior high schools and online high school courses, I have encountered many teachers outside the discipline of language arts who see the teaching of reading and writing as the job of the English teacher (Klein & Yu, 2013). Instead of teaching students how to read or write in their respective disciplines, the content area teachers merely assign reading and writing assignments, assuming the students are already proficient readers and writers (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2004; Moje, 2008; Rainey & Moje, 2012).

The connection between writing and content learning deemed important was explored by researchers (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975; Emig, 1977; Martin, 1984; Shanahan, 2004, 2006) because writing inherently engages students in learning content and helps them construct personal meaning as students engage in the

actual physical act of putting thoughts on paper (Bangert-Drowns et al., 2004; Newell, 2006). However, many of these early studies did not come to concrete conclusions regarding the connections between writing and content learning.

To analyze this inconclusive body of research, Bangert-Drowns et al. (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of studies regarding writing to learn in various content areas. Their findings indicated an overall small yet significant effect of content area writing in regard to student learning. However, the effects varied depending on the content area, the strategies used, the age of the students, and the length of the interventions used, as well as the length of the required writing. We can see that generic content area writing training cannot cover all the variables. Content area teachers need more specific, specialized training regarding helping students become literate in, and specifically write in each content area. Prior (2006) made a case that learning how to write specific genres in different situations (content areas) contributed to overall learning in other settings: “A lab report written for a biology class is linked to the wider world of lab reports and other scientific genres. As the chain of genres grows, it implicates multiple activity systems” (p. 62). Who better than a content area teacher who knows how to write the particular genre in the field of study to teach students to write and learn the content whether it is biology or world history (Glickman, 2002; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007; National Writing Project [NWP], 2010; Smith, 1996; Strong, 2006)?

Although a myriad of programs and opportunities for teacher professional development regarding content area literacy exists, many school districts across the

country need to be more selective with their choices due to a lack of funding or time to provide continuous effective professional development. Furthermore, educators realize the importance of professional development in literacy, but currently and historically, they have not often had the resources to pursue it effectively (D. Dean, personal communication, November 19, 2013; R. Fleming, personal communication, February 19, 2014; Miller, 2013; Robinson & Bryce, 2013).

Simply including more writing in different subject area curricula does not teach content area writing or improve student learning (Bangert-Drowns et al., 2004; Klein & Yu, 2013; Newell, 2006). Implementing specific, strategic writing in the classroom has been shown to be the best way to improve student writing (Dean, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007). These strategies have been found in Graham and Perin's meta-analysis and reinforced by Dean's (2010) work with teaching writing strategies, and have been implemented by English and language arts teachers (NWP, 2010), and summer institutes based on the NWP professional development model have been active for over four decades (Gray, 2000; Smith, 1996). Students whose teachers participated in these summer institutes improved their abilities to write (Gallagher, Woodworth, & Arshan 2015); however, only around 10% of all participants at NWP summer institute sites taught content outside the area of English and language arts (NWP, 2009). If the gains are so significant for teachers of English, shouldn't they also be significant for other content areas, especially if content area writing can have positive effects on learning content? Smith (1996) pointed out Since the NWP began, it has increasingly become the fashion to recognize the importance of teachers gathering together to study their craft. No longer is

the NWP the only game in town. Teacher-centered communities have cropped up in other disciplines—seven others in California, for example (the California Arts, Foreign Language, History-Social Science, International Studies, Literature, Mathematics, and Science Projects). These changes in professional development models pertain to the organization's own content areas, but what is to stop them from teaching writing in their own content areas in the same manner?

### **Research Purposes**

The purpose of the Central Utah Writing Project (CUWP), an affiliate of the NWP, is to improve the teaching of writing in classrooms from kindergarten through the university, regardless of the content area in which writing occurs (CUWP, n.d.). Writing to learn is an important tenet of both the CUWP and the NWP (Dean, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007; NWP & Nagin, 2006; Strong, 2006). Studies show the effectiveness of the type of training the Writing Project institutes implement (Brown, Morrell, & Rowlands, 2011; NWP, 2010; Street & Stang, 2009). However, most of these studies have been done in English/language arts settings. I investigated how the CUWP summer institute training has influenced the attitudes and classroom practices of teachers in content areas other than English or language arts. Briefly stated, I studied how and/or if the CUWP summer institute influenced the attitudes and classroom writing practices of four teachers who do not teach English or language arts.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Existing Theory and Research**

Guba and Lincoln (2005) characterized a constructivist approach to qualitative research as local and specific in its relativism and transactional in its creative findings. The search for understanding and reconstruction of meaning of individual experiences contribute to its constructivist nature. Creswell (2007) said:

In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences.... These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views.... Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. (pp. 20-21)

Batagiannis (2011) cited Greene (1996), Piaget (2001), and, Vygotsky (1978) explaining that “Constructivism is a theory of learning in which the learner is involved in creating his/her learning, with the teacher as the facilitator. This theory promotes active learning; collaboration; respecting social learning as an important component of learning; and reflection, recognizing its inextricable role in the learning process” (p. 1,308). All of these foundations coincide with my beliefs about the learning process. Other theorists such as Freire (1970) and Kemmis (2009) share the commitment to more practiced-based learning rather than lecture-based learning. Teachers are not just dispensers of knowledge. They need to be active participants, helping the students form their own course of study within the scope of the class. Accordingly, students cannot sit passively



and absorb the knowledge of the instructor; they must contribute to the scope and shape of the class and create their own learning. They need to be active participants, involved in critical inquiry and collaboration. Teachers cannot expect students to simply know how to write and therefore learn by themselves. They have to be guided within the expertise of the teacher's realm of discipline, in a social and collaborative effort to use writing as a tool for learning various content. Similarly, teachers also need to be active participants in their own professional development and not just passive recipients (Glickman, 2002; Glickman et al., 2010).

Learners, teachers in this case, bring a lot to the learning table with their prior knowledge and experiences, their culture, their home (and other) cultural and social literacies (Cumming-Potvin, 2007; Gee, 2003; Gilmore, 1986; Heath, 1983; Newkirk, 2002; New London Group, 2000; Toohey, 2000; Wells, 1985). Learning and instruction are most powerful when built upon these foundations, connected to what the participants already possess and hold true. Cumming-Potvin's study (2007) concluded that "multiliteracies, combining scaffolding and diverse texts through meaningful tasks, can encourage agency in...learning across contexts" (p. 502). Vygotsky's learning theory (1986) focuses on individual scaffolding for the zone of proximal development. This framework helps construct the learning for students and instructors as writers within the classroom by connecting new learning to previous learning with the help of a teacher or other social construct. It also allows students to extend their learning beyond the confines of the school, taking advantage of natural or prior experiences, curiosities, interests, and abilities (Bourdieu, 1991). Dewey (1965) argued that meaningful learning must begin

with what is already relevant for the learner.

The CUWP summer institute helps teachers to use social collaborative efforts to build their own abilities and create understanding for themselves. The teachers are then challenged to implement similar methods in their classrooms. Teacher self-efficacy regarding writing and the teaching of writing is built through social construction (Daisey, 2009; Dymoke & Hughes, 2009; Norman & Spencer, 2005).

Pajares and Valiante (2006) explained Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive theory of self-efficacy and stated, "Self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for academic motivation and successful accomplishment, because when students believe that their actions can produce outcomes they desire, they have the incentive to persevere in the face of difficulties" (p. 159). Self-efficacy theory, simply stated, refers to the belief that the preconceived notions of one's own abilities to perform tasks are directly related to the actual performance at the task and the level of success one achieves. Bandura (1986) defined it as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute course of action required to attain types of performances" (p. 391). Originally, Bandura (1977) theorized generally that what people believe about their abilities and the outcomes of their performances influence what they believe. More recently, self-efficacy has been used in studies regarding motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment (Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007), most of which helped predict student academic achievement (Pajares & Urdan, 2006; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Multiple studies have linked student competence in writing to their writing self-efficacy (Beach, 1989; Faigley, Cherry, Jolliffe, & Skinner, 1985; Pajares, 2003; Pajares et al., 2007).

“High self-efficacy...helps to create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks and activities. As a result of these influences, self-efficacy beliefs are strong determinants and predictors of the level of accomplishment that individuals finally attain” (Pajares, 1996, p. 545). Similar results should be expected from teachers when they receive competent guidance and practice with their own writing and in writing instruction. Self-efficacy theory also hypothesizes how performance transfers to new skills when similar skills are needed to accomplish tasks or relate to similar domains (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996).

If self-efficacy helps to determine the amount of efforts students will exert, it is logical to say that determining a teacher’s self-efficacy in writing and teaching writing will help determine his or her willingness, if not the ability to instruct students in the practice of writing within a given discipline. Dembo and Gibson (1985) view personal teaching efficacy as “the best predictor of teacher behavior” (p.175).

Hall and Axelrod (2014) include five broad themes when discussing attitude in relation to students and writing: “(1) feelings about writing, (2) writing self-efficacy, (3) motivators for writing, (4) teacher influence, and (5) writing preferences” (p. 34). I have included all aspects in a general definition throughout this discussion.

However, despite the strong corresponding language between the CCSS standards for English language arts classrooms and the standards for writing in other content areas, content area teachers do not receive the direction they need through preparation and professional development to effectively teach writing. In my experience, these content area instructors receive ideas about how to involve writing in their curricula; however,

they are generally not instructed how to incorporate writing to learn as a regular practice in their classrooms. Content area teachers lack knowledge to attempt to teach writing and use writing as a tool in their classrooms (Calkins, 1994; Dean, 2010; Graves & Kittle, 2005; Hillocks, 1986; NWP & Nagin, 2006; Strong, 2006). These content area teachers would greatly benefit from professional development, which teaches them how to teach writing within their discipline as opposed to just assigning writing and becoming overwhelmed with the fear of grading mountains of papers. Content area teachers need assistance to incorporate writing into their own curriculum to help students use writing as a tool to learn (Dean, 2010; Strong, 2006) and prepare student for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, getting them ready for college and careers.

Hillocks (1986), in discussing how research on composition impacts policymakers, reported his survey findings that most teachers do not possess the strategies needed to make this type of instructional shift right away. He stated,

To learn the strategies, teachers will have to learn the theories underlying them, discuss the strategies, develop their own materials for use in their own classrooms, try those strategies and materials, discuss the results with others, try them again, and cycle through the process again. (p. 250)

The findings of DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour (2005) reiterate this cyclical process of discovery and improvement in their work with professional learning communities.

Hillocks (1986) also recommended that educators explore the NWP and its affiliates. More recent studies (Brown et al., 2011; NWP, 2010; Street & Stang, 2009) concurred and reiterated the effectiveness of this type of teacher training the in NWP institutes. Hillocks continued, calling for more localized in-service trainings:

Local in-service training programs can involve teachers in learning about more

effective techniques, collaborative planning for the use of those techniques across the writing curriculum, systematic observation and evaluation of their use and results, and continued revision. Such in-service obviously requires more than the one or two days available in most school systems. It may require summer workshops, released time during the school day for planning and observing, and time for follow-up evaluations and revisions. Without such a serious commitment, change in teachers' behavior and, therefore, in students' writing is likely to be negligible. (p. 251)

The NWP and its affiliates (in this case, the CUWP and the Wasatch Range Writing Project here in Utah) organize the summer institute as a place for teachers to gather and share research-based best practices. With their collective expertise, teachers help each other develop and refine the art and science of teaching writing. They return to their respective schools and communities where they assist other teachers in developing similar effective practices. These local teacher leaders assist one another create a continual network of support and training through follow-up activities and personal development opportunities sponsored by the Writing Project. Hickey and Harris (2005) found that when teachers—instead of administrators or outside speakers—are used to present professional development to their colleagues, collaboration increases, teamwork is more effective, and teacher leadership develops, all of which are key components in the NWP model. Hickey and Harris and Lieberman and Wood (2002) stated that teachers develop a greater sense of accomplishment and confidence when they present their practices to their peers. They develop more expertise and, by so doing, acquire more power within their organization. Colleagues are more willing to follow a teacher leader with confidence than someone from the outside with nothing but a name and a position (Northouse, 2010).

The NWP model offers an opportunity for multiple faculty members to take on

leadership roles among their peers. It develops a team-based leadership in which the staff builds a community base of power grounded in shared expertise. With shared responsibility, the management of the entire collaborative scheme can be carried out through a team leadership model in which smaller interdependent teams can be organized, sharing and coordinating ideas and trainings with each other to achieve the common goal of high student achievement (Northouse, 2010).

The NWP engages in real-world writing practices that adhere to standards for good classroom activities promoting authenticity with student work. Smith (1996) listed some of the techniques and strategies used by the NWP to accomplish this goal. They present writing as a process, which encourages teachers and students to think like writers, organizing thoughts, revising, sharing, and forming a community no matter what the subject of the class. These align neatly with those strategies recommended by Graham and Perin (2007), which include the use of writing strategies, summarization, collaborative writing, specific product goals, word processing, sentence combining, prewriting, inquiry activities, a process writing approach, the study of models, and writing for content learning (pp. 4-5). The NWP also teach to write for different audiences and purposes, both real world skills. Writing is used a tool for learning, not just a product to be graded and forgotten. They create and promote a culture of writers and teachers and learners, providing safety for all to contribute and take risks without the fear of failure (Smith, 1996, p. 289). These, as well as other practical practices, help teachers make connections and feel invested in their own development. The active participation connects their classrooms to the new material that they help to construct through writing,

reading, and collaboration.

Another positive aspect of the NWP collaborative community is that it eliminates the one-shot approach to professional development. Most professional development plans are abandoned before they are understood and implemented because they do not receive the necessary time for the details to be fleshed out (Power, 2011). Sufficient time to develop or implement new practices does not exist. Glickman et al. (2010) identified, among other characteristics for successful professional development, the need for long-term planning and development, provision of time and other resources, follow-up and support experiences, and ongoing feedback and assessment. There is a need for continual development, and not a “drive-thru” approach to professional development. Long-term support and interaction also factors into improving self-efficacy (Pajares et al., 2007).

The NWP provides the necessary time and support to make sure that good teaching practices make their way back into the classroom. The institute in itself provides an avenue of change because a change in education takes time (Smith, 1996), and the sheer amount of time and effort put into a longer institute gives the teachers involved more experience in the collaborative processes and practices involved. Local writing project sites might offer short workshops occasionally, but these are the exceptions to the rule, and more often than not the short workshops are based around previously established practices or ideas stemming from the community. The teacher presenters at these workshops are also available as local resources for those who want or need more. The focus remains on ongoing collaboration and development. Hence teachers have consistent access to retreats, longer workshops, summer institutes, and professional study

groups. Through local project sites, hundreds of thousands of educators have access to a wealth of resources, both material and collegial.

Founder of the NWP, Jim Gray, wrote,

School reform can't happen just by passing laws and publishing mandates. But real school reform can happen when teachers come together regularly throughout their careers to explore practices that effective teachers have already proven are successful in their classrooms. (2000, p. 103)

Smith (1996) noted the importance of using teachers as the experts within the field of education:

If we do not put our faith and our energy into teachers, then nothing we do in education—no initiative, no standard, no assessment—will ever make a real difference to the lives of students. To put this more positively, teachers are our best resource and our best hope to rethink and reshape education for the next century. (p. 292)

She also noted that “teacher-centered professional development programs can provide what is missing from the reform package of frameworks and assessments” (p. 290).

Teachers can reflect on good teaching practices by reflecting on their own learning (Lieberman & Wood, 2002). They can take the knowledge and experience and construct their own meaning, then return to share those reflective practices with their school faculties or even their students.

Kelly (1999) and Smith (1996) pointed out that other institutions, such as the California Mathematics Project, the California Science Project, the National Reform Faculty, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Science Foundation, have all taken parts of the NWP's model and adapted it to suit their own content area needs.

Following practices similar to those established by the NWP, teachers would have



opportunities to more deliberately “think about their students’ needs and write their own curriculum in community with others” (Christensen, 2006), thus creating a stronger professional learning community and allowing for more opportunities for greater student achievement (DuFour et al., 2005).

The basic structure of the NWP professional development is based upon several theories of adult learning, or andragogy (Knowles, 1980). Glickman et al. (2010) summarized Knowles’s findings: Adults have a psychological need to be self-directing; adults possess vast amounts of experience that should be tapped; adult readiness to learn correlates with real-world application; adults want immediate application of new-found knowledge/skills. This intrinsic type of motivation is what makes the project sites run, not a top-down approach with dictated curriculum. These real-world applications of knowledge also come from self-directed learning, an act that adults participate in daily. When that knowledge and expertise, especially when related to classroom practices, can be shared among colleagues in a professional setting, all participants benefit. Because of the authenticity of this problem solving, professional development moves from a strictly transactional contract between administrators and teachers to a more transformative change in thinking (Glickman et al., 2010; Northouse, 2010).

### **Positionality**

As a participant in the initial CUWP (2009) summer institute, I have seen the benefits of the training, philosophies, and practices I engaged in during the session. Even though I am an English teacher and teach writing in the scope of my classroom

curriculum, as a result of my participation in CUWP, my personal proficiency in teaching writing improved, my attitude towards student writing improved, and my professional development practices increased exponentially; my self-efficacy in teaching, sharing, and presenting increased. In fact, I now publish articles and make presentations based on my classroom practices and philosophies. In short, the CUWP summer institute was the best, most enduring, literacy training in which I have personally participated. The teacher-led training benefitted not only my classroom practices, but also my personal and professional development as a writer. Due to my experience and education, I have been asked to help with collaborative school-wide efforts to improve student writing and improve the writing instruction across different content areas. Along with a fellow CUWP participant and math teacher, I have conducted a district seminar in content area writing. I have also taught shorter, one-week CUWP summer institutes patterned on the full 3- or 4-week NWP model.

As I try to expand my role as a teacher leader in my school and in my district, especially regarding the teaching of writing, I want to appeal to more than just the English teachers—they are a receptive audience, for the most part. When I have tried to build literacy practices among faculty who specialize in other content areas, especially when it comes to writing, I have been met with strong resistance, and even hostility in some cases. I was looking for evidence and testimonials to further my ability to help improve the literacy practices in my school and district, especially writing to learn in different content area classrooms. My role as a “passionate participant” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196) in this project helps drive the completion of the project, my CUWP

associates and I would benefit from any positive reports derived from this study as would the NWP and all of its affiliates.

### **Research Questions**

Because I wanted to reflect the participants' views accurately, I explored a few basic, open-ended questions in this study.

1. What impact has the Central Utah Writing Project (CUWP) summer institute had on teachers' attitudes toward writing?
2. Have teachers changed their classroom practices after participating in the CUWP summer institute? If so, how?
3. If teachers have changed their classroom practices, what are their perceptions of the effectiveness of these changes on student learning? On students' attitudes toward writing?

Norman and Spencer (2005) asked similar questions, but they did not include practicing teachers of various content areas; instead they focused on pre-service language arts teachers. Rodgers (2011) also developed similar questions with undergraduate students and their attitudes toward writing. Street and Stang (2009) looked at the ways teacher education courses affected teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding writing.

### **Prior Research, Theory, Experiences, and Purposes**

Because I wanted to study how and/or if the CUWP summer institute influenced the attitudes and classroom writing practices of teachers whose content is something other than English or language arts, I investigated the attitudes of these content area teachers toward writing both professionally and personally. Because the selected participants had already undergone the training in one of the previous summers (2009-

2013), collecting data from the participants before their summer institute experience was impossible; however, they were asked about their attitudes and practices regarding writing in their classrooms both before and after their summer institute experiences. I explored the various ways these teachers' attitudes changed. In conjunction with this question, I also explored what changes teachers have made in their classroom practices as a result of the summer institute involvement, regardless of which year they participated. Additionally, I investigated the teachers' perceptions regarding the changes they have made—their ideas of their students' writing proficiencies, attitudes, and capacities to learn the content with the changes in writing instruction.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

#### **Study Design**

In approaching this study, I conducted a multiple case study that included four individual cases that have experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2013)—the CUWP summer institute. I involved one mathematics teacher, one music teacher, one social studies teacher, and one science teacher. Each case study involved personal interviews and either a classroom observation or collected artifacts with a secondary content area teacher with content area expertise outside the field of English or language arts who participated in the CUWP summer institute between 2009 and 2013. At the time of this study, the 2014 CUWP summer institute had just finished, and the participants had not been able to implement their professional development in their respective classrooms yet.

Case studies are an appropriate format for this study due to a wide range of participant experiences and personal interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2008). Each participant has his or her own understandings and interpretations of the professional development training, and each will have implemented it individually in his or her own classrooms. Collecting and analyzing the participants' views and attitudes towards the training would provide a description of the participants' perceived effectiveness of the CUWP training for teachers whose primary content is not English or language arts. I wanted to collect the most accurate representations of the

participants' experiences as possible, and open-ended case studies are the best avenue to collect the qualitative data that would support the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2008) regardless of positive or negative data results.

## **Context of the Study**

### **Research Setting**

The research setting of this study includes several school districts in Utah, Wasatch, and Salt Lake counties in Utah, whose teachers have participated in the CUWP summer institute. Teachers who participate in the summer institute represent schools whose populations include a variety of socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Those who are accepted to participate in the summer institute are educators (K-16) who have voluntarily applied to the program, have passed a group interview panel, and have committed to giving up three or four weeks of their summer in order to learn from university faculty (from Brigham Young University [BYU]) and from fellow teachers. In short, these teachers are dedicated to the improvement of the teaching of writing in schools. They want to be there.

### **Teacher Demographics**

According to CUWP summer institute organizers, the demographics revealed that the participants predominantly fit into a few categories. The majority of the participants were white, secondary language arts instructors, and mostly women. Participants also included men, ethnic minorities, elementary, and teachers of subjects other than language

arts; however, on a large scale, these populations might be considered underrepresented. Around twenty participants are accepted into the summer institute every year. Because of various life circumstances, the number of participants who are selected to participate in the institute often differs from the number of those who actually attend.

### **Details of the Phenomenon (CUWP Summer Institute)**

Of the many programs and professional development opportunities that the CUPW offers, this study will focus on the summer institute, a 3- or 4-week course, which is offered during the early part of summer every year. The summer institute also includes an evening meeting for participants in March, as well as a full-day training in late April or early May. For the first 3 years (2009-2011), the invitational summer institute was a sixteen-day program over four weeks. In the years since, because of reduced funding and concerns for teachers' time, the summer institute has been reduced to fourteen days over three weeks.

Since its inception, the institute has been administered by the program director Deborah Dean from BYU (the program's host institution). Chris Crowe from BYU and Karen Brown from Provo School District served as original co-directors. Brown resigned when she gained additional administrative duties in the district and was replaced by two former summer institute participants, Joseph Wiederhold and Chris Thompson, both public school teachers, who became co-directors with Chris Crowe in 2014.

According to the CUWP's website, participants in the summer institute "demonstrate best practice, read and discuss research, and write and respond to others"

writing” ([utahteacherswrite.org](http://utahteacherswrite.org)). The participants also gather ideas and strategies for teaching writing, share in collegial relationships with other teachers, earn credits (either state professional development points or six university credits), have time to write and think about writing instruction, and receive new books, and build friendships ([utahteacherswrite.org](http://utahteacherswrite.org)).

The basic format of the summer institute is fairly simple. Each day begins with a scribble (warm-up writing prompt), which is led by one of the participants, accompanied by time for the participants to share what they have written. Another participant then reflects on the previous day’s proceedings via a creative log that is kept on a rotating basis. The program also consists of one or two fellows presenting demonstration lessons from the participants’ content area that involve teaching writing. The other group members participate in the lesson and provide constructive feedback for the presenter. Also scheduled into the day are opportunities for fellows to write professionally and personally, work in writing critique groups, as well as reading groups that study and discuss current research on different aspects of incorporating writing in the classroom. Outside local and national researchers and writers also make guest presentations to the institute every few days as well. The CUWP website ([utahteacherswrite.org](http://utahteacherswrite.org)) cites three tenets that guide their activities: (a) teachers teach one another; (b) teachers reading and discussing relevant educational literature and research; (c) teachers writing and sharing their writing.

Over the course of the summer institute, participants are encouraged and expected to take pieces of their writing to a publication state, some submitting to



regional and national platforms as well as local publications.

Prior to the institute, during the evening meeting and the full-day training (normally held in either the Provo or Alpine School District Professional Development Center), CUWP participants, commonly referred to as fellows, meet with the directors to receive assignments and instruction for their roles in the upcoming summer institute. After the summer is over, fellows also have a chance to follow up on their development with a fall retreat held at Daniel's Summit Lodge. Some fellows are also invited to continue their professional development by attending the NWP meetings held in conjunction with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) national convention. CUWP also hosts periodic local conferences and workshops open to other teachers, as well as various writing retreats for participants to maintain professional collaborative opportunities for classroom teachers. Past participants work as teacher consultants in local schools and on various community projects such as writing camps, all of which promote the need for continued professional development in the teaching of writing.

### **Research Methods**

A case study involves studying a particular case (or multiple cases) within a specific parameter as it is observed in a real-life setting, or as it happens in context (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2008). Creswell develops the definition of a case study in more depth:

[It is] a type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study, as well as a product of inquiry. Case study research is a qualitative approach in

which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. The unit of analysis in the case study might be multiple cases (a multisite study) or a single case study (a within-site study). (p. 97)

Miles and Huberman (1994) further define a case as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p. 25). The intent of this study is both to understand a specific issue, or phenomenon, if you will, (how/if the CUWP summer institute affects attitudes and practices of teachers other than those who teach language arts) and to describe what is happening in the context of these classrooms (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2008). Therefore, it may be referred to as both an instrumental case study as well as an intrinsic case study (Creswell, 2013). This multiple case study included four teachers, all participants in the CUWP summer institute (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2006). Merriam might also refer to this study as a particularistic or phenomenological study. Merriam stated “case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and informing policy” (p. 51), all of which can be derived from the results of this study.

### **Sampling Strategies**

Participants for this study were purposefully selected based on a few criteria. Because the CUWP has only existed since 2009, and because only around 20 teachers are accepted each year, the number of possible participants for this study was limited. Because this study focused on secondary teachers who teach subjects outside of the

language arts, this further restricted the number of possible candidates. With the limited number of possible participants, purposeful sampling here remains the only logical method to select the participants (Creswell, 2013). Patton (2002) explained that

the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich* cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term *purposeful* sampling. (p. 230, emphasis in original)

Participants were identified through records kept by CUWP administrators. At the selection of the participants for this study (2013), only six possible candidates fit these preliminary requirements. When the actual study was undertaken, two more possible participants were available because another summer institute (2014) had been completed. These new participants, though, did not have much time to implement or refine practices learned in the institute, so they were purposely not included in this study. By the completion of this study, even more participants that meet these initial requirements might have had opportunity to participate in the summer institute. Hence, replication and triangulation of this study will work to corroborate the results (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

Participant availability also limited the number of case studies. Two of the six viable summer institute participants had moved out of state at the time of the study. However, within these limitations, maximum variation (Merriam, 2009), in order to account for as wide a representation of the small population as possible, still appeared possible due to the demographic make-up of the remaining sample size. This variance in participant type allows for some transferability to other populations for future studies, while also inviting future studies of a similar nature once a larger sample size is available.

Regardless, because of the small number of candidates, the use of case studies was the most practical way to gather meaningful data to represent the few as individuals as well as to discover common themes (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008). By using case studies, I identified common themes so that the participants would represent the larger population of content area teachers who have completed similar professional development institutes modeled after the NWP guidelines (Creswell, 2013; Graham & Perin, 2007; Stake, 1995), specifically future CUWP summer institute participants. The selection of multiple participants (cases) also makes a stronger case for the significance of the accumulated data (Yin, 2003).

In the end, four participants were selected: two female and two male. Two taught in the same school district, but all four taught at different schools (two rural, two suburban). All four also taught different content areas: math, music, science, and social studies. The math and music teachers participated in the 4-week seminar, and the other two participants were included in the 3-week model. All participants attended each all sessions for their respective summer institute experience. A summary can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

*Details About Study Participants*

Participant	Gender	Years taught	Date of summer institute	Content area
1	Male	17	2009	Math
2	Female	16	2011	Music
3	Female	6	2013	Science
4	Male	19	2013	Social Studies

### **Additional Limitations**

Apart from the aforementioned small sample number of potential participants, it must be taken into account that all of the participants self-selected this professional development as they had to apply for the position in the summer institute. The participants were not resistant to the professional development; nor were they mandated to receive the CUWP training; all four were willing participants in both the CUWP summer institute and in these case studies. This may bias some of the results, as these participants were looking for positive changes or improvement before becoming involved in the summer institute. Nevertheless, I was still interested in observing and reporting participant experiences, attitudes, and practices. In the future, if this type of professional development is mandated by administrators, another study could explore the experiences of those who were not voluntary participants. The participants of this study were all voluntary. Results might be different if a participant was mandated to participate in this type of professional development.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data was collected through multiple methods, thus providing stronger evidence (Yin, 2008). I started with one individual face-to-face audio-recorded personal interview with each participant. These semi-structured interviews included open-ended questions that could be used flexibly over the course of the interview; although flexible, the questions still required the same type of information (Merriam, 2009). See Appendix A for interview questions. Additional probes that sought clarification or further exploration

of topics were asked but not included in the appendix. These probes allowed for more flexibility and interpretation of the participants' experiences (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Because the study asked for participants to reflect on past practice and experience, interviews were the most practical method to gather data (Dexter, 1970; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The interviews were conducted in person, wherever happened to be most convenient for the participants—two in their own classrooms, and two in a faculty room located elsewhere in their school buildings. Each interview occurred in one sitting, the lengths (11 to 25 minutes in length) dependent on how openly the participants wanted to discuss their experiences and elaborate on their views. Interviews were audio recorded for coding and analysis. Appropriate permissions from school districts and principals to record conversations were obtained beforehand. The researcher conducted all interviews personally and individually. One outside party transcribed all four interviews.

The interviews were coded for themes specifically outlined in the literature review. Twenty-eight preliminary codes emerged from the literature review. However, many of the initial literature-based codes overlapped with others, so they were combined and condensed by the researcher before the final coding took place. This was done to avoid redundancies when coding. In all, twelve final themes that were identified by the literature review emerged from the interviews, observations, and artifacts: a participant's personal interpretation of the experience (phenomenon), construction of one's own learning, active learning/participation in the professional development, the inclusion of authentic tasks, collaborative support community, inclusion of prior knowledge and/or experience, self-efficacy regarding one's own writing and the teaching of writing,

motivation as a teacher, motivation as a student, scaffolded modeling, teacher expertise in professional development, and the use of writing in the content area. After the transcripts were analyzed for these twelve themes, other emergent themes were addressed.

The second aspect of data collection involved classroom observations or collected artifacts (see Appendices B and C.) If participants were willing, I observed these teachers in their own classrooms as they used or taught writing as part of their instruction, especially if they felt it would show evidence of a difference brought about because of their involvement in the summer institute. These observations were as nonintrusive and non-participative as possible, with no attempt on my part to become part of the class or a member of the group (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Nonparticipant observation is a common source of data collection used in case studies (Cremin & Baker, 2010). Gold (1958) described the researcher's role as a complete observer because the researcher does not interact with the participants or the students in the participants' classrooms during the observation periods. Appropriate school district and administrative permissions were also obtained prior to the recording of these classroom observations.

Participants were asked if they were willing to participate in classroom observations. Two participants, the math teacher and the science teacher, consented to classroom observations. Each of these observations lasted for one class period (45 minutes and 41 minutes, respectively) with invitations to return as often as I wanted. These observations were video recorded, with the focus on the teacher's actions (not the students'). A different transcriptionist from the one who transcribed the audio recordings transcribed the video observations. The principal researcher then coded the transcripts.

The other two participants declined observations, mostly due to the restraints of their scheduling and the timing of the study. However, when they were asked to bring artifacts that might provide evidence of their writing practices in their classroom with them to the personal interview, they both assented readily to the researcher's request. Both the music teacher and the social studies teacher forgot to prepare the requested materials at the time of the interview but submitted them electronically at a later date. The music teacher also voluntarily provided further, newly-developed material at an even later date. Observations of artifacts were only coded and analyzed for connections to the same themes found in the interview transcripts.

The classroom observations and artifacts were used to corroborate the information gathered in the interviews and triangulate the previously obtained data. Describing the physical layout of the teachers' classrooms and how it might factor into the effectiveness of teaching writing, or describing student participation or reactions to the writing instruction in the different content areas, might appear to provide meaningful data, but not in this case. These details were superfluous to the purpose of this study and did not provide any useful data. The highly descriptive field notes taken from the observations were used as reference points for further discussion and reference points for further interview questions (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002).

The next portion of the data collecting depended on the depth of the responses that the initial interviews and observations yield and the themes that surface.

After the initial coding of the data resulting from the individual interviews, I contacted the participants via email in order to ask a few clarifying questions. These



responses were brief and did not alter any data. One participant even emailed me an unsolicited artifact she had developed since our interview in order to corroborate what she said she was doing in her classroom. I communicated in this fashion in lieu of conducting secondary interviews, which would appear more formal, and to allow participants to clarify any previous statements, as well as allow the participants to share anything they might have overlooked or forgotten. This communication was more informal and lacked a specific, common questioning structure (Merriam, 2009).

Data was not collected from other parties such as administrators, team members, parents, or students because this study focused on the participants' attitudes and opinions and experiences. Incorporating data from other shareholders could come in a different, future comparative study.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Once the interviews were transcribed verbatim, I analyzed the transcripts, separating ideas into meaningful categories (Borgatti, 2008; Richards, 2003). The interview questions were semistructured and led to open-ended follow-up questions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Merriam, 2009); therefore, the answers produced a myriad of responses. I then looked for relationships among participant responses (Richards, 2003). Because of the possibility of such varied data, selective data reduction was necessary. The themes, along with illustrative examples from the participant interviews, can be found in Table 2. However, the outlying data that did not fit commonly into the rest of the coding was still important. Inclusion of this discrepant data provided insight when

Table 2

*Themes Found in the Literature Review with Illustrative Examples from the Interviews*

Theme	Example from the Interview
Personal interpretations of experience (music)	“After the institute, it...doesn’t matter what you do or how you do it...and you can be as rigid to whatever standard you want to hold or not. That’s kind of what I took from that: I don’t have to maintain the standard that the honors English teachers do. I don’t even have to maintain the standard that the history teachers do. I can maintain my own writing standard.”
Construction of own learning (math)	“...As each individual person presented, I would always constantly ask myself the question, alright, they’re talking about this aspect of writing. How does that truly apply to what I’m trying accomplish in teaching the students mathematics? And it gave me a chance to reexamine and to say okay, I need to... I can see how this can be used, but I can also see how this really doesn’t quite work for me. And I learned along the way different techniques about the writing for learning, how writing for learning works to help the students better understand the curriculum.”
Active learning/participation in professional development (science)	“I played the role of teacher when we were doing our demo lesson...I was a student a lot. I was a writer. I was a reader. I was an editor and critiquer.... we read. We wrote. We had a lot of reflection time, which I appreciated. We were able to interact with others and give them feedback on their writing.”
Authentic tasks (music)	“...Following every rehearsal...we have a wiki space, and they’re all assigned to a group on the wiki space, and they have to post regarding that rehearsal on the wiki space.”
Collaborative support community (music)	“...I knew that I wasn’t judged at that point for what I was doing. They knew that I wasn’t an English teacher, but...the feeling in the institute was just everybody’s doing their thing the way they do it, and it doesn’t matter how you do it, and sometimes it doesn’t necessarily matter how well you do it...just that you’re doing it and that you’re encouraging others to do it. Encouraging, that was probably the biggest thing. It was all really encouraging, and positive, and constructive. And you know, even if you didn’t do it perfectly, the encouragement or the feedback was always the positive plus whatever else you needed.”
Prior knowledge/experience (science)	“This is my sixth year teaching. My first two years I taught in California, and one of our school goals was writing across the curriculum, and so it was something I always did, but I’d never had much formal instruction in it as a science teacher. I don’t teach writing, but I use writing a lot with my students. Um, mostly to help them communicate, to help them put their ideas together, and to help them with critical thinking, things like that.
Self-efficacy regarding writing and teaching writing (math)	“As I tended to write, and as I had the opportunity to write and reflect on my own writing, and my own skills, it gave me a stronger basis and more, uh, stronger comfort level to establishing and helping my students to write, even in the math.”

*(table continues)*

Theme	Example from the Interview
Motivation as a teacher (science)	“I’ve always loved writing, I’ve always loved reading, and I found my love for writing again. Because after doing my master’s degree I decided to hate it after I had to write my thesis, cause it was painful. I found my joy in writing again, and I found more motivation to have my students do a little bit more writing, not just, a quick bell ringer or something like that.”
Motivation as a student (social studies)	“I don’t think that they’re ever like, yeah! We get to write! But, um, but I’ve, I think I’ve gotten a few assignments that I designed in a way, in such a way, that once they start doing it they’re like, oh that was really fun.”
Scaffolded modeling (social studies)	“...One thing that I gained quite a bit from is how to go about teaching, modeling the writing...I feel like that’s one of the biggest things that I took away....”
Teacher expertise in professional development (math)	“It gave me an opportunity to teach math to a bunch of English teachers...In the institute I gave a lesson that started with <i>On Beyond Zebra</i> , and we talked about the use of variables in uh in algebra and how we could use them and how we could apply them. I got a lot of very powerful strong feedback on the lesson that I created.”
Writing in the content area (math)	“In writing down and learning how to see what they’re saying so that they can think about what it... the idea of writing for learning really enhances their ability in the future to learn concepts. For example, I teach...basic algebra concepts. And the idea of algebra being a step by step thinking process, is they learn to see how the idea of a unknown, as they learn to see the idea of equations, and they put that into practice through their writing, they learn to see it. And in learning to see it when they go on further into mathematics, then it just becomes a natural part of them. They understand how it works, and they can utilize it, not only in mathematics itself but in their own professions.”

comparing it to the common correlation and when analyzing the data as a whole.

Common themes as well as outlying ideas were analyzed. The process of data selection and exclusion was narrated as a part of the data analysis section after the analysis had been accomplished (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Smagorinsky, 2008). Because gathering and analyzing data is a recursive process, I frequently alternated back and forth between the collection and analysis stages, developing both simultaneously.

The analysis of the teachers’ responses shed light on the effectiveness of the CUWP summer institute through the sharing of their stories and experiences and

practices. The results are shared later as narrative stories (Mishler, 1986), or descriptions (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008) and an examination of commonly corroborated themes. Through these holistic and embedded forms of analysis (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008), which are principally inductive and comparative (Merriam, 2009), my report of the findings also discusses the lessons that the researcher learned (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) from each of the case studies individually, as well as how they represented a whole population. From the results of the data gathering from the interviews, observations, and artifacts, (first) within-case analysis and (second) cross-case analysis of themes were constructed (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2008).

Many themes overlapped within the interviews/transcripts. To demonstrate how the analyses transpired, below is a section of the transcript of the interview with the social studies teacher, along with some of the themes identified therein.

(A) I don't think that they're ever like, yeah! We get to write! But, um, but I've,  
(B) I think I've gotten a few assignments that I designed in a way, in such a way,  
that once they start doing it they're like, oh that was really fun. Um, I've been looking for this one. This is, this is an example, um of one where I, I have all these... One of the things I did, I've done for a long time just for fun to... If we had a little, as a reward at the end of class or something, I would tell what's, what I call, I give them a life lesson. They're experiences from my past that I decide, you know? If I was a teenager again, this is what I'd do. [Demonstrating on laptop] This is thing that where they... Each of these underlined words is a key term from that chapter. (C) **And then they have to use those key terms in explaining a situation they've had in their family. This chapter is [about] political organization of space. And so, they have to talk about, uh, an incident in which they had either fictional or nonfictional or combination of the two, where they had to divide space in the house based on, you know like, like the classical put a line down the room and they have to use all these terms.** All these terms are perfect for describing how the space is after it's already been divided. And so, (D) that's [demonstrating] a story that came from my life personally about my sister. It's funny. I like to write... humor... (E) and so I read this... story to the students as an example of what I want them to do. And then they wrote their own and I just gave them the parameters. I said, you need to use

this many key terms and they need to be, you know, done this way and about this long but, but otherwise, they, they did their own story, and just used those guidelines.

The underlined section beginning at point A reveals elements related to the theme of student motivation. The Italics at point B also indicate an overlap with how the teacher views his own efficacy in teaching writing. The bold print at point C is an example of writing in the content area. The underlined section running through points D and E illustrate some scaffolded modeling of writing, and the added Italics at point D show some self efficacy related to his own writing. Each of the four interviews revealed that the themes found in the literature review kept overlapping, showing a tight correlation between the themes and the evidence to corroborate the narratives of each of the participants.

### **Consideration of Possible Ethical Issues**

Merriam (2009) stated that validity or trustworthiness in qualitative writing involves “conducting the investigation in an ethical manner” (p. 209). I acknowledge the subjective nature of this study and the interpretations of the results. The study has limitations because the data was self-reported by the participants after their involvement with the CUWP summer institute. Some of the participants had to recall experiences several years before the interviews. The difference between the time of the summer institute and the interviews may have altered in the participants’ responses as opposed to what they might have said immediately after participating in the CUWP summer institute. Future studies that replicate these findings could take this variable under consideration.

And if the results corroborate those found here, it would strengthen the triangulation of the data and solidify the validity of the study (Merriam, 2009). However, I wanted to allow the participants to speak for themselves—to tell their own story and their perceptions. And to avoid any misconstruction of participant response, I member checked by reviewing each case study with the corresponding participant for accuracy before publication (Maxwell, 2005). This transpired after a polished draft of the narratives had been written. Member checking occurred again after the analysis and interpretation sections had been written.

### **Confidentiality**

To ensure confidentiality, participants were only identified by the subject matter they teach. All other labels and names were removed. To further ensure discretion, only the researcher and transcribers had access to the recordings and transcriptions. Transcriber access was terminated once transcripts were completed. All materials were kept in secured locations (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002).

### **Monitoring and Use of Subjective Lenses**

As a former participant of the CUWP summer institute and an active teacher consultant, I have a vested interest in the CUWP and the NWP. To monitor the accuracy of the answers, again, I collaborated with the participants to ensure that accurate portrayals of their experiences were represented regardless of the outcomes. I realized that my position as a researcher might appear compromised with my vested interest in the success of this program; however, I hope all disclosed biases serve as transparency,

especially because I reported all findings, not just those that were favorable. With most qualitative studies, when discussing reliability, complete replication of a study cannot be achieved because “human behavior is never static” (Merriam, 2009, p. 221). Instead, it is more important to ensure that the data collected is consistent with the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Smagorinsky, 2008).

### **Validity**

I realize that the effectiveness of the CUWP summer institute training is left to self-reported individual interpretation. The implementation of the training received in the individual classrooms hinges on the dedication and attitude of the individual teachers. Each one of the participants shared a common experience, even though they attended during a different year’s institute. Despite the shared phenomenon, each participant also had his or her own interpretation of the training they received, which may also have led to different interpretations or connections possibly resulting in different classroom practices and successes. Themes that emerged in the data collection reflected that difference but still tied together with common emergent themes (Smagorinsky, 2008; Vygotsky, 1986).

One way that the study’s consistency increased occurred because all the interviews and observations were conducted by the researcher. The transcriptions were conducted by independent persons and were checked for accuracy by the researcher before coding. Secondary coding of all the data was also conducted by one individual (Merriam, 2009). Denzin (1978) proposed that the use of multiple methods and multiples sources of data also bolster the internal validity of a study through triangulation. Member

checks, also known as respondent validation, for which the researcher checks with the participants regarding feedback and interpretation of the data, also tightens the argument for the validity of the data (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Merriam maintains that “triangulation remains a principal strategy to ensure for validity and reliability” (p. 216).

Disclosing my intentions, my positionality, and my methods will help this study to be as transparent as possible (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009). It is a way for a few case studies to illustrate the effectiveness of the CUWP/NWP summer institute model for content area (not English) teachers and their attitudes and practices of teaching writing in their own classrooms. It is not meant to measure effectiveness, but rather to observe and report teacher perceptions.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The first part of the results is presented in a series of four narratives, one for each of the participants, identified only by their individual content area. Each narrative represents a summary of the individual interview and either the classroom observations or the artifacts supplied by the participants. Each narrative is a constructed interpretation of the interviews, artifacts, and observations. However, they have been member checked individually by each participant for any misrepresentation or errors in transcription that may have occurred.

#### **Narratives**

##### **Mathematics**

The first interviewed participant principally taught mathematics, but also has taught business and computer classes, and was the yearbook advisor. He was also involved with the school musical each year. At the time of the interview, he was in his 17<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, all of which had been at the same rural junior high school. He participated in the CUWP summer institute 4-week session after his 11<sup>th</sup> year of teaching.

Never afraid to attempt something new, the math teacher decided to join the summer institute in order to solve a problem—he said that he wanted students to remember the concepts they had been taught and believed that writing would be a powerful solution to that particular problem. Whereas previously the only writing done in his classroom involved writing numbers and equations, he went looking for something

more. Because of his assignment to teach the yearbook class, he was included on a list of language arts instructors who received promotional emails about the CUWP's initial summer institute. He applied, figuring it would help in his quest for a solution that involved writing.

During a group interview as part of the summer institute application process, he said he realized that having a math teacher among English teachers would bring new perspective to the experience for himself and for the other participants. He also knew one of the other participants and was very curious to see how things panned out. The other incentives such as a stipend and university credit also enticed him to participate in this professional development. Despite teaching a content area that does not often include words other than in story problems, this math teacher was not intimidated by writing; in fact, he enjoyed writing on his own, and since the institute's completion he reported writing personally on an almost-daily basis.

Through many of the activities at the summer institute, such as writing and sharing with others and presenting lessons for the others to critique and provide feedback, the math teacher gained confidence in his own writing and his ability to include writing as part of the instruction in his own classroom. He acknowledged that his own writing and reflecting is a key to student success in using writing as a learning tool in the classroom. He said,

As I tended to write, and as I had the opportunity to write and reflect on my own writing, and my own skills, it gave me a stronger basis and...comfort level to establishing and helping my students write, even in math.... But more importantly than that, it gave me a chance to examine my own practice.

He stressed that writing to learn is a powerful piece and frequently cited the common

adage that, as learners, we only remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, and 30% of what we see...and 70% of what we write. Even though those numbers are debated by psychologists and other scientists, he recognized the importance of incorporating writing in order to increase student understanding, especially because the core curriculum has been moving toward higher level thinking skills. Writing requires a greater depth of knowledge.

Throughout the summer institute, he constantly asked himself, “How does this content apply to mathematics and how I teach?” He admitted that he did not really know how to incorporate writing into his curriculum, but he was able to receive some assistance from the writing project fellows at the summer institute in that regard. After attending the CUWP summer institute, he started using writing to help students explore reasons behind the mathematics. Math class is not just all formulas any more. Writing has brought more depth to the thinking behind the calculations and has also become an introspective tool for students to reflect on their learning.

Since the summer institute, the math teacher has been asked to rewrite an online independent study mathematics course for a university and has personally seen the need for clear writing because that was the main method of delivery for the course. He said that participating in the summer institute gave him the confidence to complete that task.

This confidence was also evident in his classroom practices: he frequently had the students pull out paper and reflect or explore their thought processes. At first, he said the students were resistant, not wanting to write in a math class. However, over time, they became accustomed to this method and stopped complaining and became comfortable

with the practice. He was also not afraid to experiment with different writing procedures or genres and always provided a model, as he often shares his own writing with the students, a strategy he learned at the summer institute.

Despite this success, though, students still refused to write, and it has caused him to back off a little. He regretted it, though, and has determined to include it more in his repertoire of standard classroom strategies.

Another roadblock in his opinion was time. With a new mathematics core, the content was changing, and it took his focus away from writing as he has tried to understand the change in content he is supposed to teach. He felt that he needed to find a better balance between incorporating the new core and implementing writing, a practice he knew to work with regard to student learning, but it has been difficult to implement within the framework of the school day schedule.

As far as student attitudes toward writing were concerned, the math teacher was not sure whether or not they had changed. However, he stated, “By the time they leave my classroom, they understand a little bit better the skill of technical writing...thinking through the step-by-step, underlying principles of algebra.... Writing has increased their technical understanding.” Going back to the adage to which he repeatedly referred, he mentioned,

As they learn to see the idea of equations, and they put into practice through their writing, they learn to see it. And in learning to see it, when they go further into mathematics, then it just becomes a natural part of them. They understand how it works, and they can utilize it, not only in mathematics itself, but on their own professions.

When asked directly about the impact of the CUWP summer institute on his

teaching and whether he would recommend it to other teachers, the math teacher responded that he had already encouraged several colleagues to attend the institute regardless of their content area because he felt it would change their classroom practices like it had changed his. He also co-taught a district level course in the summer for multiple content area teachers based on writing to learn and the work of Bill Strong (2006).

He acknowledged that his success might have come from his initial desire to find a solution to his problem through writing. His biggest takeaway was that he could effectuate this by helping his students write for their own learning. Regarding the CUWP summer institute as a whole, he said,

I can see that this is not just an English teacher workshop where you learn how to teach English better. This is about coming up with true skills that help to build and understand not only my learning and my own writing, but also my students' learning and their writing.

Shortly after the interview, I was invited to observe a typical day in his classroom. I was told to just show up any time other than a test day, which I did. I sat at a desk in the back of the classroom, and was promptly ignored by the students and the teacher, which allowed me to be a non-intrusive, non-participative classroom observer (Cremin & Baker, 2010; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Gold, 1958).

The teacher started the class, after sundry housekeeping announcements over the intercom by reading a poem called "The Ferris Wheel" and had the students think about Ferris wheels for a moment before writing for five minutes about the word *rotate*. After a bit of writing, he had the students pause and then address in writing what was necessary for something to rotate. All the students were engaged in the writing. This procedure

appeared to be a standard routine that had been established and practiced because everyone knew what to do. The students then used their writing to generate a classroom discussion facilitated by the teacher. This conversation included multiple images they wrote about, such as ceiling fans and rolling down a grassy hill. It then moved into more of a technical, almost scientific discussion about needing an axis, force, and direction, showing some prior knowledge about the concept of rotation.

This discussion then moved into the mathematical side of rotation and the graphing of points on a coordinate plane. The teacher used questions that allowed the students to think and construct their own answers before he would make any corrections to their thinking. He brought in previous experiences the students had with slope and other graphing concepts. After this discussion of the concepts necessary to graph points on a rotating axis, and before they moved on to working on assignments, he had them write what they learned about rotation at the bottom of their other writing, correcting anything they had misunderstood from before. Most students took the time to write a short paragraph about the overall concept.

The rest of the lesson then involved checking previously assigned math problems and the assignment of new ones. Students had the remaining time to ask questions and work on their homework. The work atmosphere was relaxed, with the students discussing with each other and the teacher concepts both mathematical and trivial. There was even a bit of singing. The teacher walked around helping, often referring the students back to the discussion and the writing they did to remember important points about rotation and coordinate pairs.

## **Music**

The second participant, a music teacher, had a different experience as she began the CUWP. At the time of the interview, she was in her sixteenth year of teaching; her assignments included orchestra, guitar classes, and a concurrent enrollment music class for a local university. These assignments were split between two suburban high schools. Her four-week summer institute experience came the summer after her twelfth year of teaching.

The music teacher was a bit more reluctant to participate in the institute as she had never incorporated writing in her classroom before. However, some of the English teachers at one of the schools where she taught had presented some of their activities to the faculty, and she was intrigued. Being a reader and writer “by nature,” she felt like this was a type of professional development she could handle and possibly apply to her content, as opposed to some of the other recent professional development opportunities she had experienced. Writing was also something that “kids don’t do,” and therefore provided a challenge. Her principal interest in the summer institute, though, was mostly “self-centered,” as she put it: the institute provided the professional development credit hours she desired. Plus, she did not have to pay to go.

Not as eager to join in the activities, she participated reluctantly. She said, “I did all the writing prompts...and I listened to everybody read their things and I was mortified ‘cause I was so far out of my element and I knew I was. It was bad.” She cried all the way home for the first several days. However, the institute members made an effort to make her feel welcome and comfortable, but it pulled her out of her comfort zone. “I

didn't like it at all." She decided to stick it out, though.

At one point, she got the courage to share a response to a writing prompt. From then on, things changed: "It was a different ballgame for me from then on because I knew that I wasn't judged at that point for what I was doing. They knew I wasn't an English teacher." Everything became "really encouraging, and positive, and constructive...and the feedback was always the positive...plus whatever else you needed." She found comfort in the collaborative, collective efforts of the professional development community that the summer institute had constructed and provided.

Participation in the institute's daily individual writing activities brought back her enjoyment of writing, a sentiment that had lain dormant for quite some time. A self-proclaimed prolific writer in high school, where she wrote plays and such with her friends, the music teacher had fallen out of the habit and just stopped writing. The CUWP summer institute reanimated that writing spirit in her.

Personal inhibitions regarding her formal writing abilities (during her pursuit of a master's degree) also made her reluctant to include writing in her classroom. She doubted herself, but after the summer institute, she felt more empowered to include writing at a standard that she was comfortable with, a standard that did not have to measure up to honors English teachers. Again a sense of empowerment came from her experiences at the summer institute.

When it came to implementing writing in her classroom, she decided to take small steps. Previously, the only writing assignment was a concert report which consisted of a few lines. The first change included the creation of a writing rubric, which helped her go



from three scribbled lines to a two-page, formal piece of writing for the students to complete. “I went from not being comfortable to actually going through and grading a writing paper and being okay with that.”

Another change the music teacher executed regarding writing in her classroom was the inclusion of more informal opportunities for students to write. Before the summer institute, she had only asked students to write one short report each year. Her new approach involved students writing about their group rehearsals on a class Wiki. Through this writing, students were free to comment as they would like, but they also needed to extend their thinking and reflect on their own practice sessions. This type of writing allowed students of many abilities and personalities to contribute their voices without fear of repercussion of judgment. Students were free to be creative; one student created a complete storyline for her group’s rehearsal, complete with fictional character names and plot twists, but they were all grounded in the context of orchestra practice. Multiple students also expressed appreciation for the safety they felt with this type of writing for class assignments. Students who would not dare speak a word aloud in front of their peers in class often shared online keen insights into the practice group or class dynamics. They would write about their learning and improvement instead of sitting quietly, revealing nothing.

Since the interview took place, the participant sent me another writing assignment she has incorporated where the students have to prepare a personal playlist. The writing assignment included written rationale for their choices, involving multiple higher-level thinking skills and giving the students opportunities to build validity and personal

confidence in the content area.

The confidence she gained from attending the CUWP summer institute manifested itself even more as the music teacher shared her personal writing endeavors that stemmed from her participation in the CUWP summer institute. She said that she now keeps a personal blog, and has attended a CUWP writing retreat and a one-week summer institute, which is similar to the complete summer institute but in a condensed format. Perhaps most impressive was her discussion of the publication of professional articles in Music Educator journals across the country.

She reported that she definitely saw improvement in the students' writing over the course of the year, and especially if the students had taken her class over multiple years. Students and parents became more accustomed to the writing element in music classes.

The music teacher attributed the change in her attitude and practice to her participation in the CUWP summer institute. She had already highly recommended it to colleagues in her two schools and throughout the school district, and especially to those that teach different content areas.

## **Science**

The third participant was a science teacher. She had been teaching for 4 years before she participated in the CUWP summer institute, two of which had been out of state. At the time of the interview she had been teaching for 6 years and had experience on both the middle school and high school levels. Her current assignment included eighth grade science and a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) elective in which she and the students had freedom to explore multiple areas related to math and

sciences. This past year, she taught units in chemistry, biology, physics, geology, water, energy, engineering, and urban infrastructure.

Before her participation in the three-week CUWP summer institute, she taught in California, where as part of her school's goals, she was involved in writing across the curriculum. She never had any formal training on how to teach writing or even use it in her classroom; it was just expected to be used.

She maintained that she still does not teach writing, but she uses writing extensively—mostly as a tool to help students communicate: “to help them put their ideas together, and to help them with critical thinking....” She says that students spend at least one-fifth of their class time writing, which will involve at least one assignment every day.

The science teacher decided to participate in the summer institute after being persuaded by a colleague, who was a former participant; she also had a good relationship with one of the directors, who also persuaded her to participate. She was also looking for a way to expand her horizons by interacting with professionals outside the confines of science teachers. This, she mentioned, was one of the things that helped her the most—to view her own curriculum from other perspectives.

She said that personally she had always loved writing (and reading). That was until after writing her master's thesis, and then she decided she hated it because of that painful process. However, because of the institute and the opportunities she had to write again, she began to love writing again. “I found my joy in writing again, and I found more motivation to have my students do a little bit more writing—not just...a quick bell ringer or something.” Other activities she mentioned as beneficial included sharing and

receiving feedback, especially the genuine reactions of the other institute participants. Some of the roles she mentioned playing during the institute included those of teacher (during her demo lesson), student, writer, editor, and critique. The different perspectives she used while participating helped to look at assignments and her own practices critically. She also appreciated the built-in time to read, write, discuss ideas with teachers of different age groups and content areas and reflect on their experiences and practices.

She noted repeatedly that writing was not something normally done in a science classroom other than lab reports, something the students abhor. Many times, she emphasized the fact that it was fun to start using writing in the classroom with things that the kids did not hate. It became something that was fun for students and the teacher.

Before the institute, the science teacher already had a good attitude toward using writing in the classroom, as it had been expected in her first assignment as a teacher in California. However, she said attending the CUWP summer institute convinced her to continue to incorporate writing in the classroom. Principally, she said, it gave students a voice, especially the ones who did not vocalize their thoughts in the classroom:

There are a lot of kids I don't hear from in the classroom very often.... Even if I call on them, they'll say one sentence. But then I have them write something, and they are prolific writers, and I get to hear what they have to say if they won't say it out loud.

Similar to the music teacher, she was able to see the learning and growth of her students' content area knowledge through their writing. After attending the institute and deciding to incorporate more writing into the classroom, the science teacher thought she would experience quite a bit of resistance from students, but she said it had not been any more than the normal grumbling about doing work in class. For her it was a surprise to

say the least. Of course, she explained, the students always say things such as

This isn't English class; I'm not supposed to write; I'm not supposed to read. And you know, after we get past that first one, I don't hear it again...their attitude toward writing and communication is improving.

And to date, she had not received any complaints from colleagues, parents, or administrators either regarding the changes she made regarding the integration of more writing. She mentioned one specific problem she had involving students whose language skills are limited due to learning English as a second language. Although August and Shanahan (2006) stated that English learners do not need to be proficient speakers before obtaining (reading and) writing skills, this science teacher's experiences with larger writing assignments and her English learners involved large amounts of plagiarism, which she attributed to a lack of language (specifically writing) knowledge. The only other problem she noted was the frustration in trying to break students from the habits of informally writing using the same language as when they text or use social media. She stated that she would like to get students to avoid the "LOL" and "IDK" jargon and encourage them to write more formally.

As far as her own personal efforts in writing were concerned, she was motivated to begin an experience journal for her daughter that she plans to give her when she turns eighteen years old. On a more professional level, she said that what she learned at the institute helped when she had to take several classes to recredential, "even the science classes," which included more writing than she was used to. Another indirect byproduct she observed included better grades in her master's classes. When speaking of the writing and collaborative learning experiences with teachers of different disciplines at the

institute, she said, “It was helpful to me to understand more about the writing process and how that works.” She described the change she made in her STEM elective class: resulting from her experiences at the CUWP summer institute, she incorporated more staged projects, which she used to help the students see writing as a series of drafts instead of as a one draft and done experience. Like the writing process, she had students use writing to reflect, revise, and edit to clarify thinking and to learn from their experiments and labs. She also had them write more about their experiences than she had previously required.

When asked about her perception about whether the increase in writing in her classroom increased the students’ capacity to learn the science content, the science teacher responded affirmatively without hesitation. She believed this because with the writing they tended to

think at a much deeper level. I love asking questions where they have to write a response, and they have to take time to think, and they have to do it on their own. It really helps you [as a teacher] see exactly what they’ve learned and where the misconceptions are and how I need to reteach and readdress [the content].... It’s helped a lot.

She said that the CUWP was definitely effective professional development because it changed the way she taught and it made her evaluate her own practices so she could make her teaching better by incorporating writing as a way of learning and reflecting; and that, she said, benefitted students. She highly recommended the institute or any of the CUWP workshops to all teachers, but specifically to “non-English teachers” because, in her experience, English teachers already came with this knowledge. This science teacher, after her participation in the institute, did some training for her

department at her high school, where she met resistance from the science faculty. She felt that their resistance might have come from her lack of seniority or the others' belief that it was not their job to teach writing. Regardless, she said it was difficult to keep her enthusiasm because she was the only one in her department implementing writing. She transferred schools (and districts) soon after and started writing more. Concerning her belief about the power of the summer institute, she concluded the interview: "It's really something you need to experience to be able to...have a testimony about it...and its effectiveness." After she initially participated in the CUWP summer institute, the science teacher attended an initial writing retreat the following fall but did not participate in any other continuing collaborative activities apart from participating in the CUWP Facebook group.

After the interview with the science teacher, I was invited to come back another day to observe a regular day in the classroom and how the teacher used her training involving writing within her content area. She gave me a range of dates to choose from during which she was not giving a test nor was a school-wide assembly scheduled. She said that because she uses writing every day, it would not matter when I came.

On the day I selected for the observation, the class was involved in a lab regarding different types of heat: radiation, conduction, and convection. She started the class by having the students work in partners to write during a "bell ringer" review about waves, a unit they had just finished. I sat at the teacher's desk in the corner, was briefly introduced and promptly forgotten by the students, which again left me as a nonintrusive, nonparticipative observer of the classroom (Cremin & Baker, 2010; DeWalt & DeWalt,

2011; Gold, 1958). After initial directions from the teacher and a discussion with their partners, the students used a classroom set of Chromebooks to write about their understanding of waves. The teacher then reviewed the material orally, with the students using what they had written as a basis for the conversation. They then submitted their writing electronically.

The teacher then switched topics from wavelengths to heat and presented a brief video about the three types of heat. Another oral check for understanding occurred briefly. The teacher's examples all related to a hot griddle in the back of the classroom, where a teacher assistant was cooking pancakes—an added motivation for student to complete the day's writing assignment. The students were then directed to an electronic lab assignment based on the newly presented material about types of heat. The students then shifted to work in groups of three or four to complete their assignment, which consisted of reading the directions, recalling the content of the video and their discussion with the teacher, and then writing about their findings. The teacher circulated to assist with technology issues and to direct the writing the students were supposed to construct. She specifically addressed the need for careful presentation of evidence to support their findings. Students needed to reflect on their own understanding while providing evidence through writing. Technical aspects of writing, specifically correct paragraphing and careful mechanics were also stressed. The teacher walked around and conferenced with the student groups about their writing and made sure that there was enough content-oriented material to support the students' conclusions about the heat experiment.

During the lab time, the atmosphere was relaxed, with music playing and natural



conversation, leading me to believe that this lab and writing procedure occurred fairly frequently. No grumbling occurred regarding the use of writing. When discussing the content material, the students freely used language consistent with writing processes such as drafting and revision. When finished, students were directed to review material on Canvas—some teacher generated, some their own written notes—for an upcoming test.

They continued to discuss the content material after they had finished their writing assignment and ate their pancakes. They were obviously familiar with using writing as a tool for learning in their science classroom. The science teacher said that she did not teach the students how to write, but she definitely set expectations for them with how they were to write in the science classroom, and how the students should use writing to clarify their understanding of the content and present their ideas and conclusions to others.

### **Social Studies**

The final participant in this study was a social studies teacher who, at the time of the interview, had been teaching various social studies courses for 19 years. His assignments at the time of the interview included a class required for graduation—Geography for Life, as well as an AP Human Geography course. He had 17 years of social studies classroom experience at the secondary level when he participated in the 3-week CUWP summer institute.

When he was in his master's program, he came across constructed responses to show understanding of content, and he decided to implement them in his own classroom. This writing assignment he mentioned involves a summary of the content and then a

personal application, for which the students needed to reflect and address the “so what” of the material and connect it to their lives. He became interested in content area literacy while in graduate school. However, he admitted, the major impetus for joining the summer institute was the credits that were offered for the professional development. They equaled the number he needed for a lane change. Despite the large chunk of time it required, it was an added benefit for him that he could obtain the six credit hours he lacked for a lane change with a professional development opportunity in a subject area he was interested in and one he felt comfortable with. He, along with a colleague, had been working on writing digital social studies curriculum that was more student-friendly to read.

Before his participation in the summer institute, the social studies teacher said that he used writing in his classroom as a means to assess student understanding. He said he used writing because he hated worksheets. He also mentioned having students write traditional research reports, so he went to the CUWP summer institute to find more creative or diverse ways to use writing in his content area.

The experience with the summer institute and the professional writing assignments inspired him to write more on a personal level, as well as to write as a model in front of his students. In fact, he said that his biggest takeaway from the summer institute was learning to model content writing in front of his students. The institute, he said, gave him the motivation he needed to move forward with using writing as a tool for learning.

He felt like a learner, one who absorbed more than he reciprocated to the group.

He said, “I saw the vision of writing and the importance of writing...it was reinforced... I really got...some practical skills that I could implement...namely teaching and modeling writing.” Regarding this modeling, the social studies teacher shared an example of how he incorporates modeling in his AP class by demonstrating for them the entire writing process before assigning the writing he requires. He used his own writing as examples of how to answer the free-response questions he asks.

He spent quite a lot of time modeling for his ninth graders how to make the connections in their ideas through effective writing. He said,

They’re not bad at writing—composing sentences and things like that, but in terms of ideas and connecting ideas together...they’re not so good at that...so by having me show them how I think through things, how I plan my writing, then how I put it to paper.... I show them how they could do the same thing.

This was a change from before he attended the institute. Before, he would just assign the writing and not teach the process of writing, but after attending the summer institute he illustrated the process of thinking and writing together.

Previous experiences with attempting cross-curricular projects—namely writing research papers with the English department—left him discouraged because nobody wanted to collaborate, especially regarding writing. However, he gave indirect credit to the CUWP summer institute for giving him the confidence to make another attempt at collaborating with the school’s English department, an attempt he said, would help students bridge content area learning through writing. The students would present the content of social studies by using the knowledge gained in the English classes. He predicted better interdisciplinary collaboration in his school as a result of what he learned through the collaboration he experienced at the summer institute.

He also shared an assignment regarding political boundaries for which he taught social studies vocabulary through writing narratives. He modeled the expected writing by using the vocabulary words in humorous situations from his own life. Students were already familiar with the narrative format and enjoyed the humorous personal context. It helped them to make connections to the terms, learn them, and use them in their own writing, thus demonstrating their understanding (Robb, 2014).

Regarding improving student writing, the social studies teacher said that believed strongly that the more he used writing in his classroom, the more proficient the students became, and the more capable they were in demonstrating understanding of the content. “I wouldn’t be continually on this quest to try and incorporate writing into my curriculum if I didn’t believe that it was a superior form of teaching and assessing students’ learning.” He supported his claim by laying out the gradual participation in and improvement on AP examinations in the school. He said his school went from one class of about twenty students passing at 50% to over one hundred students participating and passing at a rate of around 60%, a statistic he said was phenomenal for a rural school like his. If half the grade comes from writing, he posited, does not that show that they are becoming better writers overall? He also noted the students’ general ability to communicate through writing improved over the course of the time in his class.

One drawback he mentioned in taking the time to incorporate writing in his classroom was that every moment he explicitly taught writing was time where he missed out on delivering more social studies curriculum. He said that other social studies teachers, in his experience, refused to use writing because social studies was not tested by

the state, and so it did not matter if the students knew the content well enough or not; they just needed to pass. He also stated that math and science teachers did not want to do it because their subjects were tested and could not spend the time with writing.

Regardless of the roadblocks he mentioned, the social studies teacher still believed that writing was an effective way to help students think and learn through reflection and processing thoughts. He said that outside of his master's training, the CUWP summer institute had been the best professional development he had participated in over his career. His participation in the CUWP reunion days and two writing retreats, during which he worked on professional articles to promote writing in his content area, were evidence that support his conviction. He had already recommended the summer institute to faculty members both inside at outside the English department. "Reading in the content area and writing in the content area needs to be emphasized in terms of professional development for all teachers," he concluded. "Writing needs to be emphasized more."

After the interview, the social studies teacher emailed me several content-heavy writing assignments that he used with his students. He sent the aforementioned narrative writing assignment about political boundaries, along with a sample of the writing he did that year to model his expectations to the students.

Another assignment regarding ethnicity and conflict involved current events and research writing. The students needed to use the writing process to incorporate many aspects of human geography and history. They were expected to write well, using a literary hook, narrative observations, research questions, and conclusions based on

written evidence, all aspects of using effective writing to learn, reflect, and convey ideas. Proper formatting and citations were also expected, as was the inclusion of multiple sources.

He also provided a writing assignment that had students write arguments regarding population growth using materials they had read from the textbook and watched from YouTube videos. The students then had to take their writing and use it as the basis of an argumentative essay, a construct from the Language Arts core curriculum (CCSS).

Other lines of evidence he provided included writing to interpret demographic charts and a PowerPoint presentation that he shared with his faculty regarding the need to incorporate literacy, especially different content-specific texts and the use of writing and inquiry in all content areas. His research was based on the work of James Gee (1996).

All of the material submitted to me corroborated the social studies teachers' declarations regarding his use of writing in the classroom, which he said came from the confidence he gained from the CUWP summer institute.

## **Findings**

### **Themes Based in the Literature Review**

The 12 themes relevant to those addressed in the literature review, which are deemed necessary for professional development, include a participant's personal interpretation of the experience (phenomenon), construction of one's own learning, active learning/participation in the professional development, the inclusion of authentic tasks,

collaborative support community, inclusion of prior knowledge and/or experience, self-efficacy regarding one's own writing and the teaching of writing, motivation as a teacher, motivation as a student, scaffolded modeling, teacher expertise in professional development, and the use of writing in the content area. Each interview, observation, and artifact was analyzed for each of the twelve themes. Several of the ideas overlap and interconnect with each other. The evidence that emerged from these participants' experiences suggests that these four case studies corroborate what has been previously researched regarding the effectiveness of this type of professional development. These results came from an analysis specifically looking for these twelve themes while coding the transcripts of the interviews and classroom observations, as well as looking at the participant artifacts. Each subsection addresses one specific theme regarding the participants' experiences with the CUWP summer institute. These are the themes that I expected to be present.

**Personal interpretation of experience.** In order for professional development to be analyzed through a constructivist lens, a participant of a phenomenon must be able to reconstruct or interpret his or her own experiences so as to create meaning (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). For the participants of this study, all four showed metacognitive awareness and made reflective observations regarding the meaning that they created for themselves as participants in the CUWP summer institute.

The music teacher realized that she was lost at the outset of the summer institute, out of her element; however, she was able to think about and realize that her experiences within the summer institute were within her control and decided to do something about it,

participating despite being uncomfortable, until she overcame that self-imposed restriction of her comfort zone. She found her voice during the summer institute through writing. One classroom artifact that she provided reflected that her students were able to also discover their own voices through writing on a class Wiki. Deliberately, she thought about what worked for her, and after her metacognitive reflections, she found that the small writing exercises worked best for her; they were what helped her make meaning for her in the summer institute. So, she focused on those before venturing into more uncomfortable situations that required her to share her writing. Eventually, she recreated her comfort zone when it came to writing and sharing. Over her career she had lost the love of writing she had in high school. Her reflective practice at the summer institute helped her to find that and a place where writing could be used in her music classroom. Petrified of her situation at the institute, she realized,

Once I finally got the courage up to read one of my own writing prompts...it was, it was a different ball game for me from then on because I knew that um I wasn't judged at that point for what I was doing. They knew that I wasn't an English teacher, but...it doesn't matter how you do it, and sometimes it doesn't necessarily matter how well you do it...just that you're doing it. That was probably the biggest thing. It was all really encouraging, and positive, and constructive. And you know, even if you didn't do it perfectly, the encouragement or the feedback was always positive, plus whatever else you needed. I came to enjoy it, but that first week was murder.

The music teacher was able to establish her own set of guiding standards for the writing she did and expected her students to do in the classroom. She discovered, "I can maintain my own writing standard" and not have to conform to everyone else. She interpreted her learning at the institute through the lens of her own realizations and labeled it a success.

Juxtapose that situation with the math teacher, who went into the summer institute



already exhibiting metacognitive behaviors regarding his ability to construct meaning from this situation. He knew he was stepping into a content area with which he was not completely familiar (writing instruction) or comfortable, yet he purposely sought out ways during the institute to create connections and applications for his content area. He knew his perspective would be different as he presented a mini-lesson using writing in algebra to the group. He also realized that he could construct meaning from the feedback given to him by the others regarding writing in a math classroom. He said, referring to the meaning he created from the feedback he received, “my entire shape of writing and using writing shifted.”

Both he and the social studies teacher found that they could interpret what might work for their students through what they experienced with the writing activities they participated in, primarily realizing that students need to use writing in order to learn content. The math and social studies teachers also demonstrated this transfer of their metacognitive realizations from the institute into their own classrooms when they each helped their own students to create their own meanings and interpretations of the content through the writing assignments they offered in their separate classes. The teachers took the knowledge they constructed during their summer institute experiences and applied it to their classroom practices. This included modeling writing as well as using writing as a learning tool and not just an assessment.

All four participants also discussed their individual interpretations of their students' attitudes and abilities to write and improve as a result of their dedication to providing opportunities for students to write for reflection and for learning. They saw a

carryover from their own attitudes about writing and student participation in writing and the students' attitudes and aptitudes. They were not able to explain it, but they all acknowledged that from their perspectives, student writing improved. The carryover into the classrooms was evident in the artifacts that the music teacher and the social studies teachers provided. Examples of the artifacts can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C. Each had their students actively reflecting on their own practices. The music teacher had her orchestra students ponder their own needs after practice sessions. She had all her music students reflect through rationale writing in regard to the soundtracks they created to represent their own lives. The social studies teacher, in a teacher-led professional development for his own faculty, had colleagues metacognitively address the ways they interpreted literacy in their respective content areas and had them write about it.

**Construction of own learning.** Closely aligned with interpreting one's own learning experiences is the construction of one's own learning. Constructivism is a learning theory where the teacher is a facilitator and the learner is actively involved in creating his or her own learning (Batagiannis, 2011; Greene, 1996; Piaget, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). Hence the success of professional development lies with the learners' ability to construct his or her own application. What they take away is dependent on the effort they put into constructing meaning for themselves. Learners must contribute and construct their own learning so they feel invested (Glickman et al., 2010).

The math teacher, already aware of what he wanted to get out of the summer institute before he started—a solution to his problem: “How do I get the students to remember the concepts that they have?... And I thought that writing would be a very

powerful solution to solving that particular problem.” He went in looking to make meaning and was mindful of doing so in a way that would apply to his content and his particular classroom. He immersed himself in the activities without reservation, participating in the writing and the reading and the teaching and the critiquing in order to construct something meaningful for him.

Throughout the interview, he kept coming back to what he had personally learned, what he had been able to construct for himself from the summer institute experience. He made several observations about what he was able to construct. His first one included some of the writing activities he participated in during the summer institute.

One of the more powerful pieces for me was our opening writing where we would be given some sort of writing prompt at the beginning...where we just sat down with just a writing prompt and had a chance to write. And it was then that I realized that my own writing, and including my own writing [in the classroom], was a major piece to getting my students to write. As I tended to write, and as I had the opportunity to write and reflect on my own writing, and my own skills, it gave me a stronger basis and stronger comfort level to establishing and helping my students to write, even in math.

He constructed a second learning point from involved a lesson that he taught to the summer institute fellows, which, as required by the NWP professional development model, included writing to teach content.

It gave me an opportunity to teach math to a bunch of English teachers, but more importantly than that, it gave me a chance to really examine my own practice. To be able to create a lesson that would work, to create an introduction. In the institute, I gave a lesson that started with Dr. Seuss’s *On Beyond Zebra*, and we talked about the use of variables in algebra and how we could use them and how we could apply them. I got a lot of very powerful strong feedback...and I used it to enhance the writing and to really help the students to truly understand. I remember we talked a lot about writing for learning, and as we talked about writing for learning, we had an opportunity to really look at [it] from a content area point of view. I was able to truly look at the power of writing in helping my students to understand and retain, which was the purpose that I went to the

conference and the Summer Institute in the first place.

Additional metacognition led the math teacher to his third constructed takeaway.

I would always constantly ask myself...how does *that* truly apply to what I'm trying accomplish in teaching the students mathematics? And it gave me a chance to reexamine and to see how this can be used, but I can also see how this really doesn't quite work for me. I learned along the way different techniques about the writing for learning, how writing for learning works to help the students better understand the curriculum.

The observation in his classroom corroborated the fact that he took his constructed learning and applied it in his teaching by an introductory writing prompt to stimulate learning. The students were then able to construct their own meanings with guidance from the teacher's questioning and from their writing exercise.

Whereas the math teacher openly shared his reflective constructions in the interview, the other participants were less forthcoming with what they constructed for themselves. That is not to say that they did not construct meaning from the summer institute, but it was less overtly revealed.

The music teacher constructed for herself, as previously illustrated, more confidence in her abilities as a writer and as a teacher of writing in her music classroom. This constructed confidence led her to publish her own professional writing in multiple national disciplinary journals.

The greatest takeaway for the science teacher was a rediscovery of a love of writing, a point all four participants shared. She said:

I found my love for writing again. After doing my master's degree, I decided to hate it after I had to write my thesis, because it was painful, but I found my joy in writing again and I found more motivation to have my students do a little bit more writing, not just a quick bell ringer.

She constructed personal meaning through her participation in the writing activities, which led to incorporating more writing in her science classroom. This led to motivation, which in turn led to incorporating more writing in science. She found that having students write more pieces that were not lab reports led to students enjoying the writing more than before, which led to deeper engagement and creation of their own meaning of the content.

The social studies teacher emphatically stressed that what he gained from his experience at the summer institute was the importance of modeling writing for his students, a skill he deemed practical and motivational, as the modeling of writing at the summer institute had done for him. “I got some information, some skills and tools to help, to actually model writing...the whole process, also demonstrating some of the things that I’ve written...on a social studies level.” The interview and the artifacts he provided illustrated that he had already incorporated this takeaway. Specifically, he shared an example of using his own writing of a narrative in order to teach students content specific vocabulary terms (Appendix C).

**Active learning/participation in professional development.** Another facet of constructivist theory and learning is the active participation of the learner. This closely aligns with constructing one’s own learning (Greene, 1996; Piaget, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978), because it is necessary to contribute to the learning process as an engaged participant, not merely passively taking in the information being presented. To be effective learners, they must contribute to the collaborative group learning efforts, and constructing their own learning. Active participation helps participants invest more in their own learning (Glickman, 2002; Glickman et al., 2010).

All four participants viewed themselves in different roles at different times throughout the institute: learner, teacher, writer, reader, listener, critiquer, editor, reflector, collaborator. The format of the institute did not allow for participants to simply sit back and absorb the professional development with typical lecture-style deliveries because participants interacted in reading groups and writing groups; they were required to present a lesson from their content area that included writing as a tool, which was then constructively critiqued by the group, as well as produce text that would be submitted for publication in both a class anthology and in specific content area professional literature.

Each participant mentioned activities in which they enjoyed participating: daily writing prompts, sharing personal writing, walk and write activities, teaching lessons, and interacting with other teachers, working together to improve their practices. For the science teacher, the active collaboration was one of the things she valued most about the institute. She said that even when schools have set aside time for collaboration, the time is not always there. The institute provided time to truly work with others; it was built into the daily schedule. This takeaway application was evident in the classroom observation, because she allowed students time to collaborate on their inquiry and writing.

Three of the four participants eagerly began the summer institute without hesitation. They willingly immersed themselves into the writing and sharing and teaching and learning. Only the music teacher hesitated to participate at the outset of her time in the summer institute. She felt out of her comfort zone and so withdrew initially, preferring to sit on the fringes and observe; however, she found it hard to engage or get anything out of the professional development until she began participating, writing, and

sharing: "...once I finally got the courage up to read one of my own writing prompts," she said. That turning point was when she started to construct her own learning from the professional development. Eventually, she wrote an article for publication, which was published by *Utah Music Educators Journal*. Subsequently, it was also published by the Tennessee Music Educators Association and the Maryland Music Educators Association. She wrote, shared, and constructed for herself a voice in her professional community through her active participation. After the summer institute, she continued to be active in CUWP functions.

At the other end of the engagement spectrum was the math teacher, who was already searching for an answer to his question regarding writing before he interviewed for a spot in the CUWP Summer Institute. He was already looking to find answers through writing, and actively wrote and shared and discussed, engaging himself in the community of teachers in order to construct his own learning regarding how he could use writing more effectively in his math classroom. He constantly asked questions of others and of himself regarding personal application for his content, and by so doing, he acquired valuable insight and practical strategies to take back to his school. The lesson he presented to the group for critique was a highlight for him because it allowed him to open up and truly apply what he had learned to a group of teachers who gave him honest feedback and a direction to improve. He also helped compile and publish that summer's institute class anthology of participant writing. More importantly, he found that actively participating in the institute allowed him to reflect more effectively on his own classroom practices.

When observing the math teacher in his classroom, it was obvious that he expected everyone to participate in the learning taking place. Everyone had a voice, and was expected to share their thoughts. All were expected to be writing as well when it was time to write. Students who initially decided to not participate in the activities received personal encouragement from the teacher and fellow students. Soon they were all engaged in the writing and mathematics of the lesson.

The social studies teacher also approached participation in the institute openly because he, too, sought answers for questions he had concerning writing. Through his participation, he said he came away with practical skills such as the use of models in teaching writing in his classroom, a practice obvious in the artifacts he shared. His directions often refer to the writing models the teacher constructed either for or with the class.

The participants, regardless of initial attitude and level of activity, deemed this professional development effective because they participated actively (eventually). They attributed their learning to their active participation.

**Authentic tasks.** In addition to participants being actively engaged in their own professional development, the tasks they are asked to performed need to be authentic. In other words, they cannot be contrived and irrelevant to the daily practice of teaching and managing a classroom. The writing should apply to the participants' individual lives, careers, and practices.

The CUWP summer institute was designed to help teachers of any content area incorporate the teaching of writing as it applies to each individual classroom and subject



area, therefore helping students to learn how to write successfully within each discipline (Dean, 2010; Strong, 2006). The NWP (2010) promotes the use of authentic writing, including the presentation of writing as a process, a practice which allowed and encouraged the participants of the CUWP summer institute to think like writers: organizing thoughts, sharing ideas, revising drafts, and working collaboratively in a professional community of writers.

The science teacher thought that interacting with others and giving them feedback on their writing, like real writers do, was one of the most beneficial aspects of the CUWP summer institute. In fact, three of the four participants discussed how valuable they found the collaborative reading and writing groups and shared how they felt the interaction helped them develop better practices for their own classrooms. The math teacher stressed that the feedback from the lesson he presented helped him know how he could use writing about mathematics in his classroom as a tool for learning.

Other authentic practices from the institute included writing as a tool for learning, studying models, using strategies, word processing, incorporating inquiry activities, and targeting specific product goals (Dean, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007; Strong, 2006).

These practices surfaced repeatedly during the observations and as I analyzed the artifacts the teachers provided. The social studies teacher, in particular, felt that the most valuable learning he took from the institute was how to use models of his own writing when teaching students how to fulfil a writing assignment for his class. The vocabulary writing assignment he showed me incorporated real, personal examples from his own life that served as models for the students to follow as they created their own narratives that

incorporated the specific political terms he wanted them to know.

The science teacher and the math teacher both used writing activities as exploratory tools for students to inquire about new topics. They then worked collaboratively to solidify their writing and learning; the math teacher used group discussion to follow up, while the science teacher had the students working in pairs as they wrote up their lab reports.

As the music teacher found encouraging, positive feedback to be most beneficial for her at the CUWP summer institute, she began to provide a real-world forum for the students to write and for her to provide this same type of feedback in a safe environment. She incorporated a class Wiki for students to write about their practice sessions. They used this cyber writing space as a tool for self-reflection, as well as a tool for organizing their thoughts and for expressing what they have learned about the content and their ability to work as a community of musicians. The Wiki was also used to provide encouragement and feedback to the students. The music teacher also used other reflective writings throughout the year to help the students organize their thoughts about their own improvement and practice.

The social studies teacher created another authentic writing task where students researched current and historical ethnic conflicts, and then provided an arena for students to write what they learned about these conflicts, but more importantly write about how the concepts applied to themselves, thus connecting students to the present-day political world.

Other evidence of real-world writing tasks transferring to the classroom include

the social studies teacher using YouTube videos as a starting point to explore (through writing) the issue of population growth. He also used writing as a tool for student learning by having them write to explain graphs and charts regarding geographic data. The science teacher used writing as a forum for students to think about new material they learned “to communicate, to put their ideas together, and help them with critical thinking.” She took them through the writing process: drafting, revising, and editing their scientific inquiries and discoveries.

In addition, as part of the institute, each participant was required to write for publication: one piece for the class, which could be anything, and another professional piece, which the directors encourage to be academic in nature. These pieces were often submitted to professional journals. Writing for different audiences and purposes are also real world skills that can be transferred to writing that happens in the classroom (Smith, 1996). As mentioned, the music teacher published a professional article in three separate journals.

Almost as a side note, all four participants said that participating in the CUWP summer institute helped them begin writing for themselves again—a blog, letters, journals, professional articles—something they felt helped them see themselves as writers and teachers of writers in their respective content areas.

**Collaborative support community.** Another theme that the literature deemed necessary for effective professional development was the need for ongoing, continual development—not just one workshop here and there that present information without any follow-up. Long-term support for professional growth is essential (Pajares et al., 2007).

Teachers need to be supported by each other and their administrators as they implement best practices that they have learned from professional development. This should be a serious commitment on the part of all invested parties. A collaborative support community has to be in place as a continual network of support and training. Follow-up activities and personal development opportunities are essential for good practices to be fully integrated into a teacher's classroom and life (DuFour et al., 2005; Gray, 2000; Hickey & Harris, 2005; Hillocks, 1986; Smith, 1996).

The up-front time commitment alone—3 or 4 weeks during the summer—illustrates the dedication of all the voluntary participants of the CUWP summer institute. After the summer institute concludes each year, the collaborative community still supports each other with myriad follow-up activities. A fall retreat is offered to the most participants. Some participants are invited to attend the NWP annual conference in November each year. Others are contracted to present smaller seminars and workshops, while more are invited to participate. All are apprised of upcoming events such as walk and write groups, professional reading groups, nationally-acclaimed speakers, special retreats, reunion days, etc. A supportive online community remains active via the efforts of CUWP summer institute participants as well. Each of the four participants mentioned their experiences with the support they received from the CUWP community.

The math teacher recognized the tightness of the community immediately; he mentioned the sense of community beginning with the group interview he participated in upon application to the CUWP summer institute. He applied with another teacher he already knew, recognizing that professional development is better when you work

collaboratively (DuFour et al., 2005). This allowed him to immerse himself in the community of writers more easily, and when he felt accepted by the group, he gained confidence in what he was doing. He mentioned repeatedly the helpfulness of the “powerful, strong” feedback he received on his writing and his presentation. This sense of community was apparent in his classroom as the students worked together naturally and fluidly to discuss and figure out the subject matter. As far as his personal involvement in the continual aspect of the CUWP professional development community, at the time of the interview, the math teacher had traveled to the NWP convention the year following his participation in the CUWP and had participated in at least five follow-up workshops, including cofacilitating a week-long seminar for teaching writing for content area teachers in his district. He also maintained an online presence on the CUWP platforms. He regretted that his other professional duties in his building were taking more of his time and he could not immerse himself more in the professionally supportive activities.

The music teacher, as has been mentioned previously, accredited her success in the CUWP to the way the group supported her and made her feel welcome in an environment where she felt out of her element. She also mentioned that the English teachers who convinced her to apply for the CUWP summer institute were very supportive and continued to support her efforts to write in her content area. This, unfortunately, was different than other professional development seminars and workshops she had attended, most of which she felt were irrelevant and full of ever-changing acronyms. The CUWP and its tenets had meaning for her and was not a

pointless repetition of something she had already mastered. She felt so strongly that she participated in the 1-week summer institute a few years after her initial experience. This week-long institute is a condensed version of the full summer institute. She also participated in a follow-up writing retreat and actively contributed online to the support community by sharing ideas to help teach writing and supporting others who shared their ideas. Her class Wiki illustrates how she valued continual collaboration because the students have to recurrently post their reflections and learning through writing.

The social studies teacher has probably been the most active participant in taking advantage of the continuing support of the CUWP summer institute. He participated in the follow-up retreat, as well as another 3-day retreat specifically designed for those who were working on publishing their own writing. He worked toward professional publication on his own, but reached out to fellows of the CUWP as a support network for feedback and revision assistance. None of his student assignments built upon collaborative communities; however, he presented about the need for effective writing across the curriculum in all classrooms to the entire school faculty. In the interview he discussed previous efforts to collaborate with colleagues: some efforts between the English and social studies departments succeeded, and other attempts failed because there lacked continuity and time, as well as the investment and commitment of those involved. He mentioned that his master's studies included professional learning communities, but he became somewhat disaffected by them due to the lack of stakeholders' willingness to collaborate, something different than his experience with the CUWP summer institute and its continual support network. Even though this concept has not transferred to his

classroom or faculty, he craved the collaborative environment, and expressed desires to try again to establish it within his building.

Like the other participants, the science teacher expressed how powerful an experience it had been to collaborate and share and receive feedback from peers. She particularly expressed how beneficial it was to collaborate with people outside her content area. “Interacting with non-science teachers taught me a lot,” she said. However, this did not really translate into further participation, unlike the other three. After her summer institute, she attended the fall retreat, but had not followed up with other available support activities outside of occasionally participating on the group Facebook page. She acknowledged the importance of being part of the support network but expressed concern about the distance and time she would have to invest in order to attend them.

**Prior knowledge/experience.** Many researchers agree that one’s prior knowledge is important when it comes to constructing new learning (Bordieu, 1991; Cumming-Potvin, 2007; Dewey, 1965; Gee, 2003; Gilmore, 1986; Heath, 1983; New London Group, 2000; Newkirk, 2002; Toohey, 2000; Wells, 1985). Other experts acknowledge the fact that a great lack of knowledge of how to teach writing exists (Calkins, 1994; Dean, 2010; Graves & Kittle, 2005; Hillocks, 1986; NWP & Nagin, 2006; Strong, 2006). The participants’ prior knowledge and experience with writing and the teaching of writing was another factor in the success of their professional development.

When asked about her previous experience with using writing her classroom, the music teacher simply stated, “I didn’t.” She later corrected herself and admitted that her

students did a little writing when they had to fill out a small concert report form, but that was the extent of writing in her music classes. However, she described herself as always loving to read and write. She mentioned an uncle who was a playwright and encouraged her to write. With her friends in high school, she wrote plays and short stories. After starting to teach, she abandoned her writing, feeling it was not essential for her job. She attended required district literacy in-services, but she did not get much out of all the technical aspects of writing or all the acronyms that were constantly thrown around and changed. When writing for her master's degree, she was self-conscious about her writing, especially her grasp of conventions (grammar, punctuation, etc.). A professor bluntly pointed out the obvious, so she tried to improve, paying more attention to the technical aspects of writing. Speaking of the in-service and attempts to learn grammar rules, she said, "I'm not good at the formalized stuff. Um, my punctuation is horrible. I'll be the first one to admit it.... I had no idea how to apply any of that stuff." Associated with her perception of the failure with the literacy courses she sat through and the acknowledgement of her lack of technical writing skills, the music teacher did not feel that she had ever been taught how to incorporate writing in the classroom.

The math teacher admitted that he did not have students writing anything outside of formulas and equations. He had never used taught writing let alone use writing in his instruction. Even though, he himself wrote personally and enjoyed it, he expressed a common misconception that the teaching of writing was the English teacher's job in school (Moje, 2008; Rainey & Moje, 2012). He said he knew the value of writing for himself, but he did not know how to incorporate it in a mathematics classroom, or even in



the computer classes he taught. In short, before the CUWP summer institute, writing in his content areas was nonexistent.

The science teacher began her teaching career by way of another state, where incorporating writing in all content areas was mandated. She taught there for two years and said that because of that experience she felt comfortable using writing in her science classroom. Despite this requirement, she confessed that she never had much formal education regarding teaching writing in a science classroom, but she had always enjoyed it, except after completing her master's degree, when she decidedly despised writing. Regardless, she felt that she did not know how to teach writing but still used it “mostly to help [the students] communicate, to help them put their ideas together, and to help them with critical thinking.” In her classroom writing was a tool for students, a means to an end. She said that she gives the students at least one writing assignment per day.

Out of the four participants in this study, the social studies teacher had the most prior knowledge and experience with using writing in his classroom. He discussed how he despised simple fill-in-the-blank worksheets that most social studies curriculum included. Because he had always enjoyed writing personally, he decided that was the best way for students to show their learning. So he had his students write factual reports about the course content. Then while he was in graduate school, where he took many courses on content area literacy simply because he was interested in the subject, he discovered a different student writing response, which had the students writing personal applications to new content—how it connects to and applies to current events and personal lives—in addition to summarizing content material. He found it engaged the students more and

their engagement increased. He did say that he did not teach the students how to write them, though, at least not before the CUWP summer institute.

Two of the four participants did not involve any writing in their classrooms before attending the CUWP summer institute. The other two used writing but did not teach it. Three of the four reported that after attending the CUWP summer institute, they explicitly taught writing to their students, mostly using models and modes that were compatible to their respective content areas. All four said that they have increased how much writing they incorporate in to their classrooms after participating in the initial summer institute despite differences in their active participation in the CUWP summer institute support network. It seems that prior knowledge might have had some bearing on how teachers incorporated writing into the classrooms before the CUWP summer institute. After the CUWP summer institute, though, all participants increased their use of writing, with three of the four explicitly teaching writing. Although none of the participants directly stated so, there appeared to be a correlation between their involvement in the CUWP and their own self-efficacy, or at least their awareness of the need to teach writing and their performance of actually teaching writing in their classrooms.

Whatever the reason, the need to include prior knowledge in learning appeared to have transferred to each of the four participants' classroom practices. Each of the social studies teacher's artifacts that he shared included an aspect of connecting the new material with previous content through either formal or informal writing activities. The math teacher and the science teacher linked lesson content to previously acquired knowledge or skills either through writing or oral discussions. The social studies teacher,

the math teacher, and the music teacher all had the students make connections between their writing and their personal experiences.

**Self-efficacy regarding writing and teaching writing.** Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996) generalizes how confidence and performance in a given area transfers to new skills or practices in another when similar skills are required for the accomplishment of related tasks. Dembo and Gibson (1985) stated that personal self-efficacy was “the best predictor of teacher behavior” (p. 175). If this is true, then teachers who saw themselves as writers acted like writers, and those who saw themselves as teachers of writing were more likely to succeed at teaching writing. According to Daisey (2009), Dymoke and Hughes (2009), and Norman and Spencer (2005), teacher self-efficacy regarding writing and the teaching of writing is built through social construction. And at times teachers’ self-efficacy is low due to a lack of prior experience or training in pre-service education programs. However, the CUWP uses the social atmosphere of its summer institute to build teacher confidence in their own writing and abilities to teach students how to write and use writing to learn in various situations.

During the institute teachers are required to act as writers as they wrote personally and professionally. They also teach writing to their peers as it pertains to their own grade level and content area. In both areas, they receive feedback as a means to improve their abilities as writers and teachers of writing. Because the CUWP summer institute is voluntary professional development, some motivating factor to increase one’s efficacy is already present. However, as the participants became more involved, and their self-efficacy in their own writing increased, they achieved more, staying motivated and

invested in their professional development. Similarly, as they became more involved, their self-efficacy in their ability to teach writing increased (Bandura, 1986; Pajares et al., 2007; Pajares & Valiente, 2006). Multiple studies also link student competence in writing to their writing self-efficacy (Beach, 1989; Faigley et al., 1985; Pajares, 2003; Pajares et al., 2007). It stands to reason that as learners at the CUWP summer institute, the teacher participants would corroborate these findings.

All four participants mentioned in the interviews that they enjoyed writing, that writing was something they had done for themselves previously. This came in various genres and contexts: from writing silly plays in high school to personal journals and blogs to academic writing in the pursuit of advanced degrees, all four participants wrote. This perhaps influenced or motivated them in part to self-select this specific type of professional development. There was already some measure of self-efficacy.

This self-efficacy manifested itself in three of the four participants—the math, science, and social studies teachers, who took to the CUWP summer institute easily and participated openly in all aspects of the program, acting as writers and teachers of writing during the CUWP summer institute. In terms of involvement with writing, the science teacher began journaling again, this time to capture life memories for her daughter. She wrote a small piece for the CUWP website in addition to her professional piece for the institute. The social studies teacher progressed in his professional pursuits by writing some of his own social studies texts, but he mostly focused on writing stories for himself and models (both fiction and nonfiction) for his students, as well as publishing professional articles. He recently published an article for a local language arts journal.

The math teacher began writing more than he had before as well, perhaps summarizing the success all the participants had when it came to self-efficacy and writing:

As I tended to write, and as I had the opportunity to write and reflect on my own writing, and my own skills, it gave me a...stronger comfort level to establishing and helping my students to write.

He gave credit to the CUWP summer institute for giving him the confidence to pursue other writing opportunities such as writing an online math course for a local university.

The music teacher, however, as has been noted, was hesitant at first, unlike the other three participants, and even wanted to quit the program because she felt inadequate due to her lack of perceived competence in her technical writing abilities. However, once she was able to overcome her reluctance and immerse herself in the program by participating in the writing and the sharing, that she felt more empowered to write and teach a group of writing teachers. She began writing on her own again, though she had not attempted that for years. The publication of her professional article validated her self-efficacy in writing, and she began to write even more. Her success with her own writing increased her self-efficacy in teaching writing as she transferred her newfound confidence to her classroom and helped her students use more writing. This manifested itself with the artifacts she provided—first with her class Wiki page, but most powerfully with the second piece she sent to me (unsolicited months after the initial interview), the life playlist (Appendix B). She also participated in an additional one-week summer institute where she became more involved more readily, participating, and using her own expertise to help others as she looked for new ways to improve the teaching of writing in her music classrooms. She said that the more she modeled and taught writing the more

comfortable she had become with using writing in her classroom, and the more comfortable she felt teaching the writing that the students needed to do in music. “I went from being uncomfortable to actually going through and grading a writing paper,” she said of her transformative mindset. The music teacher also mentioned how her students’ self-efficacy regarding writing increased the more they wrote for her class, corroborating previous studies regarding self-efficacy and writing (Beach, 1989; Faigley et al., 1985; Pajares, 2003; Pajares, 1996; Pajares et al., 2007).

Although none of the four teachers had previously had much self-efficacy regarding teaching writing in their own classrooms, three of the four noted that they had made strides in this area, including the previously mentioned experiences of the music teacher. Both the social studies teacher and the math teacher cited the confidence they built while participating through writing, teaching, giving and receiving feedback. The social construction of the CUWP summer institute empowered them to want to teach writing in their respective classrooms. The classroom observations and artifacts validated their self-claimed increase in self-efficacy in teaching and using writing. The social studies teacher mentioned that before the CUWP summer institute he would simply assign writing for his students to do, but after participating in the summer institute he taught them the writing process behind the product and provided models for them to follow. Because both the math teacher and the social studies teacher increased their own self-efficacy from where it had been, they both returned to their classrooms eager to teach their students how to write like a mathematician or a historian.

The science teacher, on the other hand, still claimed that she did not teach writing,

but she used it as a tool or an assessment. Students use the writing process while constructing meaning through multiple drafts and revision. She expected them to do it, but she did not explicitly teach how to do it. Nevertheless, whether her self-efficacy to teach writing was low or not, her willingness to use writing to help students learn science content remained firm. It may be coincidental that she was the only one of the four participants who participated the least in the continued network of support from the CUWP, but this appeared to be one of the only main differences between the reported experiences among the participants.

**Motivation as a teacher.** Because the CUWP summer institute is a voluntary form of professional development, it was not surprising that the participants were motivated to participate and find success. The aforementioned themes of active participation, collaboration, continual support networks, reflection and interpretation, using teachers (peers) as experts, engaging in authentic tasks, and self-efficacy in writing and teaching writing each contributed to motivating teachers to learn through effective professional development (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Glickman, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Lieberman & Wood, 2002; Northouse, 2010; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Valiante, 2006; Smith, 1996).

The fact that the participants sought out the CUWP as a way of improving their own practice contributed greatly to the perceived success of the training and the self-efficacy of the participants as writers and teachers of writing. Because it is what adult learners crave (Knowles, 1980), intrinsic motivation is what helps the writing project sites to work effectively (Glickman et al., 2010; Northouse, 2010).

There were many reasons that motivated the participants of this study to become involved in the CUWP summer institute; some reasons were intrinsic while others provided outward rewards. The math teacher, as noted previously, was already searching for answers to questions he had, and he deemed the summer institute to be a place where he could find those answers. His level of engagement came directly from his internal desire to discover solutions to problems. His curiosity regarding how a math teacher would fit into a group of language arts teachers also drove him to reflect on his experience and internalize the learning he constructed while he actively strived to apply the content and strategies presented and practiced during the summer institute to his own content and teaching practices. His internal motivation led him to discovery:

I can truly make a difference through writing. I truly can help my students to write for learning. I truly can see that this not just an English teacher workshop where you learn how to teach English better. This is about coming up with true skills that help to build and understand not only my learning and my own writing, but also my students learning and their writing in no matter where they go.

This discovery motivated him to incorporate more writing in his classroom, and to look for further ways to create authentic tasks through writing and technology, which is where he believed his field was heading.

Like the math teacher, the science teacher came to the CUWP summer institute with a pre-established positive attitude towards writing. However, the music teacher felt out of her element until she felt accepted by the CUWP summer institute community and overcame her securities and doubts. Her love for writing as a high school student lay dormant, and only after it was rekindled through establishing a daily routine of freewriting did she have positive experiences to help motivate her. Both the science



teacher and the music teacher discussed in their interviews how as they participated and immersed themselves in the community of writers, their own motivation to write and share and learn (both professionally and personally) increased; their joy increased; and they believed that the same would transfer to their students. The music teacher started blogging, and the science teacher resumed journaling and letter writing.

The science teacher said that participation in personal and professional writing gave her motivation to incorporate more writing in her classroom, and not just simple bell ringer activities, but more writing for discovery and real science writing. The observation of the lab she conducted revealed that she had implemented more writing for the students.

The social studies teacher's internal motivation was similar to the math and science teachers. He already liked to write and wanted to pursue something in which he was interested. He had become dissatisfied with the writing found in the textbooks he used and was entertaining the idea of writing his own, hence fulfilling personal and professional needs. The drive he had to write personally led to his desire to have students write more in class for discovery and in order to express what they have learned. He wanted to find more diverse, creative ways to use writing in the classroom. Similar to the math teacher, the social studies teacher was also on a type of quest to incorporate more writing into his classroom practices. "I wouldn't be continually on this quest to try to incorporate writing into my curriculum," he said when asked about his plans to incorporate more writing into his content area, "if I didn't believe that [writing] was a superior form of teaching and assessing students' learning." Toward the end of the interview, he plainly stated that one important takeaway he got from his participation in

the CUWP summer institute was the motivation to want to do more in terms of writing for his classroom and writing on a professional level and even writing on a personal level. His pursuit of publication supports his claim.

At the same time, he did say that the biggest motivation for attending the CUWP summer institute was extrinsic: the credit hours for license recertification that were offered. For participating in the 3- or 4- week institute, 6 or 8 university credit hours were available to the participants. All four teachers mentioned the appeal of the credits and the other incentives. At first the CUWP also provided a \$250 stipend for those who completed the entire professional development during the summer. However, as federal funding faltered, that stipend was retracted. Still, other benefits for teachers included professional books and other teaching materials, and of course, food.

Other external factors gave the participants further motivation. Recognition for participation and publication was a factor, especially for the music teacher. She, the math teacher, and the science teacher all had colleagues and/or friends who had participated in the CUWP summer institute who had expectations for the success of their peers. The science teacher mentioned that she was motivated by wanting to improve her writing from the level it was when she worked on her master's degree.

Many reasons instigated the participants' motivation to become better teachers. However, their motivation to act and learn throughout the CUWP summer institute made a difference in their perceived abilities and success from this form of professional development (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996). All continued their personal and professional writing and incorporated some aspects of the teaching of writing in their

classrooms.

**Motivation as a student.** This section is founded on the same principles and premises as was the section about motivation as teachers, as it applies to the participants as the students in the CUWP summer institute, but more importantly as those strategies and practices acquired by the participants transfer those motivations back into their own classrooms and their work with their own students.

Three of the four participants mentioned that students were initially reluctant to write in their classes, especially since they taught subjects other than English. “This is not a writing class!” students would complain. They reported that students had not been asked to write in previous content area classes outside of English. The music teacher said that you would have thought that the world had come to an end when she asked for two pages, double spaced “What are you talking about? You want me to spell check what?”

The social studies teacher commented regarding student attitude toward writing assignments, “I don’t think that they’re ever like ‘Yeah! We get to write!’ But I think I’ve gotten a few assignments that [I’ve] designed in such a way that once they start doing it they’re like, ‘Oh, that was really fun.’”

The music teacher shared a similar experience with students who did not feel they needed to write in their orchestra class:

Orchestra is an easy “A” right? Yeah, third quarter, these guys get damaged sometimes, and I end up with kids down in the low “B” range because they don’t do the writing...portion of rehearsal. And I’ve had some parents come back asking what’s the problem with this? Well, they’re not doing the writing. Writing? And they’ll look at the kid and go, where are you supposed to be writing? And the kid’ll be like, \*sigh\* on the computer. Well why aren’t you doing it? Because it’s orchestra. That doesn’t matter!

It appeared that students did not come to these content area classes motivated to write. The music teacher reported when she first asked them to write for class at the beginning of the year, they were afraid that they might write the wrong thing. Her students were uncomfortable writing in her classroom, just as she was at the beginning of the CUWP, but they soon overcame their trepidations as they accepted the assignments and grew more accustomed to the expectations for writing. They gained some confidence and self-efficacy in writing.

The science teacher related this anecdote.

Every year at the beginning of the year...the first writing assignment they're like, this isn't English class, I'm not supposed to write, I'm not supposed to read...and then after we get past that first one, I don't hear it again. And so, their attitude toward writing and communication in other disciplines other than English I think is, is improving.

With her enthusiasm and the motivation, she gained from attending the CUWP summer institute, the science teacher pressed on, anticipating more pushback from the students, but as they continued to write more frequently for a variety of purposes and audiences, they became accustomed to writing in science class. As she increased the amount of writing, she anticipated more grumbling, but the negativity never manifested itself in the classroom. Quite unexpectedly for her, certain students, especially those who did not participate in class discussions—those who were too shy or embarrassed to speak up during class—were more motivated to explain their thought processes in writing. She explained:

There's a lot of kids I don't hear from in the classroom very often...Even if I call on them, they'll say one sentence. But then I have them write something, and they are prolific writers, and I get to hear what they have to say if they won't say it out loud. So it's been a very good experience [to have them write].

The music teacher reported similar success with motivating some students with disabilities, as well as those whose native language is not English to write rather than express their learning orally. She said that her Wiki also gave the students an opportunity to explore aspects of their own performance in depth, more than they would ordinarily share on a practice chart. It offered a familiar digital platform that most students were comfortable with and created a safer environment for students to share their learning. One girl who never spoke a single word in class waxed creative on the Wiki and added a creative twist by reinventing the members of her group as characters in a fictional setting and added story elements to the required practice session observations and notes. Overall, she found that many minority populations, although they perhaps struggled socially, were more apt to attempt to write.

The science teacher also found that to use writing in something besides work that they absolutely hated such as vocabulary or test questions, they were more motivated to do it without complaining, and it became fun for most of them. The social studies teacher used modeling as motivation to show them that social studies writing did not have to be boring, even with something as mundane as vocabulary. “By having me show them how I think through things, how I plan my writing, how I then show how to actually put it down on paper...they could see how they could do the same thing.” Writing was no longer merely assigned but also modeled. He found this especially helpful, especially with those who were motivated by the outside influence of looming advanced placement tests, which contain a heavily weighted written component.

The math teacher was a little less certain about how his own personal motivation

to incorporate writing in his classroom influenced the students' motivation to write. He acknowledged that they came into this class on many levels, but most were apathetic toward writing, as it was supposed to be a math class. He observed,

You have the students that come into my classroom that are okay with writing, and they feel comfortable with it. You have students that are absolutely not comfortable with writing. And you have my students that are indifferent. After incorporating the writing into my class and my teaching, I'm not certain I've changed any of them in their own perspectives.... But as I [wrote with them] more and more, they kind of got used to it, and they started to become comfortable with it, and it helped them to be able to see and understand just as they learn to see the idea of equations, and they put that into practice through their writing; they learn to see it...and in learning to see it when they go on further into mathematics, then [math and writing] just becomes a natural part of them. They understand how it works, and they can utilize it, not only in mathematics itself but in their own professions.

The motivation as a student might not have existed at first, but as each of the teacher participants helped the students adjust and become comfortable with incorporating writing in the different content areas, the students became more proficient and through a heightened sense of self-efficacy in writing, the students became more motivated to complete writing tasks whereas before they hesitated or refused (Pajares, 1996).

**Scaffolded modeling.** Key to Vygotsky's (1986) schema theory is the notion of teachers using scaffolded modeling in order for learners to construct their own learning in their zone of proximal development, which is a link to constructing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986, 1997) in the teaching of and the incorporation of writing. Composing in front of students serves as a model of thinking and writing and allows learners to see what is expected before attempting a task. The scaffolding comes when an instructor when guides a student through the process with the use of mentor texts, which might include the instructor's own writing (Dean, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007). The entire

construction of the CUWP summer institute, which was modeled after the NWP model, was designed to model good practices for teaching writing and to incorporate practice-based learning for teachers.

For the social studies teacher, modeling was the greatest takeaway from the CUWP summer institute.

That's the one thing that I gained...from this is how to go about teaching, modeling the writing...some practical skills that I could implement, namely...tools to help model writing, to read, to incorporate...the whole process...demonstrating some of the things that I've written on a social studies level.

He said that his biggest goal was to help the students improve their writing by using modeling his process—from planning through the whole writing process—especially as it pertained to the assignments he asked them to complete, and as they prepared for the AP tests. Most of the assignment artifacts he shared came with examples for students to follow with the process being discussed in the classroom with the students.

The math teacher also discussed his discovery of the use of models:

I realized that including my own writing [in classroom instruction] was a major piece to getting my students to write. As I tended to write and...reflect on my own writing and my own skills, it gave me a stronger basis and...stronger comfort level to...help my students to write, even in the math.

He also used a strategy modeled during the CUWP summer institute during the class I observed, which was having the students scribble their own thoughts about a writing prompt based on a reading. He used a poem and related it directly to the mathematical concept they discussed that day. It was apparent in the students' behavior that it was a strategy he regularly employed. The math teacher also discussed the importance for him to see models of the lessons the CUWP participants needed to present before he could

conceptualize incorporating writing in his math class. After that he was determined to incorporate modeling and writing, along with telling his students about the math concepts they needed to learn.

The music teacher mentioned that part of her motivation for attending came from the modeling that some of her English teacher colleagues shared as part of a professional development. However, one of the artifacts she shared, after she attended an additional the one-week CUWP seminar, was the creation of a personal playlist (Appendix B), where the students needed to thoughtfully construct a written rationale, defending a selection of songs that held importance to them. The assignment was introduced using a model that the teacher had constructed and written. She said that it was one of the most powerful writing assignments she had ever done, for herself and for students.

The science teacher did not talk about modeling as being impactful, although her motivation to write more herself came from the exercises and practices of the CUWP summer institute. Seeing the modeling of the other CUWP summer institute participants helped her to “seal the deal” about incorporating more writing in her own classroom, though, but I did not observe any modeling of writing in her classroom.

**Teacher expertise in professional development.** Closely related to active participation in professional development is the need for professional development to be conducted by teacher experts. In other words, the most effective professional development opportunities are those conducted by teachers who engage in best practices and then share their discoveries with their colleagues, be they in the same building or not (Brown et al., 2011; Hickey & Harris, 2005; Hillocks, 1986; Lieberman & Wood, 2002;



NWP, 2010; Street & Stang, 2009). The NWP model fully supports this notion, using teachers to help teach each other how to improve the teaching of writing. Collective expertise in the day-to-day classroom holds more weight for most teachers than outside researchers who have not taught for years. Teachers are more likely to follow a teacher leader than a so-called expert from outside the arena of education (Northouse, 2010). Kelly (1996) stated “Teachers are our best resource and our best hope to rethink and reshape education for the next century” (p. 292).

Nobody influences teachers more than other teachers. The math and music teacher initially applied to the CUWP summer institute at the insistence of colleagues. The science teacher knew one of the directors from a previous teaching assignment. The social studies teacher also mentioned collaborating with English teachers who had encouraged him to investigate the CUWP summer institute for himself.

The science teacher said that the interaction with other professional was beneficial, especially knowing that they were working together, providing feedback to each other, trying to help each other improve their practices through writing. She felt encouraged by learning more about the writing process, not having ever been taught it as a science education major in college.

All participants valued their roles as they assisted in the reading groups, the writing groups, the whole group discussions. It was more like a group of peers who were seen as equals. Editing and critiquing were conducted by teachers of many grade levels, experience levels, as well as various content areas. Many of the participants mentioned the value they felt from each other as they witnessed the reactions of their peers and

received honest feedback about their lessons or writing. The music teacher said that this sense of community was what allowed her to feel like her voice mattered, that she had something relevant to add to the conversation of education. The math teacher added that the CUWP summer institute experience was not just about learning like English teachers but rather “coming up with true skills that help to build and understand not only my learning and my own writing, but also my students’ learning and their writing no matter where they go.”

Each participant played professional roles in the CUWP summer institutes they attended. Active participation helped each to become a teacher leader in his or her own right. Summer institute participants are encouraged to return to their own schools to teach others about what they have learned regarding the teaching of writing. The math teacher found acceptance and was even asked to help facilitate a seminar open to anyone interested in improving the teaching of writing in his school district. Among the attendees, there were special education teachers, an art teacher, and another math teacher. On the other end of the experience spectrum, the science teacher yearned to share her knowledge but was met by resistance from her faculty. She became disheartened, but then felt better as she changed assignments and her new colleagues welcomed her ideas about writing a little more readily. The music teacher added her voice to the national conversation regarding teaching music—one more example of teachers becoming the experts.

**Writing in the content area.** Because each participant of this study has a background in a subject area other than language arts, it was vital that each one apply the

concepts and strategies taught during the CUWP summer institute for teaching writing to their own content areas: mathematics, music, science, and social studies. Acting as active participants in their own field allowed them to be the experts, leading by example in using writing as a tool in their respective areas of study. In order for students to be able to write effectively in the various subject areas, teachers need to be able to write and effectively teach writing in their own disciplines (Glickman, 2002; Glickman et al., 2010; Strong, 2006). Because this element is crucial, the participants of the CUWP should be able to transfer their training to their respective classrooms effectively. Also, students, according to the NWP (2010), Graham and Perin (2007), Prior (2006), and Smith (1996), should obtain real world skills by being able to write for different audiences, with different purposes, and different content areas.

The music teacher lamented that she had to attend content area writing classes in the past that focused on elements of writing that were outside the scope of her employment: acronyms and assessments that only applied to those giving writing tests at the end of the year, and because it was not related to teaching music, she became disinterested and did not gain anything useful from these other trainings. Despite the trainings for all content areas, she felt they were structured for teaching language arts instead of how to use language arts in teaching other content areas. She initially said that in her guitar and orchestra classes they addressed different types of literacy: reading and writing music. However, during the CUWP summer institute, she found that she could write (using words) authentically in her content area for a larger audience. The confidence obtained helped her to take that writing about music and its application to

their lives back to her classroom through her life soundtrack assignment. The Wiki writing about group practice sessions allowed the students to use writing as an effective, reflective learning tool in the discipline of music.

The science teacher reported that writing was not usually used in science classrooms unless it involved lab reports and write-ups, but the students and the teachers hated those. Her classroom assignments included teaching eighth grade science, which included units in chemistry, biology, physics, and geology; she also taught an elective course focused on STEM subjects, where she could have student explore inquiry-based projects in any of the STEM fields. When interviewed, she said her students had participated in units involving water, energy, and urban infrastructure. She said that even though other teachers in her field did not use writing, she tried to give the students some type of writing assignment every day, mostly as a tool for exploration and learning, sometimes as an assessment of learning. She said that having them write in science was beneficial because:

They think at a much deeper level about it. I love asking questions where they have to write a response, and they have to take the time to think, and they have to do it on their own. And it really helps you see exactly what they've learned and where the misconceptions are and how I need to reteach.

Although she adamantly claimed that she did not teach students how to write in science, she said that having students use writing for something other than the dreaded lab reports was enjoyable for her and for them. She incorporated the writing process as well; students had to revise their conclusions and draft multiple responses before finding solutions as they explore scientific questions. The classroom observations revealed this put into practice, as the students appeared to naturally take to their writing assignments

during their scientific work regarding heat.

The social studies teacher knew that writing was important to his content area especially because the AP tests involved an extensive writing prompt. And as he taught AP geography classes, as well as others, he geared his instruction toward the tests, using free response questions as a form of assessing student understanding. He reported, though that he did not teach them how to write, though. He claimed that every moment he had to teach the writing process was a moment he was not delivering the already over-extensive social studies curriculum. He simply did not have the time to do it; that was the English department's job. After the CUWP summer institute, however, he realized the value of modeling good writing for his students. He changed his approach to how he used writing in his classroom, incorporating models of good writing, including his own, for students to follow. He used the models as he had them write regarding various content related topics—geography, politics, and current events. Through modeling effective writing and the assignments he provided, he illustrated how writing helps to make personal applications and connections for the students. He demonstrated how writing was part of the research process when it came to writing to learn, solidifying your thoughts, and communicating your research and understanding. As he incorporated writing, he believed his students' AP results improved as did their understanding.

The math teacher, whose other duties involved teaching computer classes, as well as being the yearbook instructor was never instructed in using writing in teaching mathematical concepts or any other aspect of his job description. Outside of writing formulas and equations, writing did not exist in his classroom. However, he saw how he

enjoyed writing in his own life and wondered how that could apply to teaching math. He saw writing as a solution to the question he had about getting students to think more deeply about what they were doing in math. As he participated in the CUWP summer institute, he found “different techniques about writing for learning [and] how writing for learning works to help the students better understand the curriculum.” He found that using writing for learning in math helped students

come to the understanding and conclusions of why and how mathematics works so they could help remember and work through things rather than ‘Here’s a formula, memorize it, plug it in’...something that they won’t remember two weeks from now.

He said that having the students write and reflect about the mathematical concepts, write about making connections to their lives, and write their questions and understandings helped students to hold onto the mathematical concepts that they learned longer than if he just explained to them the mathematical principles and how to solve equations. During the interview, he had a sort of epiphany as he spoke:

In writing down and learning how to see what they’re saying, so that they can think...the idea of writing for learning enhances their ability in the future to learn concepts. For example, I teach...basic algebra concepts, and the idea of algebra being a step by step thinking process, is they learn to see how the idea of a unknown, as they learn to see the idea of equations, and they put that into practice through their writing...and in learning to see it when they go on further into mathematics, then it just becomes a natural part of them. They understand how it works, and they can utilize it, not only in mathematics itself, but in their own professions. The idea of writing and thinking step by step...is one of the major, underlining principles I’m teaching in algebra: step by step thinking.

The writing that the students performed during the classroom observation corroborated his words because the students reflected and put into writing a previously addressed concept and made connections to their individual lives and to the new concepts of

rotation and revolution they were learning that day.

### **Roadblocks**

Despite the positive comments the participants had for their participation in the CUWP summer institute and the changes they made in their classrooms regarding writing and teaching writing, all four mentioned a few items they considered to be roadblocks or obstacles that needed to be overcome as they implemented their newfound knowledge in the classroom or would be an obstacle to surmount as they continued to incorporate more effective writing in their classrooms.

First, regarding the summer institute itself, the participants agreed that it was difficult to give up the required time (3 or 4 weeks) during the summer to participate in the complete professional development. It potentially took time away from family, travel, or other professional or personal pursuits. Despite this potential set-back, all four study participants believed that the time investment was worth their sacrifice. However, they also believed that potential participants in the CUWP summer institute might be deterred from participation by the time investment alone, thus keeping teachers from investing in this type of professional development.

After their participation in the CUWP summer institute, the participants encountered further obstacles in their schools on two fronts: both from their colleagues and from their students. Fellow faculty members complained about the time required to teach writing in their own fields. All participants mentioned that they and their colleagues were concerned about the time that was taken away from teaching the state required curriculum material. The social studies teacher pointed out that this might be addressed in

cross-curricular collaborations; however, he had mostly experienced broken collaborations, with departments not putting forth the efforts to work together, especially regarding writing in different content areas. Still the attitude that it is the English teachers' jobs to teach students how to write pervaded (Moje, 2008; Rainey & Moje, 2012) many departments. It may be a pedagogical or a paradigmatic shift about the teaching of writing in different content areas that is needed before the need to include writing in all classrooms is accepted. Even those teachers who see the importance of teaching writing within the content areas, such as these four participants, discussed the need for balancing time between teaching how to write like a mathematician or a historian, with teaching the actual state-mandated content within the time frame of a school year.

Each of the participants reported that students, in many cases, initially resisted using writing, with a few, as the math teacher pointed out, refusing to write at all because they "weren't in an English class." The science teacher pointed out directly, and the other participants corroborated, that this resistance was quelled fairly quickly, though, in the case of the majority of students. Of course, there were outliers that still refused to write. Many students performed well after they accustomed themselves to new procedures and routines involving writing in the classroom. The attitude that their other content area classes should not involve writing because they were not English classes possibly illustrated a lack of continuity of skills across curricula. It could also be a part of a different problem that should be studied in more depth: apathy. Writing involves working hard to communicate your ideas, with revisions in an effort to improve your ideas or



solidify your learning (Anderson & Dean, 2014; Graham & Perin, 2007). Apathetic students would need different avenues of motivation to succeed. However, each of these participants reported that most students began to use writing for many purposes, some of which became self-motivating.

The science teacher also discussed her concern about students who were English Language Learners (ELLs). Her experiences with ELLs and writing were a little discouraging because the ELL students she had in her classes were not proficient writers in their first language, which made it hard for them to express their learning both in a new medium (writing) and in a second language. She said that these students would begin by copying others' work, either by hand or by wholesale cutting and pasting from online sources. She did say that as their understanding of the English language and the science content increased, this practice of copying instead of producing lessened, and they started writing more on their own. These students also fit with what the music teacher described as the biggest problem she noticed as her students began writing: they did not want to take risks with their own thoughts. They were afraid to be wrong and have others see their mistakes. Written mistakes were more permanent than spoken ones. However, she found that as the students became more comfortable with expressing their reflection in writing, and the teacher-imposed standards were acknowledged and accepted, this expressed fear of failure or simply "doing it wrong" decreased.

It is expected that other roadblocks would arise in other schools, as these participants simply represent a larger population with an exponential degree of situations with variables including different students, teachers, schools, and other outside

influences. Despite these set-backs, though, it is important to recognize that each participant still agreed that including writing in their classroom was vital to learning. Three of the four also confirmed that the direct teaching of writing was worth the time they invested.

### **Other Themes**

A summary of the participants' self-constructed learning can be seen in Table 3. While each of the study participants came with different motivations, purposes, and background experience with writing and the teaching of writing, they shared the common phenomenon of the CUWP summer institute. During the interviews, and the analysis of the classroom observations and the supplied artifacts, various themes not found in the literature emerged. However, themes were closely related to those explored in the first part of the research study, but revisiting them in different perspectives revealed further insights. These topics included participants' practical purposes for writing, which is directly related to content area writing; participant comfort levels, which is closely related to self-efficacy; and the social construction of the professional development model of the summer institute itself, which contributed to the perceived success of the participants both as participants and as teachers using writing in their own classrooms. These prevalent themes were addressed in the previous sections and are revisited in the analysis section as I briefly answer the three major research questions.

Table 3

*Participant Learning Constructed During the CUWP Summer Institute*

Participant	Content area	Constructed learning (main takeaway)
1	Math	Writing to learn can be a valuable tool in teaching math concepts and helps students connect what they already know to new content.
2	Music	I can establish my own informal writing standards so students feel comfortable writing in my class in order to show their learning.
3	Science	Writing helps students learn content and provides an effective way to assess their learning.
4	Social Studies	Modeling writing for students allows them more access to the writing process and motivates them to learn social studies content.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Analysis of Findings**

To analyze the results of the study, namely the findings from the interviews with each participant and the two classroom observations, and the multiple artifacts from the two participants who chose not to be observed, I revisited the three research questions in order to compose answers. Short, direct answers can be found, especially for the second and third questions, but the smaller details of the interviews, observations, and artifacts revealed more about the true impact of the professional development these participants experienced during the CUWP summer institute.

#### **CUWP Summer Institute Impact On Teachers' Attitudes**

The first question I asked as I began this study was what impact has the CUWP summer institute had on teachers' attitudes toward writing. When directly asked, the math teacher and the social studies teacher shared that their attitude toward writing was already positive. They knew that incorporating writing into their classrooms was important; they were seeking for the application of writing in their classrooms. They not only sought how to implement more writing in their content area but how to do so effectively for their specific situations. The science teacher, likewise, because of prior experiences in a previous teaching assignment, saw benefits to using writing in her content area, and she said that her attitude never really changed because it had always been positive. The music

teacher alone admitted that her attitude toward writing in general changed after the CUWP. However, looking at some of the actual changes that occurred demonstrate that their attitude toward writing changed more than the participants verbalized.

Three of the four participants initially reported that before they attended the CUWP summer institute that they did not use writing in their classroom. The music teacher later corrected herself and said she used writing minimally for mundane tasks, but the writing was not the important part of those tasks. The science teacher said that because of her previous teaching assignment, she used writing but did not give any time to teaching students to write. The only participant who regularly made writing part of his curriculum was the social studies teacher. However, for him it was not a priority either.

It was interesting to observe how after their participation in the CUWP summer institute, all participants shared how they had changed and began to use writing in their classroom for practical purposes important to their content areas. Writing became a tool for them, a tool which could be used for multiple purposes. Three of the four teachers shared that they began to dedicate time in class to teach specific genres or processes that would assist the students to complete their writing tasks.

All four participants described using writing to learn, both as they took on the role of learners during the summer institute and as their students used writing in their classrooms. The students were able to use writing to think about, organize, and understand the different content areas. The math teacher specifically mentioned using writing to explore the depth of mathematical concepts and increase the depth of knowledge the student was attaining (Webb, 2002). He attributed this increase to the way

writing helped students make personal connections between the content—the concepts he was teaching—to the students’ lives. The writing made the students slow down and think about what they actually knew. The students were able to do as the statement attributed to E. M. Forster (1927) stating: “How can I tell what I think until I see what I say?”—they could see what they said and then knew what they thought. The math teacher also said that writing helped students with managing 21<sup>st</sup> century technology skills.

The participants started to use writing as a tool for thinking and discovery, a tool used to find solutions to problems, and a means to construct personal connections to and meaning from the content. For those students who do not normally express themselves orally in class, it became a means for them to have a voice and share their knowledge. As the participants used modes and genres more familiar to the students, such as online platforms or more informal pieces of writing, the act of writing became an outlet for some of the students, a way to communicate comfortably. Although this did not motivate some students, it gave those who were normally silent a channel to demonstrate their understanding of the content. Also, while the participants wrote for themselves, they discovered that they, too, had a voice within their field of expertise, the music teacher actually publishing the piece she wrote during the summer institute in three professional journals. The math teacher has written curriculum on a larger, more public scale.

The music teacher also mentioned that reviewing student writing helped her to discover more about who her students were, and it created more of a sense of community within her classroom. She shared that at times the students were more aware of the audience that authentic writing tasks created, and were therefore more careful and

deliberate in what they wrote, as they knew others would see their writing. All four participants also began using writing as an assessment of student comprehension and found that over time the quality of the writing improved, as did the level of student understanding of the content.

To summarize, the three of the four teachers' attitudes about writing itself did not really change dramatically because they were already positive. For them the CUWP summer institute became a place to develop their ideas and further their abilities to incorporate writing into their respective classrooms. For the other participant, the change was more pronounced; her participation in the CUWP summer institute changed the way she saw writing and her ability to use it in her classroom. Overall, the change came more in the application of the knowledge and skills acquired at the CUWP summer institute than in the teacher attitudes.

### **Changing Classroom Practices**

My second research question for this study addressed how teachers changed their classroom practices after participating in the CUWP summer institute. Aside from the aforementioned changes in the general purposes for writing in their classrooms, the participants also experienced separate epiphanies regarding writing instruction during the learning processes in their respective content areas.

The math teacher stated, in reference to his experience at the CUWP summer institute, "I found my view and my entire shape of writing and using writing shifted." The interview and observation revealed that he started including more writing assignments in order to get the students more involved in thinking about the processes of

math, what they already knew, and what they thought they knew. They could then use that writing to serve as a foundation for discussion or constructing connections between pre-existing schema (Vygotsky, 1986) and new mathematical concepts. He found an answer to the question he posed before participating in the CUWP summer institute regarding how to use writing in his classroom: to have students write for understanding. He started to have students write what they thought they knew about, and use that writing as they discussed new concepts, helping them make connections and construct their own understanding of those concepts. He was pleased with what students were able to do. He confessed that due to the outside pressures of implementing a curriculum with new standards, he fell away from his practice, but wanted to return to the practice of incorporating writing in his classroom even more since he saw the value of writing as a tool for learning with his students.

The social studies teacher acknowledged several changes that he made in the writing practices of his classroom. The artifacts he shared supported the statements he made in the interview. He shifted his methods from simply assigning writing assignments to his students to taking the time to teach writing. His biggest shift was in the incorporation of models. He started to include models of what the intended outcomes for their writing assignments looked like, and would even employ his own personal writing to serve as an example. His use of humor and personal writing served as a motivating factor for students to accomplish their social studies tasks. Often he would write in front of the students to serve as a role model of the process of writing as it pertained to the individual assignments he gave.



Even the science teacher, who said her attitude regarding writing in her classroom remained the same after the CUWP summer institute showed a small measure of change in her classroom practices. Despite her admission that she still does not teach how to write in science, she recognized that after the CUWP summer institute she increased the amount of writing she required from her students because it illustrated their thought processes and could be used as a tool for many different purposes. She also began to require the students to show more of their thinking processes in writing as they learned, including several drafts of writing for the more formal assignments. Many of her project-based assignments also required students to show their learning through writing and reflecting processes as well. My observation of her lab about types of heat corroborated her claim about what she required of students through writing.

Perhaps the greatest visible shift in attitude came from the music teacher. As stated in the narrative and other sections of the study, she overcame her own trepidations about participating in the CUWP summer institute, and recalled her own personal passion for writing and was able to construct for herself new self-efficacy in writing and using writing to teach the content of her classes. One of the fears she overcame was a sense of imperfection with formal writing standards and academic language. She acknowledged her lack of writing knowledge and her discomfort with working with those outside her normal peer group. She felt inept with grammar concepts and the rampant use of jargon in the literary professional development she had previously experienced, and therefore steered away from actively participating in the initial activities at the summer institute. She reported that the greatest change for her came in herself—in her own attitude. When

she realized that she could construct her own standards of writing for her own classroom—not necessarily holding with strict APA or MLA guidelines on every assignment, she moved from fear of using writing in her classroom to feeling comfortable enough to include it and to teach it. In her classroom, she implemented more informal pieces of writing, using modes such as Wiki pages and social media for her students to write and reflect and share their own learning processes. Reflective personal narratives from her guitar students provided a creative outlet to share what they had learned and accomplished over the duration of the course.

The music teacher drew the parallel between the shift in her own self-efficacy with writing and that of her students. She acknowledged the need to break down formal writing for herself and for her students so they could see writing as a helpful tool, not as a medium required just for an English class. She said that in music she taught “a different kind of reading and writing,” and once students were able to break the preconceived notions of writing, they moved forward “with courage” in their participation and they became more comfortable with using writing in their work with music. She herself moved from a person afraid of grading writing to comfortably using rubrics to grade writing assignments of varying degrees of formality. Her change continued to manifest itself as over time she voluntarily shared with me more writing assignments that she had designed for her students and implemented in her music classes.

Even though the extent of the changes of each participant varied, the fact remains that each one made changes to how much writing they included in their classroom practices. Most also began explicitly teaching some type of writing process related to

their respective content area.

### **Perceived Effectiveness of Changes**

The participants were also asked to describe the effectiveness of the changes each one made in their classrooms (based on their participation in the CUWP summer institute) in relation to student learning. They were also asked to describe how they believed students' attitudes about writing changed. Regarding student attitude, all four participants responded similarly: students, after initial token resistance about the content not being an English class, for the most part quickly accustomed themselves to using writing to learn, to discover, and to construct meaning through writing. It became a part of their arsenal of learning strategies. The social studies teacher even said that in some cases, "after the initial pushback or indifference, students became engaged and motivated to write, especially after modeled examples." The math teacher commented that he was not certain about any significant change in the students' attitude regarding writing, but over the course of time, they became more comfortable and more adept when using writing to learn. The music teacher also corroborated that as the students' self-efficacy and comfort with using writing increased, so did their classroom performance.

The science teacher noted that when students used writing in her classroom, their writing skills improved, as well as the learning of the science concepts she taught. Her participation in the CUWP summer institute "sealed the deal" for her to continue incorporating writing into her curriculum. The math teacher did not feel he knew about the overall quality of their general writing, but he felt that the students' ability to write technically had definitely improved over the course of the year. He stressed that this was

his focus as far as the actually writing was concerned. He also shared that he thought this improvement in their writing correlated with the solidification of their content mastery, although he did not have any tangible evidence to support his perception.

The music teacher's comments regarding student improvement took a different approach. Not surprisingly, she focused on student performance in terms of students overcoming traditional obstacles regarding writing and expression in a classroom. She declared student success with writing in her classroom because more students were given a voice to communicate through different avenues than they had available to them before. Students discovered that they could effectively construct their own learning about music concepts through words in a comfortable environment. She said that because students are generally with her for three years (from sophomores to seniors), she could see general growth in their abilities to communicate. The writing did not necessarily improve, she noted, but the students mature and develop self-efficacy in writing on the platforms she establishes for them. Both she and the music teacher saw students who were normally silent during classroom interaction show their learning through writing, a situation that involved less risk in front of their peers.

The social studies teacher, also stressing that his participation in the CUWP summer institute reconfirmed his favorable opinions regarding using writing in his classroom, was the only participant to support his claim regarding student improvement with any sort of data. He shared that when he started using models and writing in front of his students the scores of the AP Human Geography exams improved. He pointed to the fact that over the past several years, not only had their overall pass rate improved, but the

total number of students taking and passing the exams increased as the quality of the writing improved, specifically as students simulated questions similar to the writing component that appears on the test. He points to this improvement as a correlation to better student writing overall, as students learn to organize and communicate their thoughts better. Because he changed how he approached teaching this type of writing after attending the CUWP summer institute, student performance has improved.

Each participant in turn believed that the changes made affected students positively. They saw improvement in their students, although their perceptions were not always validated by concrete evidence in every case. The perception remained positive, though. Table 4 breaks down the answers to the research questions individually by participant.

### **Implications**

With the three principal research questions answered, additional questions can now be raised regarding the CUWP summer institute and its impact on content area teachers. How do these case studies represent a larger population? What factors contributed to the perceived success of these participants during the CUWP summer institute? Can the success of these participants of this phenomenon be replicated? What other assumptions can be made and what conclusions can be drawn? While not all these questions may be answered completely within the parameters of this study, I believe that it is a starting point for further research and exploration with writing in the content area. The experiences of these participants contribute to the discussion of effective

Table 4

*Participant Answers to Research Questions (Abbreviated)*

Participant	Content area	Did teacher attitude change?	Were practices changed?	Were changes effective?
1	Math	No, it was already positive.	Yes, more writing was introduced to his classroom for a variety of purposes including writing to learn, to understand math processes, and to make connections.	Yes. Students wrote better and learned content more completely when writing was used as a learning tool.
2	Music	Yes, her attitude toward using writing in her classroom improved.	Yes, many informal writing assignments were introduced into the music classroom.	Yes. Students overcame obstacles presented by traditional classroom communication and constructed their own voice and used it to assess themselves and their learning about music.
3	Science	No, it was already positive.	Yes, more writing was used, but neither writing nor process were not taught directly.	Yes. Students learned the content better when writing and going through the writing process.
4	Social Studies	No, it was already positive.	Yes, specific, direct writing processes instruction for AP exams was introduced, as well as teaching content through the use of teacher models.	Yes. Scores have increased. Content mastery also increased with more effective writing instruction.

professional development and writing and the teaching of writing. Looking at the results of the study illustrate that there is value in the experiences that these participants have shared for multiple reasons. One significant takeaway includes how each participant was able to construct individual learning that was practical and relevant to each individual's content area and classroom practices. This suggests that other participants would also have

the opportunity to construct similar experiences and successes.

### **Perceived Success of the CUWP Summer Institute**

Overall, from the sampling of these four participants (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008), the results appear to support the assumption that participation in the CUWP summer institute affects the attitudes and classroom practices positively. All four participants saw some measure of change for the better as they implemented practical knowledge and strategies gained from their participation in this professional development. Key to this perceived success could be found in the themes raised in the literature: personal interpretation of the experience (phenomenon), construction of one's own learning, active learning/participation in the professional development, the inclusion of authentic tasks, collaborative support community, inclusion of prior knowledge and/or experience, self-efficacy regarding one's own writing and the teaching of writing, motivation as a teacher, motivation as a student, scaffolded modeling, teacher expertise in professional development, and the use of writing in the content area. However, the most notable in the minds of the participants were the following three ideas: self-selected professional development in a social-collaborative environment, a continual collaborative support network, and the ability to construct their own learning and directly and immediately apply their learning to their classrooms.

Although many factors contributed to the participants' perceived success, first, the CUWP summer institute was a self-selected form of professional development, during which the teachers desiring to be involved in each session had to apply and pass a

selection process in order to be selected for participation (Glickman et al., 2010; Knowles, 1980; Northouse, 2010). The social studies teacher and the math teacher were searching for answers to questions they already held regarding how to use writing in his classroom in order to deepen student understanding of their respective content. Similarly, the science teacher wanted to do more writing in her class. They were internally motivated to construct meaning of their experiences during the summer institute and find answers (Batagiannis, 2011; Freire, 1970; Greene, 1996; Kemmis, 2009; Piaget, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978) to their professional and personal questions. All four participants of the study were motivated by external factors such as monetary incentives, university credits for lane change, or other factors in their personal lives. Three of the four participants also had colleagues who either participated with them or previously and significantly influenced their decision to participate for themselves in the CUWP summer institute. Regardless of the internal or external motivating factors driving each participant, the fact that each chose to attend willingly, and was not mandated by an administrative decree to attend the CUWP summer institute, contributed to the success of the professional development (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Glickman, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Lieberman & Wood, 2002; Northouse, 2010; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Valiante, 2006; Smith, 1996).

Another factor that contributed to the success of the CUWP summer institute for these participants came as they built camaraderie with the other teachers in their respective institutes. A social connection of peer support was established during the three or four weeks—a serious investment of time—of the summer institute as participants wrote, read, taught, walked, ate, discussed, and learned together. All the professional



development involved peers—teacher experts who knew the value of effective professional development (Cumming-Potvin, 2007; Gee, 2003; Gilmore, 1986; Heath, 1983; Newkirk, 2002; New London Group, 2000; Toohey, 2000; Wells, 1985). This social collaboration and connectivity helped establish ties to keep the participants connected through a network of social media, conferences, workshops, and collegiality that extended beyond the time spent together at the actual summer institute. This collaborative support community is a major contributing factor to successful teacher professional development (DuFour et al., 2005; Gray, 2000; Hickey & Harris, 2005; Hillocks, 1986; Pajares et al., 2007; Smith, 1996). It was this social connection that the music teacher credited for her achievement; though she initially felt out of her comfort zone, when she immersed herself in the collaborative culture of the CUWP summer institute she felt successful. It was the driving factor that led her to construct her learning and find success. Because the summer institute professional development was not a top-down, drive-by experience, but rather teacher-led with teachers teaching teachers with extended, ongoing support even after the summer institute finished, the music teacher overcame her trepidations and constructed meaning for herself. She implemented what she learned with her own students, helping them to incorporate writing in their learning of music. The teachers who continued their involvement in the support network offered by the CUWP also reported the most enduring changes in their classroom practices. This could be researched in more depth in the future.

The fact that each participant was able to construct their own learning and take away practical ideas to implement in their respective classroom practices contributed to

the participants' perceived success as well. The music teacher found her comfort zone with her personal writing and established her own informal writing standards for assignments involving multiple modes and media with her music classes. The social studies teacher began modeling his own writing for the student and teaching writing processes that he acquired at the CUWP summer institute in order to help his students organize their thoughts, learn the social studies content, and prepare for AP exams. The science teacher simply began to incorporate more process pieces of writing with her students. The math teacher implemented several strategies from the CUWP summer institute for students to use writing as a tool for learning (Strong, 2006). He reported that these strategies such as prewriting about math concepts and writing to make connections between current and past concepts helped the students comprehend the content better. He was able to see different strategies presented from a predominantly language arts teaching perspective and construct his methods to apply the same ideas to teaching mathematics through writing (Batagiannis, 2011; Freire, 1970; Greene, 1996; Kemmis, 2009; Piaget, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Professional Development Perceptions and Recommendations**

It was interesting to look at the participants of this study and their perceptions and recommendations regarding previous professional development regarding writing and their experience with the CUWP summer institute. The four participants had never encountered much in the way of professional development either in their pre-service training or with in-service training. Three of the four said they never had any training

whatsoever. Regarding writing, all they had to draw from was their own experience and involvement with writing. The music teacher related a few instances where she was mandated by her administration to participate in some general content area literacy training. She felt pressure from the administration and the school district to include various online writing programs recommended by the state or other pre-packaged programs that focused on specific writing traits or methods; however, even though she acknowledged that she taught “a different kind of reading and writing,” she found the lectured instruction—replete with acronyms and jargon—overwhelming and more specifically designed for English teachers, much of which applied to standardized testing, something that her content area did not participate in. She dismissed this training outright. The social studies teacher also discussed negative experiences at professional development concerning several failed attempts at working with his own department in a collaborative effort with the school’s English department to try and incorporate more writing in social studies. He felt lost as to how to effectively implement writing in his classroom.

However, when specifically discussing the CUWP summer institute as a form of professional development, all four participants concurred that it was one of the best experiences they had ever encountered. The music teacher mentioned that the CUWP summer institute broke the stereotype of ineffective professional development that she had believed and experienced. She said it was focused, adaptable, and applicable. The science teacher mentioned that her master’s program caused her to hate writing, but participating in the CUWP summer institute helped her rediscover the joy she had for

writing again. Participation in the summer institute helped in personal endeavors such as recertification courses and personal writing. The music and social studies teachers also mentioned the motivation they felt to write both personally and professionally. For the music teacher, writing professionally helped her realize (and her administrators realize) that “other disciplines outside English write.” All four participants concurred that the CUWP summer institute either positively shifted their perspective regarding writing in the content areas or at least confirm what they already believed about writing’s importance in their classroom. The summer institute went further, though, providing peer-led instruction and experiences that helped them construct their own meaning through acquiring practical skills and competing authentic assignments, connecting the knowledge to their own areas of expertise. As mentioned previously, the math teacher stated that the “CUWP [summer institute]...has changed the way I teach, the way I think, changed the way I work, and really helped me prepare for a lot of the changes that have come forward” regarding the new math curriculum. He sent an unsolicited comment after he was asked to perform a member check:

Looking at it now through the lens of my current working, I would emphasize the further need of writing for understanding. Through the current CMI (Comprehensive Math Instruction) training, there is a powerful emphasis in having the students explain their thinking through writing and modeling. My work through the CUWP has made me a leader in helping other math teachers understand how explanations in mathematics should look, and how to build a deeper understanding through that writing.

The music teacher said that the summer institute added to her limited experience and helped to build comfort and confidence. Participation in the CUWP summer institute positively impacted all four of these participants.

### **Comfort and Confidence**

Participants repeatedly brought up the importance of discovering their own comfort with the activities of the CUWP summer institute, with their own personal and professional writing practices, and with teaching writing in their classrooms, and although this is strongly connected to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Pajares, 1996, 2003; Pajares & Urdan, 2006), I believe it deserves a closer examination from the eyes of the participants.

The math teacher knew he was out of his element “with a bunch of English teachers,” and decided beforehand that he would need to make the connections to his content area for himself. His confidence allowed him to do this, even though the majority of the instruction addressed content different from his. The science teacher was intrigued and encouraged by the fact that she worked with people outside her content area and comfort zone. In fact, she noted that this interaction with different peers was one of her favorite parts of the CUWP summer institute because it extended her collegial spheres and she was able to make more connections for herself. As her comfort level with the other participants increased, so did her participation and learning. The social studies teacher also admitted that his comfort with his peers allowed him to show his interests and permitted him to share more of his personal writing with the group, thus giving him more opportunity to have a meaningful experience at the CUWP summer institute.

The only outlier from this group was the music teacher, and her experience revealed a different perspective regarding comfort level and constructing a meaningful experience at the CUWP summer institute. As was noted in the narrative, the music

teacher felt alone and well out of her comfort zone, so much that she did not want to return to the summer institute after the first day. She broke down and cried on her way home. Initially intrigued by the idea of the CUWP summer institute, she still felt that she did not fit in with the majority of the participants. However, after she began to immerse herself in the activities and started writing and sharing, thus becoming a writer herself, her overall comfort level with her colleagues of the CUWP summer institute and with the environment increased and her self-efficacy as a writer and as a teacher of writing in her content area also started to increase. Her realization that she could write and use writing in her own way in her classroom led her to construct standards for herself.

### **Social Construction**

The improvement of the music teacher's comfort level was not something she accomplished on her own, however; it took the social aspect of the CUWP summer institute to help her break the barriers that held her back. She said that where she felt isolated at first, the other participants and the directors made a concerted effort for the group members to socialize and work collaboratively. This was built into the scheduled daily events with reading and writing groups. The music teacher reported that when she "found social association with others who were out of their comfort zone," she felt more peer influence to stay with the summer institute and not quit. She said, "Once social balance was found, I was able to construct meaning for myself." Her responses alluded that if this professional development had not involved a long-term social interaction with her peers, she would not have benefitted. Since her initial involvement with the CUWP summer institute, the music teacher has continued to contribute to the group social media

pages and other professional development opportunities. The social studies teacher pointed out that it is when the social aspect or the collaborative experience of professional development breaks down, it fails (DuFour et al., 2005; Gray, 2000; Hickey & Harris, 2005; Hillocks, 1986; Smith, 1996). Addressing the social aspect of writing and learning, Prior (2006) stated, “Writing is a phenomenon that seems ever more connected to who we are and who we will become” (p. 64). The CUWP summer institute provided the social connectivity necessary for these teachers to discover for themselves who they were as writers and teachers of writing.

All four participants mentioned the social aspect of the CUWP summer institute as a key factor in their own personal success during their experience. The science teacher discussed how engaging in different roles as a teacher, a writer, a reader, a learner, an editor, and a “critique” helped her to make connections and construct applications for using writing in her science classes. All four found the feedback from their peers to be meaningful as they created and taught lessons involving writing in their respective content areas. Specific comments called the feedback encouraging, positive, and constructive. The music teacher said that this interaction “allowed her to construct relevance and meaning through peer interaction,” specifically sharing her writing and receiving feedback. Favorite activities all pointed to social interaction: sharing daily writes (scribbles), walking and writing in a small group, and holding professional discussions with many different colleagues. For these participants, the social structure of the CUWP summer institute allowed the participants to adapt their own experiences to their own content and classrooms as they collaboratively worked to improve the teaching

of writing in schools (Batagiannis, 2011; Freire, 1970; Greene, 1996; Kemmis, 2009; Piaget, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). The different perspectives of the individual participants at the CUWP summer institute helped make connections for the different content areas teachers.

However, along with the group interaction and social construction of meaning, participants also found time to reflect individually and construct their own learning. This is when the music teacher constructed her own standards for writing in her classroom and when the math teacher found the answers for his personal question of involving writing in his classroom as a tool for gaining understanding. He said that he was able to construct meaning from making connections between the content presented at the summer institute and his own writing and teaching experiences.

### **Recommendations**

All four participants acknowledged, as voiced by the social studies teacher: “Reading in the content area and writing across the curriculum needs to be more emphasized in terms of professional development.” They all agreed that the CUWP summer institute was an effective professional development experience in which to develop these skills because it allowed content area teachers to collaborate with knowledgeable peers who could help in an ongoing effort to teach writing and content. “When you improve the teaching of literacy for one teacher in one content area, it can improve content area learning for students,” said the social studies teacher. Without reservation or hesitation, each of the four participants in this study highly recommended the CUWP for all secondary teachers, not just those who teach English.



### **Call for Additional Research**

This study, like most research studies, answered some questions but raised others. To validate the findings of this study, I propose that much more research continue along the same course in order to replicate the findings. These additional studies could involve multiple variations in order to further corroborate the replication (Yin, 2003). Such variables might include a continued study of the same site (CUWP summer institute) to see if other more recent participants of the same phenomenon exhibit similar results (experiences). Looking at similar phenomena (other NWP affiliated sites across the country) with the same type of participants would also allow a broader perspective into the population of secondary teachers who do not primarily teach English or language arts. The sharing of more stories (qualitative data) will broaden the conversation (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Replication logic (Yin, 2003) could also be used to see if the findings of this study are unique or if they present results common to other studies. Then that quantitative data could triangulate the validity of the observations and perceptions found in this study.

Other studies that may render useful qualitative data might include a longitudinal study of the participants, following them over an extended amount of time in order to see if their attitudes and practices regarding writing and how they use it in their classrooms remains the same or if it changed (Merriam, 2009). The math teacher in this study discussed openly during a member check that even though the narrative and analysis reflected his attitudes and practices at the time the interviews and observations were conducted, he has since developed and refined how ideas and how he has progressed

beyond what he had learned at the CUWP summer institute. None of the participants said they had ceased to practice what they had learned and implemented, although three of the four expressed desires to do even more writing in their classrooms. Another useful study might compare trends over time by looking at the more veteran participants as compared to those with less experience.

This study, which corroborated the findings of studies regarding the CUWP summer institute and the attitudes and practices of language arts teachers, it would be interesting to see if purposefully targeting other populations would yield similar results. Other sample populations could include, but would not be restricted to elementary teachers, post-secondary teachers, librarians, literacy specialists, administrators, and counselors—all of which populations have participated to some extent in the CUWP summer institute (D. Dean, personal communication, February 2, 2016) since its inception.

It might also prove beneficial to analyze whether a CUWP summer institute participant's direct involvement with the continual support network correlated to their perceived success with writing instruction and practice in their classroom. Studies regarding teachers of English language would be yet another avenue to explore.

Along with more qualitative research studies, quantitative or mixed-methods studies that support the claims of these participants would also substantiate the data produced in this study and further validate the findings (Creswell, 2008). Another longitudinal study that analyzed student writing sample scores, ACT or AP test scores, or other hard data over time would allow a different perspective about the perceived

effectiveness of the CUWP summer institute and how it influences teacher attitude as it compared to student performance. A sample of students whose teachers participated in the CUWP summer institute (or another similar site) and their test scores or other quantitative data could be compared and analyzed. However, there are many variables that would have to be accounted for, making this type of study extremely difficult. One study that undertook a similar endeavor was published after this study began. Gallagher et al. (2015) found that students whose teachers participated in an NWP-based professional development model improved their writing proficiency. Perhaps, even using it in conjunction with a study such as Paula di Domenico's (2014) analysis of high school teachers' disciplinary literacy knowledge would illicit a call for more participation in similar professional development.

Regardless of which study is pursued, it is essential that more studies address phenomena that purport to improve teacher practices regarding the teaching of writing in different content areas.

**Knowledge.** Even without additional studies of its exact nature to corroborate the data gleaned from these case studies, or those mentioned in the previous section, knowing that this study serves as a description of four case studies that represent a small yet growing population should allow it to stand as a valid beginning to a conversation that needs to be continued. By itself, the study corroborates the findings that show the effectiveness of the professional development of the CUWP, an NWP-based affiliate for teachers of language arts (Brown et al., 2011; NWP, 2010; Street & Stang, 2009). This study's results illustrate that the CUWP summer institute is equal in its influence for

teachers of other content areas.

**Policy.** With these findings—that the CUWP summer institute positively influenced different content area teachers, not just English teachers—the data can be used to promote the effectiveness of all NWP-based writing project summer institutes, lobby for more teachers and universities to participate in the project and all its endeavors to promote better teaching of writing, and help teachers who were once afraid of or insecure about writing improve the literacy practices in their classrooms.

**Practice.** The results of the study favorably illustrate a positive change in the way writing is taught and used in content area classrooms. The value of the CUWP summer institute should become apparent to teachers and administrators with appropriate publication and recognition. They will recognize how it could benefit their school and district faculties and staffs. With more participation in the CUWP summer institute and other similar summer institutes across the country, the program should continue to grow. In turn, more teachers will receive effective professional development, and the effect will yield better writing instruction for students in all content areas (Graham & Perin, 2007).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A  
Interview Questions

### Interview Questions

1. What content area do you teach?
2. When did you participate in the Central Utah Writing Project summer institute?
3. Before your participation in the CUWP summer institute, describe how you used writing in your classroom.
4. Did you specifically teach writing? What did you do? How much time?
5. Before the CUWP summer institute, have you ever participated in training to improve the teaching of writing? If so, what were they? Describe your experiences.
6. How did you decide to participate in the CUWP summer institute?
7. In general, describe your experience with the CUWP summer institute.
8. (If not answered before) What roles did you play in the summer institute? What did you do to participate?
9. Using a before and after framework, what kind of impact has the CUWP summer institute had on your attitude toward writing in your content instruction? Share some experiences.
10. What kind of impact has the CUWP summer institute had on your other professional endeavors? In your personal writing?
11. Have you changed your classroom practices regarding writing after you participated in the CUWP summer institute? If so, how?
12. What are or have been some roadblocks to implementing what you learned from participating in the CUWP summer institute?
13. Do you think that being a part of the CUWP summer institute has impacted your students in their attitudes toward writing? In their writing proficiency in general? In their capacity to learn the content?
14. Is the CUWP summer institute effective professional development? Explain why you think this.
15. Would you recommend the CUWP training to others? If so, to whom? Why? If not, why not?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share about your participation in the CUWP summer institute?

Appendix B

What Brought You Here?



## What brought you here?

### Preparation:

Your personal “life” playlist and the willingness to share some personal parts of your life with your students.

*NOTE: Music is VERY personal. Be sensitive to this! You will receive some exceptionally personal stories from your students. If you are not prepared to hear explicit lyrics and learn about explicit events in their lives you may not want to delve into this.*

### Adaptations:

Students may do this in an abbreviated in-class version or the experience can be lengthened

- Shorter
  - Choose one (1) piece from your playlist
  - One complete paragraph, your reasons WHY this piece of music is your favorite. What is your experience with it? Where did you hear it? What was going on? Why is it important in your life? Is there an event tied to it?
  - I allow students to hand write or they may type on whatever device they have and email it directly to me.
  - If time allows I will ask if anyone wants to share and I will have them attach their device to the speakers and play a portion of the music they are writing about then read their paragraph.
    - *Note: You need to be somewhat familiar with the popular music of the day and if what the student will be playing on your system will be school appropriate, or at least be comfortable enough with the student to ask about the lyrics before they plug in...enough said?*
- Longer
  - Choose five (5) pieces
  - Orchestra was required 3 classical pieces and 2 from any other Genre
  - Guitar was free to choose from any genre
  - One complete paragraph for *EACH* piece, your reasons WHY this piece of music is your favorite. What is your experience with it? Where did you hear it? What was going on? Why is it important in your life? Is there an event tied to it?
  - Typed and handed in or emailed.

## Appendix C

### Political Boundaries: Key Terms Story

### Political Boundaries: Key Terms Story

Instructions: Write a fictitious story (that is based on real events in your life) to describe a conflict between you and your parents or some other member of your family or power struggles between friends. Compare yourself to a nation that is seeking to become a state or a nation-state.

Include no less than eight of the following words from chapter 7: self-determination, irridentism, devolution, sovereignty, enclave or exclave, assimilation, cultural divergence, apartheid (or segregation) balkanization, centripetal force and centrifugal force.

Use fifteen of the following key terms from chapter 8 to explain how the terms above relate to the areas of your house where you or your siblings might set boundaries or have boundaries set for you: balance of power, colonialism, colony, compact state, definition, delimitation, demarcation, antecedent boundary, fragmented state, frontier, gerrymander, imperialsim, landlocked, microstate, perforated state, prorupted state, elongated state, federal state, unitary state, confederation, allocational boundary dispute. satellite state, operational boundary dispute, physical boundary, shatterbelt, subsequent boundary, superimposed boundary, autocracy (dictatorship), democracy, supranationalism.

Here is an example that I wrote that is based (mostly) on true events from my life.

#### My Sister and Me

Growing up, the balance of power between me and my sister Carolyn was always tenuous. Like those European imperialists of old, she sought only her own self-interest at the expense of all others. She would exploit anyone or anything, so long as she got what she wanted. A typical night at our dinner table included the balkanization of our family, when an older brother took a piece of meat that Carolyn had claimed. She would fuss and complain until my mom would cut off a piece of her meat and give it to her. That is when the centrifugal forces really kicked in. One brother would be angry that Carolyn was rewarded for her bad behavior. Another brother or sister would be angry because now Carolyn had proportionately more than anyone else. Then someone would tell someone else to “shut up,” which compounded the already bad situation. With up to twelve people in the kitchen at dinner time, you can imagine how the tension could mount to the point that we were like a multi-ethnic state with each ethnicity fighting against the others. The situation was only remedied when my father segregated the loudest, most violent offenders from the rest and sent them to their respective rooms. And there sat Carolyn with a big piece of meat and a self-satisfied look on her face.

Being the sibling closest in age to me, she was the one that I played with and more often than not, fought with. One lazy after-noon when I was twelve, Carolyn and I sat on the floor playing a miniature game of billiards. There was a mechanism that would shoot the miniature cue ball at the other balls. Well, for some reason, Carolyn thought I had

cheated, so she picked up the cue ball and threw it at me and threw it me from close-range, it crashed into my cranium. It hurt like #%\$&! That act was akin to a violation of my sovereignty. I knew from many many past experiences with her that if I did not establish my self-determination and soon that she would proceed to assimilate me as if I were a subject of her own little colony.

I jumped to my feet and rushed at her. She backed up but was stopped by the console television that sat on the floor. She lifted her foot and kicked out at me to stop my progress. I grabbed her leg and simultaneously lifted it in a quick and powerful upward motion. She flipped backwards over the TV and landed on her face. She came up screaming bloody murder and picked up the first thing she could find and hurled it through the air at me. It was a ski boot. It came flying at me with an awkward trajectory that I didn't quite know how to block. It glanced off my arm and caught me in the neck. Now it was my turn to scream bloody murder. She turned and ran up the stairs. I bounded up, two stairs at a time, reaching the top to find my Dad standing there grasping Carolyn in one hand, using his free hand to grab me.

He didn't even need to say where were going. We knew that when all civility was lost that we would be deposited on stools on either end of the garage to think about our actions. Carolyn and I spent about as much time in that garage as the cars did. This time was different though. In addition to doing time in the garage my Dad informed us that we needed to learn to get along and that the solution was to spend more time together. To make this happen, we would be sharing a bedroom. SHARE A BEDROOM?! No way! I was twelve and she was fourteen! This was a violation of privacy of the highest order. Was he so old that he had forgotten what twelve-year-old boys were going through? This was just not right!

Our protests fell on deaf ears. He asserted his autocracy with "let me remind you that this is not a democracy. I am the sovereign ruler of this house and what I say is law. The sooner you learn to get along, the sooner you can have your own rooms back." As he turned and walked away, my anarchist sister in her best anti-disestablishmentarian tone muttered the word "dictator."

So there I was sharing a room with my sister. The first thing to do was to define, delimitate and demarkate some boundaries. It was decided that I had to move into her room. This seemed unfair to me at first, but then I realized that in her room, I could cause her greater frustration than she could cause me. After all, this was her territory. Every antecedent boundary that existed before was now gone. Just the idea that I would occupy areas of her room that were formerly exclusive to her would drive her nuts! The fact that, before she moved in, my older brother and I shared this room, reminded me of some boundaries that were obviously now antecedent but could serve me if I played my cards right.

As the room was more or less a square, we tried to draw a line down the middle and create two rectangular compact states but quickly realized that each of us would be

landlocked out of areas of the room that were important to us both, on one side was the door out of the room and on the other was the door to the bathroom. At first, both of were immovable. Since the bathroom was on my side and I knew she valued access more than I did, I was unwilling to compromise, just to make her mad. As a young budding athlete, I figured I could just run and jump onto my side of the room. That worked once. The next time I jumped into the room, my sister shut the door just as my foot left the ground. I hit the door and slid to the ground in a lump. So, standing in the hallway, I removed the door from the hinges so she couldn't slam it on me while I was in mid-air. Brilliant! That was what I thought until I went to jump into the room only to fly into the room to discover, too late, that my sister was standing on the other side of the wall, inside the room. Before I could touch down on my side, she gave me a shove. This time, I hit the wall and slid to the floor in a heap. My sister was not as dumb as I thought.

That is when I decided to compromise. I figured that the best way to get out of this conundrum and get my room back was to cooperate. We decided to gerrymander a Z shaped buffer state that was essentially neutral territory giving access both access to the doorway and the bathroom. The only problem that remained was that I did not have access to the closet. For me, it constituted a fragmented state that I did not have access to. At this point, Carolyn held the advantage. She had access to the closet, the bathroom and hallway. What could I do? Actually I didn't have to do anything. I didn't take a shower and I didn't change my clothes. After all, I didn't have access to any clothes. After a couple of days my increasingly masculine smells motivated her to relent. We gerrymandered a proruption that gave me access to the closet.

Our ability to co-operate helped us get our rooms back to ourselves in no time at all. By the age of twelve, I had learned more about domestic politics and negotiation than the Palestinians and Jews, North and South Koreans, China and Taiwan and all the multi-ethnic states of the Middle East and Africa. Don't get me wrong, we still had conflict, I just learned how to manage it to my advantage. Instead of being aggressive toward my sister and my parents, I learned to make allies of my parents and to be passive in my aggression toward my sister. In conflict after conflict between Carolyn and my parents, I saw her stubborn belligerence work against her. The more defiant she got, the more severe her punishments became. I learned that by being nice and agreeable, my parents would respect and trust me. I learned that my compliance and obedience could become a powerful centripetal force that resulted in a win-win for me and my parents. By the time I was sixteen, I witnessed the devolution of most of their power to the point that I became a mostly autonomous entity with self-determination.

Between twelve and sixteen, I still got into arguments with my sister that still landed us together in the garage. I built up enough capital with my parents and I was smart enough that the time I spent in the garage, compared to my sister, was minimal. I knew about how long I had to sit on the stool before my Dad would come and let us off. Just before my Dad would come into the garage, I would say in a voice low enough for my sister to hear, but not loud enough for my Dad, something like "you're fat" or "all of the zits on

your face make you look more like a pepperoni pizza than a person.” That would effectively make her scream some obscenity at me. When my Dad came in the room he would reprimand Carolyn and add time to her sentence. I would look over at him with the most innocent Ferris Buehler expression I could muster and shrug my shoulders as if I had no idea why she would want to curse at me so. My Dad would then let me off the stool and I would walk out of the room but not before giving her the finger.

By the respective ages of sixteen and eighteen Carolyn and I had matured to the point that we didn't spend time on stools in the garage anymore; but not much. She would do things like come up to me and, in a superior and condescending tone, say “I'm using the car tonight, so don't even think about it.” I would look at her with a disappointed and perplexed expression that said “how sad it must be to be you.” I would then say “fine” and walk away. Through trial and error, I was learning the martial art of deflection. Rather meet her force head on with my own, I began to deflect her energy and use it against her.

I would watch like a hawk until my Dad drove around the corner. I would meet him in the driveway. Carolyn was clueless as she was either asleep on the couch or watching some soap opera and eating something really unhealthy. I would inquire as to the quality of my father's day, compliment him on his tie and ask for the keys to the car. If I were a better man, I would have just gotten in the car and left. I could not, however resist going back into the house, walking through the room where my sister was rousing from her stupor and jingling the keys as I walked out the door, leaving my parents to deal with a screaming maniac. I know that was a despicable thing to do to my parents, but something inside me just couldn't resist. As I reflect back on my sister, I have to take back what I said earlier. She really was dumb.

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 Utah State Office of Education Secondary Language Arts Criterion Reference  
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 Utah State Office of Education Direct Writing Assessment Standard Setting  
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Writing, writing revision, creative writing, reluctant readers and writers, boys and literacy, adolescent literature, teacher (English) education, professional development, digital writing

### **Honors and Awards**

VFW Middle School Teacher of the Year Award State of Utah Winner, 2011  
 Spanish Fork Jr. High Peak Performer, August 2011  
 Crystal Apple Award, 2010  
 UCTE/LA Dr. Bill and Carol Strong English Teacher of the Year Honor Roll,  
 2010  
 Spanish Fork Jr. High Teacher of the Year, 2007

### **Refereed Academic Publications**

#### *Print*

“All Work and No Play Makes Jack (or Jill) a Dull Writer: Wordplay in the Secondary Classroom,” *Utah English Journal* Vol. 40, 2012: 9-13.

“How Can I Know What I Think Until I See [and Hear] What I Say?—Getting Students to Start Taking Responsibility for Their Own Writing through Oral Revision,” *Utah English Journal* Vol. 37, 2009: 61-65.



*Electronic*

“How Can I Know What I Think Until I See [and Hear] What I Say?— Getting Students to Start Taking Responsibility for Their Own Writing through Oral Revision,” National Writing Project Gallery.  
<http://galleryofwriting.org/writing/305481>, October 2009.

**Professional Presentations/Workshops**

- “Walking to Inspire Writing.” with Melissa Heaton. Utah Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts, Sandy, UT, November 11, 2016.
- “The Plea for narrative Read-alouds in an Info Text-Heavy World.” Utah Council of the International Reading Association, Salt Lake City, UT, October 14-15, 2016.
- Central Utah Writing Project One-week Summer Institute. with Melissa Heaton. Central Utah Writing Project, Springville, UT, June 13-17, 2016.
- “Nobody Cares What You Think: Getting Students to Use ‘Rationale’ Thinking.” Utah Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts, Sandy, UT, November 13, 2015.
- Central Utah Writing Project One-week Summer Institute. with Ginny Smith. Central Utah Writing Project, Provo UT, June 22-26, 2015.
- “The Need for Narrative Read-alouds in an Info Text-Heavy World.” with Janae Shepherd. Utah Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts, Sandy, UT, November 7, 2014.
- “Getting Back on the Bike.” with Rillene Nielsen, Utah Council of Teachers of English, Salt Lake City, UT, November 1, 2013.
- “All Work and No Play Makes Jack (or Jill) a Dull Writer: Wordplay in the Secondary Classroom.” Northwest Inland Writing Project, Spokane, WA, March 5-6, 2013.
- “Helping Students Find Their Voice through Found Poetry.” with Christine Thompson, Central Utah Writing Project, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, October 27, 2012.
- “All Work and No Play Makes Jack (or Jill) a Dull Writer: Wordplay in the Secondary Classroom.” Utah Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts, Salt Lake City, UT, October 5, 2012.
- “Revision: Getting Students to Go Beyond Spell-check.” Utah Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts, Salt Lake City, UT, October 7, 2011.

“All Work and No Play Makes Jack (or Jill) a Dull Writer: Wordplay in the Secondary Classroom.” Central Utah Writing Project, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, March 19, 2011.

“Revision: Getting Students to Go Beyond Spell-check.” Central Utah Writing Project, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, September 18, 2010.

“Writing to Learn in the Content Areas.” with Eric Ferrin, Nebo School District, Spanish Fork, UT, June 21-23, 2010.

“Writing to Learn in the Content Areas.” with Eric Ferrin, Spanish Fork Junior High, Spanish Fork, UT, February 24, 2010.

“Effective Inclusion Classrooms—Bridging the Gap: Special Ed and Regular Ed Working Together.” with Katrina Davenport, Nebo School District Secondary Teacher District Development Day, Salem, UT, September 25, 2009.

### **Grants Received**

Nebo Foundation Matching Funds: \$231.00 Science-Fiction Text Purchase, 2017

Nebo Foundation Matching Funds: \$1000.00 Nonfiction Text Purchase, 2011

Nebo Foundation Matching Funds: \$1200.00 Classroom Technology Grant, 2004

### **Professional Affiliations**

Central Utah Writing Project

International Literacy (Reading) Association

National Council of Teachers of English

National Education Association

Nebo Education Association

Nebo Reading Council

Utah Council of the International Reading Association

Utah Council of Teachers of English

Utah Education Association