NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT FELLOWS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS AND AS TEACHERS OF WRITING

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by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, best friend, and love of my life for the past 30 years, Jon Athans, who has stood by me through every bit of this process. Thank you for all of your encouragement and support, and for always believing in me.

The mystique of the NWP is difficult to define in words, but one participant captures it well, stating, "A culture of warmth, empathy, and appreciation of individual and social differences characterizes the NWP's summer institute. . .one NWP site founder called the person-centered culture of the NWP 'one third seminar, one third group therapy, and one third religious experience"' (Whyte et al, 2007, p. 12).

ABSTRACT

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At its core, this study explores the transformative nature of the National Writing Project Summer Institute (NWPSI). It employs an interpretive phenomenological analysis approach and theoretical constructs such as constructivism, self-efficacy theory, reader response theory, and socio-cultural theory in order to understand the perceptions of K-12 teachers who attended the NWPSI in Southeast Texas in the last ten years. Using interviews, reflexive journals, and a reflective metaphor activity, the researcher attempts to understand the ways that the six participants see themselves as writers and teachers of writing after experiencing the summer professional development program of the NWPSI. The research questions for the study are as follows: What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers after participating in a summer writing institute? What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of the impact the National Writing Project has had on the way they teach writing after participating in a summer writing institute? The researcher concludes that all of the participants developed a sense of self-efficacy, some of the participants viewed the program as a transformative process that changed the way they teach writing and the way that they see themselves as writers (rediscovery, validation, emergence), and that most of the participants immediately changed several of their teaching practices and felt a renewed sense of enthusiasm towards the teaching of writing after participating in the NWPSI. The researcher also concludes that the legacy of the NWP is a highly effective and transformative professional development tool for K-12 teachers in any discipline, and that

the teachers teaching teachers training model is most effective in professional development of K-12 teachers.

KEY WORDS: Constructivism, National Writing Project, Interpretive phenomenological analysis, Self-efficacy, Transformative, Teachers as writers, Teacher perceptions, Teachers teaching teachers, Reader response theory, Socio-cultural theory, Southeast Texas.

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Nothing of this grandeur happens by accident. I have had the dream and desire to pursue a doctorate since I was in college reading a novel a week and writing essays on a typewriter in the university basement. There were days when I would stash that little voice away, pushing it to the back of my mind. And then there were days when it would surface again, telling me I could do it, begging me to try. I recall graduating from the University of San Diego in 1995, looking at my esteemed and beloved professors in their funny little hats, and saying a little prayer that someday I would sit up on that stage among them. I also recall my long time professor, advisor, mentor, and friend, Dr. Infantino asking me why I would stop at a master's degree on the day I graduated with one, and prodding me to pursue a doctorate because he had no doubt in his mind that I had "what it takes" to do so.

Zadie Smith once said, "Yearning helps you become someone new" (*Defining Moments*, July 23, 2003). I am so glad I did not listen to my own self-doubts over the years, because the decision to move forward or stay put in my educational journey continued for several years until one day I watched a colleague of mine, Dr. Dodie Niemeyer, present at a staff development for our school and I was so intrigued by her presentation that I went up to her to speak about it afterwards. In the conversation that followed, she shared with me all that she was learning about literacy in her doctoral program at Sam Houston State University. As I drove home that day, I thought to myself, "If you are going to do this, you better get to it." The next day I applied to the program, and it was by far the best academic decision I have ever made. My amazing professors, Dr. Nancy Votteler, Dr. Debbie Price, Dr. Melinda Miller, Dr. Tony

Onwuegbuzie, Dr. Hannah Gerber, and Dr. Cindy Benge taught me so much about what it means to be a scholar of literacy, a teacher of literacy, and a student of literacy.

I will forever be indebted to them for the things they taught me, not only about research, writing, literacy, teaching, and being a professional in our field, but about myself. I am also thankful for my wonderful dissertation committee, my Chair Dr. Nancy Votteler, whose humor and encouragement was a God-send, Co-Chair Dr. Benita Brooks, and committee members Dr. Debbie Price and Dr. Melinda Miller. Their support, expertise, and feedback on my work were invaluable for me throughout the dissertation stage of this process.

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To my colleagues at The Woodlands High School, Lone Star College, and Point Loma Nazarene University, thank you for your unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding, especially when I took all of those personal days to write and you helped my sub teach my classes. Most importantly, thank you for your friendship.

I would also like to thank my mother, Gail Battenberg, a hard working professional who still found time to read to me at night, and who always made sure that I was surrounded by books, and my father, Paul Battenberg, who always supported and encouraged me. This dissertation represents my pursuit of knowledge, my faith in education, my commitment to students, and my devotion to reading and writing. I am hopeful that my work makes a valuable contribution to what I deem to be the most important field there is, literacy.

I would also like to acknowledge my pre-school teacher, Mrs. Butler, and Fred Rogers of *Mr. Rogers Neighborhood*. They both played a vital role in my emergent literacy development, and were my first role models as people who loved to read and explore ideas.

And finally, I would like to thank my family: my husband Jon, my daughters Melanie and Sophia, and my son Jack. When I started this journey they were 4, 9, and 11. Now they are 10, 15, and 17. Dr. Price warned me in my interview as part of the

application process that this was a “selfish degree”, and she was right. Thank you for being patient with me, and for allowing me the time and space to do the things I needed to do. There were many frozen dinners, late bed times, missed homework help, Saturday afternoons spent entertaining yourselves so I could write and research, and school events that I missed because of class. Yet you never once complained or questioned what I was doing. Thank you for believing in me and for inspiring me to keep going. And to my husband Jon, thank you for putting your passions on hold for five years so that I could pursue my own. Your support made this dissertation come to life.

Most importantly, I would like to thank our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who filled my heart with the desire to write, who called me to teach, and who gave me the gifts that helped me to find my way.

PREFACE

As an undergraduate student at the University of San Diego, I was referred by my World Literature professor to tutor in the Writing Center, and that is where my desire to teach writing began. I recall sitting in the courtyard one sunny afternoon having my lunch and watching students walk by, my head swirling with ideas, thinking that I wanted nothing more than to talk about books and write with my students every day for the rest of my life. That was the impetus of my sojourn into teaching.

My first year of teaching was in the fall of 1996, in an at-risk, inner city middle school in Las Vegas where I taught seventh grade language arts to a diverse population of students, sixty percent of whom were English Language learners. I almost quit my first year. After that year, I took a year off, then returned to California and taught AP/IB English and ninth grade English, literacy academy, and journalism. These experiences helped me to build my teacher persona, which I continue to mold and shape to this day.

When I moved to Texas in 2001, I began teaching as a graduate assistant while pursuing my master's degree at the University of Houston. I loved the atmosphere of the college and teaching college- age students. Even though I was only 30 years old and they were mostly 18-24 years old, I thrived on the opportunity to engage in deep discussions about literature and ideas with adults. I served in a role as mentor and guide, but I straddled two worlds. As a graduate student, I was also learning and could relate to their experiences, and as a teacher, I was an authority in the classroom who had a great deal of content area knowledge and experience. In 2003, I began teaching at Lone Star College Montgomery, and taught English 1301 and 1302 as an adjunct instructor. I felt like I was coming into my identity as a college professor, and was constantly reading, writing,

researching, and teaching. I was on top of the world! I felt so independent and empowered and proud of what I had accomplished. In 2005 I took a temporary full time position teaching developmental reading and writing at Tomball College, and in the spring went back to English 1301/1302 at Cy-Fair College. Teaching developmental English was challenging and rewarding, and it caused me to reflect on how I teach and how I differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners in my classroom. Once my children got a little older, I realized how much I missed the classroom, so in 2008 I took a job teaching Dual Credit English for LSC Montgomery at The Woodlands High School. I taught English 2, 3, 4, and DC English for nine years, and loved every minute of it. Every day as I listened to my students share their ideas in literature circles, read their writing in read around groups, or look at the projects adorning my classroom walls, I reflected upon how lucky I was to be teaching such wonderful young people. I am reminded of a quote by Etienne Wenger (1998): "This brings to mind the story about the two stonecutters who are asked what they are doing. One Responds: I am cutting this stone in a perfectly square shape. The other responds: I am building a cathedral" (p. 176).

This quote makes me stop and think about how what I say in my classroom every day affects how and what my students learn. This is a very simple concept, but is really quite profound when you pause to reflect upon it a bit. The main question that emerges for me is: how do I make my students feel like they are building a cathedral? The smaller questions which tiptoe behind this one are: what world view am I attempting to espouse? Which episodes do I create to help my students learn the material and build their world

view? And most importantly, how does the discourse in my classroom work to layer the internal discourses in their minds?

Cazden's question posed in her text *Classroom Discourse*, "How does the observable classroom discourse affect the unobservable thinking of each of the students?" (p.60) is one that reached in and grabbed me by the soul. As a teacher, how many times have I paused to think about how what was being a said truly affected the learning processes of my students, or even thought about how my students were not only making sense of what was being taught, but what thoughts they may be forming, merging, and building as a result of what I was trying to do in the classroom each and every day? I made a list of the activities, or episodes, I do with my students over a year. Not all of them- just the big ones, the ones that I have created to wake them up to something, or that I feel are really meaningful. Then I made a list of the writing assignments I give. Over the years I feel like I have perfected not only the order of these assignments, but also the supplemental mentor texts I use with them. I reflected upon what it was I am really trying to do with these assignments and activities, and that contemplation led me back to the world view question. That question seems too big for an answer, and it is also almost impossible to answer, because ultimately I want my student's to form their own world view. However, I concluded that it has something to do with being authentic, being a humanitarian, reading widely, trusting your own instincts, being compassionate, seizing each moment, seeking balance, keeping things in perspective, listening, living deeply, being yourself, using power to ignite change, preserving freedoms, treating people fairly and equally, and seeking truths.

This led me to Raymond Carver's (1981) story “Cathedral”, which I had my students read for Composition & Rhetoric II. In the story, the narrator says that he “didn't feel like he was inside anything” (33). He had always observed without seeing, listened without hearing, loved without feeling. In a way, he had numbed all his senses, and as a result, he wasn't really living. His epiphany came from a discourse with a blind man who saw much more than he. How often are we jolted into awareness by something we hear someone say, or woken up by something we read, or made to feel alive again by a melody or the words to a song? It is the existence of something else-something outside of ourselves-that probes us and gives us insight. Without the presence of another, we remain hollow.

Educators often say writing is a powerful tool, but what does that really mean? Those of us who teach writing praise the skill, and its ability to change the world, and open up worlds never seen before for our students. As a writing teacher, I needed to harness that magic. Then something occurred to me. . .When I taught the text *Night* by Elie Wiesel to my sophomores, we discussed Anne Frank and her powerful diary. She wrote alone, in private and in secret, but she wrote about what she heard others say, and mingled her thoughts with her observations to make sense of her world. So classroom discourses allow students to observe ways of thinking, and to listen to ways of seeing. They enable students to monitor, reflect, and think aloud, and thereby internalize, appropriate, and construct knowledge. Sharing writing provides students with an opportunity to do all of these things, as well as decontextualize. So I guess in a way each of these episodes, dialogues, discourses, and assignments are stones we cut on our path to

building, and after we have toiled, we find ourselves inside something-something grand and inspiring- like a cathedral.

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INTRODUCTION

Musings in the Moonlight

The full bright moon

casts its light

through my window

Crickets chirping

The clacking of keys

Slurps of tea

My own sighs

All becoming

A symphony in my mind

I am completely at ease

Ensconced in my thoughts

My hands race to keep up

Slumped over my typewriter

A blanket wrapped around my shoulders

Writing by an open window

I must look old from this angle

Yet I am only 22

I want to be a writer

I read everything I can

My mind is always swirling

Churning over ideas

Tidbits of conversations

Lyrics from songs

Things I see every day

Fused with things

I remember from yesterday

I want to be a writer

But more than that

I want to teach

“Why do you want to teach English?”

they ask me

You could be anything-

A lawyer, a newscaster, an actress!

I want to talk about books all day,

I say, half kidding

I want to write

and teach kids how to write

I want to make a difference

in the lives of young people

I want to change the world

“You’ll never make any money!”

It was never about the money

I discover John Steinbeck, Amy Tan, Arthur Miller, Sandra Cisneros

They set my mind reeling

Oh the poetry of Cisneros!

She is my muse,

she nudges me to keep writing

“If you teach, you’ll never have time to write.”

Watch me

My students are vulnerable

They fear the blank page

They lack confidence

They don’t trust their voices

They are afraid of their thoughts

They are afraid to share them

We’re in this together,

I tell them

We are a community of writers

A room full of blank stares

A room full of blank pages

In time they will get it

We write together

I read them stories

I share my own

We laugh and cry

We understand each other

They give me knowing smiles

They hug me and tell me

I changed their lives

This is the money I make

I am richer than anyone I know

They inspire me to keep writing

I write for them

I write for myself

My students are getting published

They are so proud to see their names

in print

Their words

standing tall as cranes

Perched by the side of a pond

Gazing up at the moonlight

For all the world to see

Making their ideas real

Sealing their identity

In a world beyond their own

They write in the moonlight

Down the street

Across town

Beyond this city

and into the next

Yet we will always be connected

As reader and writer

Student and teacher

I did pull it off

I am a teacher and a writer

A writer and a teacher

I am a teacher

who writes

In his afterword of *Lives on the Boundary*, Mike Rose (2005) shared something about his writing processes as a scholar that spoke to me:

> . . .Sketches I was writing about my own background began to resonate with my teaching experience, an overlay, as I put it, of my scholastic past and my working present. . .I had been doing both kinds of writing-poetic and scholarly-for six or seven years, both important to me, but each separate, separate in purpose, style, and audience. Over time, this separation began to feel artificial, splitting life apart, an attempt to understand and render experience with one linguistic hand tied behind my back. I became curious about the possibility of combining different kinds of writing. Could analytic, even formally academic prose, be blended with poetry, with story? . . . It's telling, I think, that memory was involved in that early experimentation. As I reread *Lives on the Boundary*, I'm struck by how often memory comes up, by its ever presence in the text. The book is built substantially from memory. . .Memory is such a complex business. Selective, often distorted, revised as we recall, reconstructed in line with our current needs and worldview. Yet it can be amazing in its particularity, at times vivid, enduring. Memories are often infused with feeling, and are central to our maintenance of our sense of who we are, our identity. To this day, just the face of an old brick, light falling on it in a certain way-raises in me feelings of both solidity and sadness (2005, p. 243-44).

This is how I have felt about my writing my entire life. I think that is why I love Sandra Cisneros so much. She was never afraid to blend poetry and memory with fiction and non-fiction. When I think back to all of the writers I so deeply admire- Arthur

Miller, John Steinbeck, Amy Tan, Ernest Hemingway, Joyce Carol Oates, Flannery O'Connor, Tennessee Williams-they all do the same thing; they blend genres. That is the way my brain works. That is how my thoughts emerge. When I am transfixed in a daze between academic scholarship, philosophical ideas, the imagery of poetry and the deep recesses of narrative, I can see everything so clearly. The world makes sense to me. My doctoral cohort nicknamed me "the poet", specifically for this reason, claiming that I fused poetry in my analysis and response to the texts we were reading that I posted on Blackboard. I guess they were right. It seems only fitting, then, that I begin as Mike Rose ends, with poetry, memory, and the vision of how my writing life has informed my teaching life, and vice versa.

How I Learned to Write

My earliest memory of writing is practicing cursive in Mrs. Overson's class in the third grade, writing my letters on a fat dotted line, imagining that the capital "E" was a hook and the capital "S" was a fish, and that the capital "Z" was the swishing path he would take to escape. Cursive led to spelling sentences in fourth grade, book reports in fifth grade, crisp composition book pages in sixth, and diagraming sentences in seventh. It wasn't until eighth grade that the magic happened. My English teacher, Mr. Winbury, taught us how to write. Each week we wrote a "composition" on college-ruled paper, and he would give us fun topics to think about. Each composition came back to me with wonderful comments- each time with a different colored pen- and for the first time, *I had a reader.* He nudged me, questioned me, drew smiley faces in the margins, and wrote in all capitals once "This really is superior!" I was an atrocious speller who loved to use words I often guessed the meaning of, yet he didn't care much about that. Rather, he

encouraged me to “find my voice”, and “speak my truth”. High school was a blur of good and bad writing teachers, so it wasn’t until I was a freshman in college that I felt that kind of passion for writing again. My freshman comp professor’s name was Dr. Coleman, and he told me that my narrative essay about my childhood made him weep. I took three classes from him before officially declaring myself an English major. The professors who followed mirrored my high school experiences-some good, some bad-but after five years writing my heart out I knew one thing was certain, I had finally found my voice. It wasn’t until I was taking a course on teaching writing for my master’s degree that I even thought about my writing journey. My professor, Dr. Infantino, assigned us a reflective journal titled “How I Learned to Write”. Years of memories came flooding back to me, and in it I mentioned my writing hero, Mr. John Winbury. Dr. Infantino shared with me that he knew him, and that he wasn’t surprised. He stated matter of factly, “He taught you how to write because he was a Writing Project Fellow”. “What?”, I inquired. “He went through the San Diego Area Writing Project (SDAWP). He is one of the best. That’s why he was so inspirational to you. You should apply to the Summer Institute next year. I’m the director.” That was the first I had heard of the National Writing Project, but after learning that the middle school teacher who opened up a world of writing for me was a fellow, I knew I *had* to go. It would be 13 years until I finally went, and it was life changing.

How Do I Know What I Think Until I See What I Say?

I have a favorite quote. It reminds me how to look at the process of writing, and I use it to teach my students. It is, simply, “How do I know what I think until I see what I say?” (E.M. Forrester, Auden, 1962).

In chapter four on expressive writing in his text *Holding on to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones*, Thomas Newkirk (2009) explored the generative theory of language, the self-generosity of the writer, the saturated quality of words, short, episodic details, and the notion of expansiveness. In doing so, he challenged his readers to try their hand at a 200 word sentence. Well, here is my attempt at a 200 word sentence that fought to get out on the page after reading this chapter:

Flannery O'Connor and E.M. Forrester said it best: "How do I know what I think until I see what I say?" I don't, I must write it, and the writing is messy, my ideas are swelling, they bump into each other, they run and hide (I can't say that-should I say that?). . .I am searching for truth; I fight the tyranny of the thesis statement, in writing I will eventually get there; I am plagued by self-censorship; however, I must write, for I am a writer, and according to Don Murray (2009), I need to stop whining and get to it, just as plumbers get to plumbing; I am speculating, musing, wondering, pondering, probing, engaging, revising, the letters on the page dance in my memory, my pen strings them along; the generative theory of language is at work in me; I can hear my former English professor Dr. Williams' voice, "Keep probing the text, keep looking, what do you see?". . .my ideas are sparks, my diction drowning in poetry, the spirit of writing takes hold, yet I am reluctant to call myself a writer. . .oh the irony. . .I am writing, and perhaps, I am even a writer.

Newkirk may have served as my muse, but as a high school and college writing instructor, I have echoed this quote by Forrester time and again over the years with the purpose of teaching students about speculative writing, in which they write to know.

Fitzhugh wrote “Reading is the path to knowledge, and writing is the way to make knowledge one’s own” (2012, p.33). His words resonate with my philosophy of teaching. For the last two decades, I have taught middle and high school students, struggling writers in developmental writing courses, journalists, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Credit, honors students, and college students how to write, and I have found that no matter what the mode of discourse is, this mantra still applies. Speculative, or discovery writing, (Singh & Unnithan, 1989) is like magical dust that a teacher sprinkle’s onto a student’s papers to get the words to flow like nectar in a sieve. That’s because speculative writing is more about thinking than it is about writing, and more specifically, about thinking on the page.

I never even heard of speculative writing until a few semesters after I declared myself an English major, yet when I look back over my journey as a college student, I am amazed at the eclectic nature as to how I learned to write. I started out at a community college in California, then transferred to a four year private Catholic university. I then attended an urban university in Las Vegas, and another private university in New Jersey, and then two large diverse universities in Texas. Over time, I amassed 355 credit hours representing four degrees and three teaching credentials in three states. Yet as I reflect upon my experience, I can attribute my authentic development as a writer, and therefore as a writing teacher, to ten courses total. That is astonishing to me-only ten courses out of one hundred and twelve taught me how to write. The first two courses I took from the same professor, Dr. Robert Coleman at Palomar College, who actually sparked my desire to major in English. They were Introduction to Literature and Composition and Literature, and they were more about waking me up to ideas than they were about writing

them down. Upon reflection, I see that this served as impetus for a budding writer-my mind was swirling with ideas, the necessary staple for composing. As an undergraduate English major, courses such as World Literature and Philosophy and Literature had similar effects on my sojourn into critical thinking and reading, but they also taught me about speculative writing and revision. I spent hours at the typewriter in the university basement revising numerous papers countless times, and producing a manuscript of my thoughts and reactions to my reading. These courses were invaluable to me in my growth as a writer, because they taught me about the process of writing and motivated me to think on the page. I also took Creative Writing, which unleashed my voice and enabled me to discover my own style, and a Narrative Poetics class which taught me how to engage the text and ask what the writer is doing in the text and what the effect of it is. That class taught me that looking at a text from the lens of a writer and not as a reader enhances the writing of the reader.

However, the courses that contributed most to my pedagogical and theoretical notions of teaching writing were graduate courses in the departments of English and Education, respectively. The first was Teaching Writing across the Curriculum with Dr. Robert Infantino at the University of San Diego, Feminist Rhetoric and Writing with Dr. Dawn Formo at California State University San Marcos, Teaching College Writing with Dr. Jay Kastley at the University of Houston, and Language Arts: Theory & Practice with Dr. Nancy Votteler at Sam Houston State University. Each of these courses allowed me to fuse theory with practice, and reflect upon how I learned to write, how I teach writing, and what makes good writing.

The Balloon Metaphor

Writing is a journey. It often begins before we can speak or articulate words in the form of scribbling, and is a vital component of our emergent literacy. As writers, we are influenced by other writers by the nature of our reading (Applebee, Britton, Bruner, Elbow, Emig, Graves Murray, Newkirk, Piaget, Rosenblatt, Vygotsky). Additionally, teachers often influence our conception of ourselves as writers, and can have positive or negative lasting effects on our writing psyche. I call this "writing baggage", and attempt to unpack this baggage with my students at the beginning of the year when I ask them to reflect on three essential questions: "How Did I Learn to Write?", "What Makes Good Writing?", and "Who am I as a Writer?". I front load my writing course with metaphors and philosophical questions before I ever get to the textbook in an attempt to get students to think meta-cognitively about themselves as writers before we begin the real act of trudging through patterns of discourse in an effort to find their own writing voice and stance. Therefore, it makes sense that an academic writer who also uses metaphors and philosophical questions to probe, nudge, and engage her readers spoke to me.

One such writer is Wendy Bishop. In her article "Places to Stand: The Reflective Writer-Teacher-Writer in Composition", Bishop (1999) discussed the attack of creative writing teachers in academe, considers the dichotomy between expressivist and social constructivist rhetoric, and laments the writer-teacher teacher-writer binary in a philosophical probing of composition theory and the *real* writer's place in it all, ending with the ironic notion that although literature professors are the gods at the top of the academic mountain, if it weren't for creative writing professors and writers in general, they

would have nothing to write about. She sums up her metaphor in one sentence: "Composition, of course, has long existed in a service relationship to both literature and creative writing, although it has come into sharper focus as the necessary foothill-region of the English Mount Olympus" (p.18). One of her kernels of wisdom that she shared grabbed a hold of me, both as a writer and an emerging scholar, and that is the insightful balloon metaphor. She offered, "The expressivist 'position', then, is often embodied by non-expressivists as constructions of Donald Murray and Peter Elbow-who certainly are often cited in CCC (College Composition Communication) pages. These individuals, in their author functions or rhetorical constructions, are raised and dismissed, treated as fatherly Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloons, floated through critiques as unitary and non-representative figures whose simplified positions can be quickly-via synecdoche-argued against" (Bishop, 1999, p. 11). She went on to praise Murray and Elbow and several other writing gurus in her discussion of composition theory, and in doing so makes a strong case for expressionist rhetoric, which is the back bone of the National Writing Project (Lieberman & Wood), but what spoke to me was her Macy's Parade balloon metaphor.

In reading those few lines and following the development of her argument and the reason for her metaphor, or more specifically, the metaphor's raison d'etre (reason to be), I began to conceive of my writing life, my writing history, my writing muse, and the very impetus for my study on writing teachers, as a Macy's Day Parade of sorts with each professor who taught me a little bit about writing, and a lot about myself as a writer, as balloons floating down the path, which I see as my writing journey. The visual that I saw is conveyed in Appendix C, with each writing teacher who inspired me given their own balloon, and the string that holds the balloon inscribed with the gift they gave me as a

writer. I could also do this with mentor texts, and writers both in composition theory and classical literature or popular culture who pulled me into the written word and made me wistful to write a few words of my own, but I felt it fitting for this study that I share my own balloon metaphor (Appendix C), and what inspired me to become a student of literature, an English teacher, a scholar, a writer.

The National Writing Project

As a doctoral student, I had the good fortune to participate in the Sam Houston Writing Project in the summer of 2013, an experience that not only enriched my classroom teaching and assessment of writing, but reignited my passion to write by inspiring me to write for myself and for publication as often as I can. The opportunity to participate as a writing project fellow has been vital in developing my persona as a writer and as a teacher of writing, helping me to understand my pedagogical theories about teaching writing, and assisting me in serving my school and community to develop a writing program which implements the ideas espoused by the legacy of the National Writing Project (NWP). The project Director, Dr. Nancy Votteler, Associate Professor and Director of the Literacy Doctoral Program in the Department of Language Literacy and Special Populations at Sam Houston State University, encouraged us to listen to (and to trust) our own voices. In the course of a month, I found myself immersed in the celebration of the written word. Every day she had us writing, sharing our writing, reading mentor texts and articles, modeling lessons, listening to others present and tell stories, work shopping, and sharing ideas with our colleagues. The greatest gift I took away with me from that experience is that I am a

writer, and that the model of teachers teaching teachers is the best mode of professional growth and development.

The National Writing Project model serves as a guide for the kind of professional learning community that has proven effective in a high school and college setting, and "is one of the most successful networks of teachers creating opportunities for teacher growth" (Votteler, 2007, pg. 51). Its focus is on teachers teaching teachers, and teachers as writers. It was so refreshing to write every day, and to share our writing. All activities were designed to put theory to practice, and what emerged was a sense of community, support, respect, and value placed on the written word. People come together when they share writing. There is something about the unveiling of our thoughts, dreams, fears, wishes, and desires on the page that connects us as a community of writers. In chapter five of the text *Inside the National Writing Project: Connecting Network Learning and Classroom Teaching,* Lieberman and Wood (2003) stated, "Many have questioned whether any other subject matter can engage teachers the way writing can, but there have been other subject-matter networks that have organized their members on similar grounds with similar results" (p. 91). The key word is *similar.* I am sure other content area networks have experienced similar results, but I would align myself with the group that argues that writing engages teachers-and students-in ways no other subject matter can.

The Sam Houston Writing Project creates an environment that fosters the celebration of writing, the sharing of reading and professional expertise, and the intimacy of working as a community of teachers, learners, and writers. Its philosophy rests on the pillars that reading and writing are entwined. They go together, and should never be

separated in the building of a student's literacy. Louise Rosenblatt (1994) argued that reading and writing are recursive processes that must not be regarded as separate endeavors , stating, "Pragmatist transactionalism has led me to invision speaking or listening, writing or reading as interrelated aspects of the individual's transactions with the environment" (p. 185) She called this the writing-reading dychotomy, which she claimed is a shift from seeing reading and writing as mirror images to the automatic assumption among scholars and educators alike that there is an automatic transfer of learning from one to another which occurs in literature classes since "Reading. . .is a 'composing' activity, while the very act of writing involves reading" (p. 185). This theory is easily observed in the day to day activities of the NWP Summer Institute. Every day our director had us write to a prompt, then read an article, story, or excerpt, then write a response and share it with our colleagues. There is something that is quite invigorating about granting yourself the freedom and time to write in solace each morning, then to read, and to share, and to write some more. In fact, what I enjoyed most as a participant in the Summer Institute was writing every morning and sharing my writing with my colleagues. I will cherish the journal I created and our class book forever, and have since then began journaling weekly and writing more extensively beside my students.

Another one of Rosenblatt's theories is easily discernible when regarding the way the Summer Institute is designed for teacher's interaction with each other. When teachers share their writing and ideas with their colleagues, they not only gain new perspectives, they gain a sense of agency about what they know and the value of their experience and expertise. They also may glean new insights when discussing the beliefs they hold that may differ from those they work with in their teacher groups. Rosenblatt discussed the

positive effects of this when she suggested, “We are used to thinking of the text as the medium of communication between author and reader. Perhaps we should consider the text as a more general medium of communication *among* readers. As we exchange experiences, we point to those elements of the text that best illustrate or support our interpretations. Sometimes, of course, interchange reveals that we belong to different sub-cultures, whether social or literary” (1994, pp. 146-147). Rosenblatt described the benefits of this transaction as being clarification of ideas and misinterpretations, validation in interpretation, gained insights, consensus, and a sense of self-awareness. It is safe to assume that each one of these benefits can be observed at some point or another in the interactions between teachers in the summer institute.

Adrienne Rich said, "You must write, and read, as if your life depended on it." (http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/540t). It is as necessary as the air we breathe. We can’t call ourselves writers unless we WRITE, and we can’t call ourselves writing teachers unless we write along with our students. And I must be doing something right. Each year one of my student’s pieces is published in the *Writing across the Curriculum Journal* at Lone Star College-Montgomery. Teachers who write produce students who write.

Philosophical Lens of My Study

The National Writing Project model of teachers as writers and teachers teaching teachers forms the basis of my philosophy for this study and is vital to the success of all classroom teachers of writing. Fruscella (2012) discussed the life changing experience of the National Writing Project Summer Institute (SI), sharing that “Every day I left the SI, I

felt challenged to view my students and teaching with a new perspective, employed with new strategies of instruction, equipped with the most confounding recent research in educational issues, and supported by a network of teachers teaching teachers" (2012, p. 18). This sentiment echoes the idea that most studies look to the National Writing Project Model as being an "exemplar of an educational improvement infrastructure" (St. John & Stokes, 2008). Teachers who have been trained under the National Writing Project model are better teachers of writing.

Aside from my experience as a National Writing Project Fellow, I met with more good fortune along my writing journey, and that was becoming a student of Dr. Robert Infantino, Director of Teacher Education (1976-1998), National Council of Teachers of English Board Member (1999-2002), and President of the California Association of Teachers of English (1994-1996). Dr. Robert Infantino, Professor Emeritus at The University of San Diego and former Director of the San Diego Area Writing Project (1980-1991), posited that the ideas exchanged in the National Writing Project Summer Institute are invaluable, and that they have proven time and again to be a life-changing experience for not only K-12 classroom teachers, but for college professors as well. Infantino shared a kernel of truth he discovered in his 43 years of teaching, twelve of which were in the high school setting and 31 in the college of education, and that is, "no matter what age, people are usually reluctant to share their writing aloud. Yet the simple but powerful tool of hearing someone else's writing read by that person has made my teaching better and my classrooms more secure [as a low risk, comfortable environment] for all of us" (1990, p. 20). The experiences teachers have in the summer institute are invaluable in developing their perceptions of seeing themselves not only as teachers of

writing, but as writers who teach. As Infantino espoused, "[The Summer Institute] is a good theory with good practice. The San Diego Area Writing Project continues to remind me of that truth" (1990, p. 21).

As a NWP trained teacher of writing, I adopted practices which I know will enhance the learning and writing of my students, such as teaching them to write in various modes of discourse and genres, showing them how to research topics and incorporate evidence into their writing, creating a nurturing and inviting environment that fosters confidence in themselves as writers and supports peer review and writing groups, using portfolios and multiple authentic assessments, adhering to the writing process and teaching them how to find their own process, using conferencing, modeling, mentor texts, literature circles, and publication to motivate and inspire them to write. Most importantly, I write along with them and beside them so that I can better understand their experience as a writer in my classroom and so that they feel the collaborative and constructive presence of a teacher who is also a writer and part of the community of writers in our class.

However, each year teaching writing, as well as finding time to write, becomes more challenging. The mandates placed on teachers by administration and district leaders leaves very little time for reflection, introspection, writing, and the assessment of writing. Teachers are asked to attend annual review, response to intervention, and 504 meetings, professional learning community meetings, mentor meetings, staff meetings and trainings, parent and teacher conferences, meetings with counselors and administrators, and meetings with colleagues. They must also serve on committees, fulfill duty assignments, and tutor students before and after school. This is on top of

planning lessons, assessing and grading, researching, preparing, reading, and writing for instruction, teaching, managing the classroom, and completing paper work of teaching including teacher assessments of English language learners and special education students, taking attendance, fielding daily e-mails, calls, and the organizational business of the day, besides teaching six classes to almost 200 students. Newkirk (2009) discussed the hauntingly elegiac truth of the absence of writing in the life of a classroom teacher in his lament, "The life of the classroom is often so hectic, the teacher's attention so consumed by minute to minute decisions, that there is no time of support for reflection, no opportunity to stand back and think" (p. 39). Conversely, writing teacher Donald Murray preached the mantra of "never a day without a line" (2009, Newkirk & Miller, p.1). Jago (2016) noted, "Many of the best practices [in writing instruction] come crashing down around what's possible…Teachers who have 40 students in each of their five classes can't possibly grade 200 papers every day. Students need to write much more than any teacher could possibly read. . .Teachers need to figure out how to multiply themselves" (p. 3). How are teachers able to find time to write a line (or more for that matter) in a day crammed with all of this responsibility? I am lucky if I have time to write a line on a student pass to the nurse. Charlotte Danielson (1996) estimates that a teacher makes more than 3,000 nontrivial decisions every day, including what to say when teaching, who to call on when questioning the class, responding to impromptu disruptions, and managing a classroom for eight hours a day.

Statement of the Problem

Writing Instruction Falls Short Nation-Wide

Baker and Jago (2016) asserted, "Writing Instruction may have fallen by the wayside during the No Child Left Behind Act era, as teachers zeroed in on teaching math and reading, as many literacy experts have lamented. But now, with most states using the Common Core State Standards, students are expected to write a lot more-and to write in different forms" (p. 1). The Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University (2016) has called for more writing instruction in the classroom and more support for teachers towards this aim. They argued that since the previous assessments focused more on reading comprehension, the new tests should encourage teachers to put more emphasis on teaching writing. However, they also added that there is a research deficit in identifying effective interventions and strategies to assist teachers with writing instruction. Dabrowski (2016), education consultant and lead literacy advisor for the Education Trust's analysis, lamented, "Students across the country still aren't doing enough writing, and what they are doing rarely entails the kind of multi-paragraph, evidence-based writing that is promoted in college and career ready standards. . .Fluency does matter-it matters tremendously" (Will, 2016, p. 2) The remedy for this kind of disparity is the National Writing Project, which trains teachers to teach students how to write in all forms.

Manzo (2008) celebrated the legacy of the National Writing Project in its ability to enhance not only student's creativity, but also critical thinking and analytical skills by training teachers to cultivate those valuable abilities from their student writers. As she developed her argument, she made a grandiose statement which alludes to the necessity

of the NWP, stating, “A cornerstone of the curriculum for generations, writing has been dubbed the ‘neglected R’ in recent years because of all the attention to reading and math. Yet, it is gaining increasing recognition as an essential skill for developing the kinds of thinking and analytical abilities students need to master complex content, tackle college level work, and succeed in a global and information driven marketplace” (2008, p. 23) In her investigation of the success of the Bay area Writing Project, she discussed the vital importance of the NWP and how it enhances student writing performance and ushers in the comments of several critics of the project, arguing for the continued ongoing support of the NWP in the face of economic decline. She illustrated the gap of writing instruction in high school and college by quoting Adela Arriaga, co-director of the Bay Area Writing Project, as saying, “Students can pass the reading part of the high school exit exam without writing a coherent sentence, but to go to college, they have to be able to demonstrate high-level writing ability. If this is what we are asking them to be able to do in college, why aren’t we asking them to do this kind of writing in high school?” (2008, p. 25). The NWP trains teachers in best practices of teaching writing, which is a last stronghold towards this aim.

Richard Sterling, former executive director of the national program whose goal since starting his first chapter in New York City in 1978 has been to place writing project programs within the reach of every teacher in the country, said that now he sees that goal as more important than ever before. He admonished teachers and NWP advocates, stating, “American education will never realize its potential as an engine of opportunity and economic growth until a writing revolution puts language and communication in their proper place in the classroom” (2008, p. 25). Mr. Sterling served as a consultant to the

national panel that issued a call in its 2003 report titled "The Neglected 'R': The Need for a Writing Revolution" for setting an agenda for writing instruction. What followed was more drudgery. In 2007, the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Writing showed that only a third of eighth graders and a quarter of twelfth graders in nationally representative samples were deemed proficient in writing. As a response to this, Mr. Sterling wisely argued that, "The National Writing Project is the single largest national undertaking to tackle the problem. I regard us [the NWP] as a national resource that is unlike any other. And our good press doesn't come accidentally. The National Writing Project is a bargain when you compare it to similar programs like the National Science Foundation. If it were lost, you would hear a cry from teachers across the nation" (2008, p. 25).

In fact, several studies over the past decade have shown that students can't write and are not prepared for college level writing, and in fact, many end up in developmental writing classes and several of those students give up and drop out of college for good. Thomas Bartlett (2003) argued that both high schools and colleges are failing the millennial generation. He echoed Judith A. Swan, a lecturer in Princeton's writing program, as stating, "Almost everyone comes in well-trained to gather research in the library, but almost none of them are capable of turning that into a real paper with a thesis and an argument" (p. 2). Unfortunately, as an English instructor at the college level for the past 14 years, I have seen this reality again and again.

Fitzhugh (2012), a high school history teacher and writer citing the report *Diploma to Nowhere,* published by Strong American Schools in 2008, noted that "more than one million of our high school graduates take remedial courses at our colleges each

year" (p. 33). Perhaps this is because teachers don't have the time to write within a school culture that has become obsessed with accountability, data, and standardized tests. Strauss (2013), argued that one decade after No Child Left Behind we are seeing the effects resulting in high school graduates "who don't think as analytically or as broadly as they should because so much emphasis has been placed on passing standardized tests" (p. 1), and that "with test scores serving as the primary if not the sole measure of student performance and, increasingly, teacher evaluation, anything not being tested was given short shrift" (p. 3). Ironically, today's student may read that very sentence and never even notice that short shrift is an allusion to William Shakespeare's *Richard III* (www.phrases.org.uk), because they no longer read many Shakespearean plays in high school English classrooms since the focus has shifted to writing 26 lined essays for the state writing examination test. Strauss went on to develop the syllogism of how the design of the test, not just the class time used to prepare for it, also contributes to the demise of writing in today's high school classrooms. She argued "most of the tests being used consist primarily or solely of multiple-choice items, which are cheaper to develop, administer, and score than are tests that include constructed responses such as essays. Even when a state has tests that include writing, the level of writing required for such tests often does not demand that higher-level thinking be demonstrated, nor does it require proper grammar, usage, syntax, and structure. Thus, students arriving in our high schools lack experience and knowledge about how to do the kinds of writing that are expected at higher levels of education" (p.3).

Kaplan (2008) speculated upon the negative focus and shift from traditional state and national exams that used to be conducted to measure objectives and standards rather than measure the performance of teachers and students, stating:

> Today, in an era of high-stakes testing, the need and desire for teachers and students to connect on a level whereby learning is measured by something other than multiple-choice examinations has become even more urgent than before (Keenan & Houghton, 2006; Stockinger, 2007). Thus, when teachers come together with us [The NWP] to connect on a level where they can question assumptions held about teaching and learning without focusing on improving students for state-mandated tests, they usually respond in ways that tell us that they find this experience refreshing and stimulating (p. 340).

Kaplan observed teachers were relieved to be in an environment where they could engage in stimulating discussions about good teaching practices with other professionals without the pressure to worry about state mandates and exams and anything other than what is best for their students in the teaching of writing. Teachers agreed that the kinds of writing students engage in on a daily or weekly basis in the classroom setting is not necessarily the kind of writing students will find on standardized state assessments, or in real life for that matter.

In his book *Lives on the boundary*, UCLA professor and literacy scholar Mike Rose (2005) shared his concerns about the state of literacy in this country:

> Students were coming to college with limited exposure to certain kinds of writing and reading and with conceptions and beliefs that were dissonant

> with those in the lower-division curriculum they encountered. And that curriculum wasn't doing a lot to address their weaknesses or nurture their strengths. They needed practice writing academic essays; they needed opportunities to talk about their writing-and their reading; they needed people who could quickly determine what necessary background knowledge they lacked and supply it in comprehensible ways (2005, p. 197).

Rose echoed the sentiments of many others in writing reform-change is needed, and it is needed now.

Additionally, Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle admonished teachers of the dangers of banal writing tasks. In their text *180 Days: Two Teachers and the Quest to Engage and Empower Adolescents*, they illustrated the tragic effects of what they call the lifeless, no-one-but-a-high-school-English-teacher-reads-it, five paragraph essay, speculating:

> Perhaps this one writing experience won't hurt him, but the relentless repetition of this form will. Standardized thinking stifles what we most value in writers: insight, courage, creativity, and joy. Too many students believe a rubric can define excellent writing. They are reluctant to vary the formula because they are rewarded for following it…It consumes the creativity, the voice, and the originality that students are capable of bringing to their writing. . .Young writers must be given time to tackle issues they are struggling with, time to listen closely to their first drafts and imagine how to deepen the images their words create-to re-see, rework, struggle, and create something new. There is so much more to

> reading and writing than ordering paragraphs to answer a teacher's question. Our students live in a world filled with conflicts and discoveries, disappointments and revelations. We must get out of the way and let students read, write, and talk about those experiences or we risk losing them. We risk losing the power of each student's brilliant individuality, which can teach us all (Gallager & Kittle, 2018, p. 222-23).

In their text, Gallagher and Kittle echo the best practices for teaching reading and writing as they call for educators to adjust their teaching to reach this new generation of students in the digital age. The suggestions they offer as they spend a year teaching, planning, and reflecting together are the same tenets of good writing instruction espoused by the National Writing Project. These educators, with 66 years of experience between them, collaborated with the goal of creating engaging literacy practices which empower all students to live literate lives.

Teachers of Writing Are Ill-Prepared

Jago (2016) asserted, "Teachers want to teach more writing. They know it is important. They believe in it. But they don't always have the support or direction available to properly teach the sort of in-depth writing now expected of students" (p. 2). She added that when the implementation of the common core first began in 2011, it became clear that many teachers lacked the skills and tools in teaching the kind of writing the standards called for, particularly argumentative writing. Jago shared, "The National Writing Project has tried to respond to that need with online professional development courses, resources for teachers, and an online community of practice where teachers can connect and discuss the new expectations of writing instruction" (p. 2). Dabrowski

(2016) claimed, “Teachers are hungry for guidance. They want examples of lessons that meet the [state] standards” (p. 2). Once again, The National Writing Project answers the call. Furthermore, schools and colleges may not be preparing teachers to write and are not teaching writing to pre-service teachers. According to a national survey on teaching writing to high school students (Kiuhara & Graham, 2009), “Seventy-one percent [of teachers] indicated that they received either no or minimal formal preparation to teach writing in their college teacher education program” (p. 153). As a result of the lack of teacher’s interest or confidence in teaching writing, many students may have fragmented, diverse experiences in high school English classes that either support them as writers and create writers out of them, or cause them to abhor writing and feel that they can’t write. Not enough teachers are teaching writing across the curriculum or valuing writing, so students are having very little opportunity to write. Writing is assigned rather than taught. The survey also found that the majority of writing assignments given by high school teachers are mere short answers and summaries. Kiuhara & Graham stated, “By far the most common writing activities used by teachers were short answer response to homework, response to material read, completing worksheets, and summary of materials read” (Kiuhara & Graham, 2009, p. 140). Teachers do not have enough time to teach or assess writing; therefore, they simply do not assign it. This results in unprepared high school graduates who are rudely awakened to the rigor of college composition classes. Wheeler & Carrales posited “If high school students are told that research papers only involve reading books and then writing about what they have read, they will be shocked to learn that college students are being asked to put different texts into conversation with

one another, and that they will be expected to make claims based on other forms of collecting data" (p. 25).

Even Teachers of Writing Don't Want to Teach Writing

In my many years of teaching college composition, I have lived the truth that Thomas Newkirk espoused in his text *Holding on to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones* (2009). He argued that unfortunately, no one wants to teach the freshman writing course. He said that it is too skills-based, requires way too much tedious grading, and that professors don't want to be bothered with correcting papers laden with careless, rudimentary errors by first year novice students. In his text he shared his experience at the University of Texas at Austin as a doctoral student in the mid –seventies:

> I will quote one memo at length, written by the department's graduate director, because it lays out the nightmarishly myopic vision of 'English' that continues to haunt those of us committed to writing and writing scholarship: There is one absolutely central reason why freshman rhetoric is avoided by regular faculty whenever possible-it involves an overwhelming amount of dull tedious drudgery. . .while classroom contact with freshman may be challenging and watching them develop intellectually in a semester may be extremely rewarding, marking the hundreds of pages of essays they write in a semester is a time-consuming, boring, uninspiring chore, primarily because so much of one's effort is spent correcting merely mechanical errors" (2009, p. 53).

Perhaps this is why most colleges staff these sections with adjunct instructors and teaching assistants, and why there is an unspoken belief that waifs through the air of the

tenure-tracked, veteran English department elite that real research, worthy scholarship, and important teaching occurs only in upper-division literature classes.

For me, that could not be further from the truth. I have taught that course every year for 14 years, and no two courses have ever been the same. For one, the students are what make the class each semester-more so than the content or curriculum, and secondly, the freshman composition course is more of a study of ideas rather than of skills. In glancing through my writing portfolio, which I kept for my doctoral course work, and which I have required students to keep for each class I have taught for over two decades, I came across a reading response to Newkirk's text that I think is relevant to share here, since it has become the impetus for this study:

Chapter three of *Holding on to Good Ideas in a Time of Bad Ones* (Newkirk, 2009) opens with Donald Graves, whom I have been waiting for. He is at the center of this conversation. Newkirk begins to lament the focus on errors and how that has soiled writing instruction. Then he utters the unspeakable: pre-service teachers at the University of New Hampshire do not take a writing course. WHAT!? I am appalled. What would Graves do?! He then paints a metaphor I relate to: Writing, the other half of the bed, is never slept in. Reading has won out. Reading is more measurable. Reading is easier to teach, and to assess. He speaks my truth. No one wants to teach freshman composition. They pawn it off on adjuncts or graduate assistants. No one wants to read their writing. This really hits home with me. I love to teach freshman comp, yet I know few people who do. Most professors I know would rather watch paint dry. I am so saddened by this notion. When writing is used, it is normally used to display your reading and imitate

texts. People are writing more in the real world, the workaday world. People are required to write in their jobs, although most employers say they are not doing it well. He makes a strong argument for writing across the curriculum. I like the way he talked about how students begin to see patterns and make connections. I think this is very true, and I think the good writing teacher capitalizes on that. This piece was a nice existential dose of reality for us writing teachers. It was medicine for my soul dipped into a well of creative imagination, and the reason we must write. As a word of encouragement, Newkirk (2009) lauded the National Writing Project as the answer to these problems when he claimed:

> The dominant mode of writing is the literary analysis paper;
> in other words, students are encouraged to read literature, but
> almost systematically deprived of the opportunity to write literature.
> Many of the wonderful National Writing Project sites work to provide
> the opportunities that teacher preparation programs ignore. Narrative
> writing is even discouraged in the first-year writing courses, even though
> one could argue that English departments are built upon narratives; they
> would not exist without narratives (p. 54).

Rose (2005) urged teachers to usurp their student's literacy knowledge and practices and fuse them with their own. He suggested writing an eclectic curriculum where the teacher considers not only their students and what they must teach, but also what they need to do to bridge the literacy gap. He argues that we must all be teachers of literacy, especially writing, stating:

> My students needed to be immersed in talking, reading, and writing, they needed to further develop their ability to think critically, and they needed to gain confidence in themselves as systematic inquirers. They had to be let into the academic club. The fact that they misspelled words or wrote fragments or dropped verb endings would not erect insurmountable barriers to the benefits they would gain from such immersion (2005, p. 141-2).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of National Writing Project Fellows on themselves as writers and on how they believe the Summer Institute has impacted the way they teach writing. The research questions that guide this study are:

1. What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers after participating in a summer writing institute?
2. What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of the impact the National Writing Project has had on the way they teach writing after participating in a summer writing institute?

Theoretical Framework

The main theories that inform this study are social-cognitive theory, self-efficacy theory, reader response theory, and constructivism. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as the belief that a person is able to accomplish what they wish to achieve. As a construct of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), self-efficacy is domain specific (Betz & Hackett, 2006); therefore, it can only be measured within a particular context, behavior, or skill. Bandura described self-efficacy as a person's belief in his or her capability to produce

a desired outcome through deliberate action; therefore, beliefs of self-efficacy influence a person's decisions, behaviors, optimism or pessimism, perseverance, and resiliency. As a result, each of these notions influences the person's overall level of accomplishment of a specific task or goal. Bandura suggested that agency and self-efficacy are reliant upon each other. In order to make the decision to act, a person must believe that they have the power and ability to act (1997, p.3) According to Bandura, a person's belief in their own self-efficacy stems from the following: performance or mastery experience, vicarious experience, such as observations and social comparisons, social persuasions, and physiological and affective state (Bandura, 1997, p. 79). Additionally, Pajares (2003) suggested that in over twenty years of research the notion of self-efficacy is a more reliable predictor of behavioral outcomes than other self-beliefs. Finally, Bandura (1997) also argued that social cognitive theory posits a perspective of agency in which individuals possess the power to contribute to their lives and social systems" (p. 3). As Norman & Spencer asserted (2005), "these experiences have not only shaped their [teacher's] skills as writers and their attitudes toward writing, but also their beliefs and values about the very nature of writing, writing development, and writing instruction.

From a socio-cognitive perspective (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978), learning is influenced by the values, beliefs, and experiences that exist within the larger community. Thus, the twelve or more years of educational experience that teachers bring into their professional development programs have formed their beliefs and values about teaching and learning" (Norman & Spencer, p. 26). Since this study is concerned with the perceptions of teachers teaching writing, it is grounded in the idea of socio-cognitive theory and self-efficacy. As the researcher of this study, I am interested to discover if teachers of

writing possess the necessary self-efficacy to take ownership of the content of their courses, successfully assess student writing, and, perhaps most importantly, see themselves as writers who teach a writing course, thereby feeling pedagogically confident and assured in their course design and best practice teaching college writing. Additionally, this study is ultimately concerned with the idea of *what the best writing teachers do,* and as such, draws its ideas from the work of Peter Elbow, Donald Graves, Don Murray, and Thomas Newkirk.

Another theoretical construct that informs the nature of this research is constructivism, a philosophical view on how we come to understand or know. Constructivism states that meaning is created through interaction with other people and the environment and cannot be separated from how it is acquired or learned. Social constructionists emphasize the significance of context, culture, and others in understanding why things happen in our world and how we create knowledge based upon this understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Another idea that emerges from constructivism emphasizes "the active construction of knowledge by individuals" (p. 57). An idea from Gunning (2010) in *Lenses on Reading* shapes the way I manage my classroom. In my high school and college level classrooms, I attempt to foster a place where a community of writers and learners work together to construct knowledge and share learning experiences by being actively engaged in their own learning. As a Writing Project Fellow, I also know that these ideas are espoused by The National Writing Project as best practices teaching writing.

Lastly, as an English teacher whose days are mostly spent reading student writing, reading, and engaging in classroom discussions about literature, I relate to Rosenblatt's

perspectives, which are supported in the recursive nature of reading and writing in the NWP SI. The notion that "meaning is created in the transaction between reader and document, [and] resides above the reader-text interaction. . . something new and different from any of its inputs and influences" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 67) describes the engagement that occurs between reader and writer. I like the way she refers to this interaction as a "poem", which denotes the idea of it being magical, and a construct of an idea that moves beyond language, through thought and shared experience, something that resonates in the realm of emotion and imagination, a mystical, abstract place that is not entirely arbitrary, yet not concrete. To me, that is the profound quality of literature and writing, its ability to transcend.

Since this study investigates the recursive ways in which writing (and therefore reading) is taught, it is imperative to explore Rosenblatt's pragmatist reader response theory, which holds that "all readers have individualized reading experiences because each reader has unique background schemata" (p. 65). As a literary theorist, college professor, and scholar who devoted her life time to ideas such as the teaching of literature and writing and the place of literature in society, she serves as a model for a study which is concerned with best practices teaching college writing. She says of her classroom experiences that she realized that the experience of the text in the presence of others is what gave value to their interchange, thereby becoming a “Stimulant to the development of critical and self-critical reading, essential to citizens of a democracy” (1994, p. 180).

I believe that students of literature have a myriad of rich experiences and perspectives which inform our reading of literature, and I encourage them to use their own visions to construct and usurp meaning from a text. To do this, I ask students to

keep "commonplace books" in which they make connections to their own lives, culture and society, and other things they have read, and I have them share and discuss their speculative writing exercises with each other. In these musings and reading responses, they begin to engage in transactions with the text, both aesthetically and efferently, as Rosenblatt suggests. In this theoretical perspective, the reader/writer is central in the "meaning making" of a text, which is what supports the theory's constructivist aims. However, there is much more to teaching writing and discourse through reader response theory. An optimal environment should include not only the reader, the text, and the poem, but other readers and a discourse that develops that is both reflective and metacognitive. Rosenblatt concludes "Collaborative educational methods. . .would include spoken and written interchange among students, the development of metalinguistic insight into their own and other's linguistic processes, and the building of critical criteria" (1994, p. 186).

In her preface to her text *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1994), Rosenblatt shared the following profundity with us: "The premise of this book is that a text, once it leaves the author's hands, is simply paper and ink until a reader evokes from it a literary work-sometimes, even, a literary work of art" (p. ix). This topic sentence sets up her life's work as well as her text, for she is quite aware of the presence of the reader and the importance of the dialogic which ensues when reading. She offered, "There is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work … the reading of any work of literature is, of necessity, an individual and unique occurrence involving the mind and emotions of a particular reader" (p. xii) in order to convey the mind blending state that emerges when a reader takes in a writer's words and

ideas. This is significant to this study because it illustrates the transaction between reading and writing and reader and writer that occurs within a writing course.

Rosenblatt made it a point to illustrate the inner-connectedness of her reader response theory and composition theories, sharing the following experience in her journey through the pedagogical shifts of literary theory she found herself swept up in throughout the decades of her career, stating "dedicated teachers of composition reacted against traditional formulaic methods and mechanical theories of writing. By the eighties, the importance of writing was becoming widely recognized. Leaders in the field developed various views of the writing process. I was pleased that some of these writing theoreticians cited the parallelism between their theories and my transactional approach to reading" (1994, p. 178).

One of the most significant statements Rosenblatt makes concerns the recursive nature of reading and writing. She argued, "Theoretical models of the two linguistic activities overlap yet differ. Both writer and reader are drawing on personal linguistic experiential reservoirs in a to-and-fro transaction with a text. Both writers and readers develop a framework, principle, or purpose, however nebulous or explicit, which guides selective attention and directs the synthesizing, organizing process of constitution of meaning. However, these parallelisms occur in very different contexts or situations. We should not forget that the writer encounters a blank page and the reader an already inscribed text. Their composing and reading activities are both complimentary and different" (1994, p. 186). Rosenblatt went on to say that in the expressive mode of writing, the writer reads to test what has been written against what they aim to write about (the purpose of their writing), and in the receptive mode of writing, the writer reads

the text through the eyes of prospective readers. This dichotomy parallels the reader's experience in reverse, on the one hand it explores relevance and cogency in relation to the text, and on the other it seeks to relate the author's intention, thereby evoking curiosity in the reader. Pam Allyn, an author and American literacy expert and founder of Lit World, echoed Rosenblatt's philosophy in her work. She also argued that reading and writing are processes that are dependent upon each other. She has eloquently encapsulated the dichotomy by stating, "Reading is like breathing in, writing is like breathing out" (www.litworld.org). The two are inextricably linked into the practice of literacy.

Broz (2011) discussed the recursive nature of reading and writing and his absolute insistence upon reading in his secondary English teacher education courses. To his surprise and dismay, he finds that his students (who are future English teachers for that matter) do not read the assigned texts, and that they attempt to write about them without having read them, attributing their understanding of them to whatever they can find on the internet, or by listening to class discussions. He argued that we set them up for this as former English teachers, and that it is easy to coast through high school English classes without having read the assigned novels because teachers lecture on the content of the books and create objective assessments that students can pass without having any real understanding of the book itself. He also stated that having students write deeply and critically about the reading would put an end to this, and that teachers must invite students to read. He shared:

> If students do not read the assigned texts, nothing important is happening in your literature classroom-nothing very important to develop your students' reading and

> interpretive abilities is happening, no matter how many lectures you deliver, vocabulary words students "learn", elements of fiction students define, quizzes students take, essay test answers students write, or films you show. Nothing important is happening because student development of reading and interpretive abilities requires engaged reading. (2011, p.15)

Literacy involves the recursive structures and processes of reading and writing, and literacy education involves the development of those processes and abilities. Additionally, these theories are relevant to the philosophies on teaching writing held by The National Writing Project and shared by many NWP Teacher Consultants regarding best practices teaching writing.

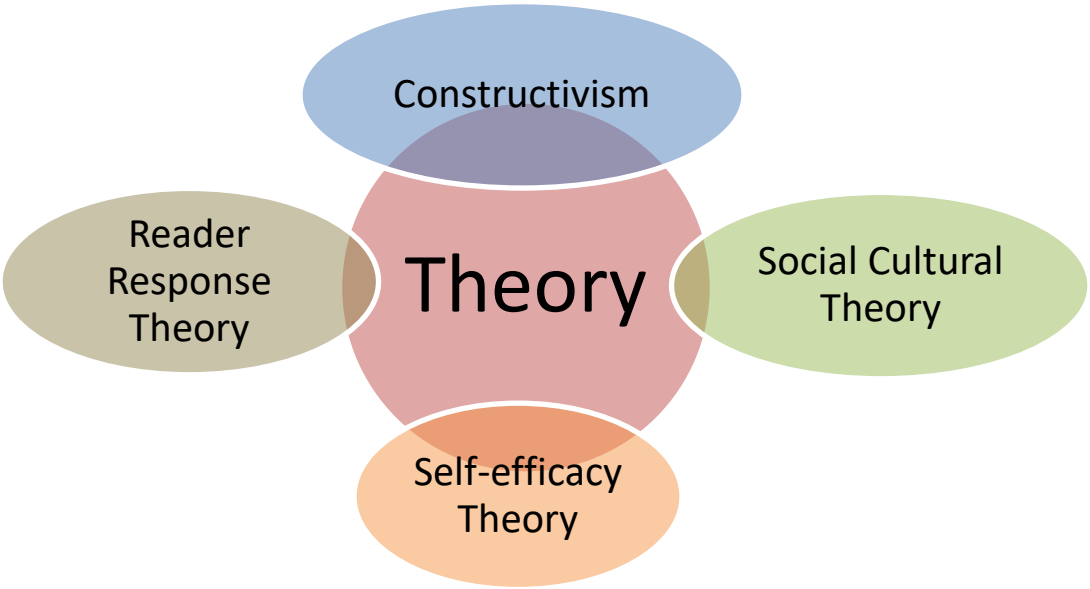

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Summary:

In this chapter, I have shared my narrative of how I learned to write, my philosophy regarding teaching writing, my experiences as a college composition instructor, and the legacy of the National Writing Project, which informs the philosophical lens of this study. In addition, I have discussed the problems facing the teachers of writing today, and deficit in solid writing instruction in our schools. I have stated that the purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the way National Writing Project fellows perceive themselves as writers and on the pedagogical philosophies they share regarding the teaching of writing. I have also briefly explored the theories which inform this study, namely self-efficacy theory, social-cultural theory, constructivism, and reader-response theory. In chapter two, I will present a review of the literature about teachers as writers and the legacy of the National Writing Project. Furthermore, I will expand upon the conceptual framework guiding this study. In chapter three, I will discuss the methodology of my study and the theoretical and conceptual framework behind it.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this review of literature, I delineate the value of the legacy of the National Writing Project (NWP) on training teachers of writing, its social-cultural theoretical underpinnings and transformative power, and the nature of self-efficacy and its tenets in the NWP, and conclude on how teachers who are writers themselves are better teachers of writing.

To reiterate, the research questions for the study are as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers after participating in a summer writing institute?
2. What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of the impact the National Writing Project has had on the way they teach writing after participating in a summer writing institute?

Although the focus of this study is on NWP fellows' perceptions of themselves as writers, and their perceptions of the impact their experiences in the NWP Summer Institute has had on the way they teach writing, I read quite extensively on the discourse which surrounds writing, including topics such as the legacy of the National Writing Project and teachers as writers. When researching an organization as large as the National Writing Project, and attempting to narrow down and distill its specific practices and philosophies, it is important to graze the research in the field which echoes the sentiments expressed in the interviews and literature about the vision of the National Writing Project. "In the NWP, participating teachers prepare for leadership roles by demonstrating their most effective classroom practices, studying research, and improving their knowledge of writing by

becoming writers themselves" (National Writing Project, 2003). The NWP Summer Institute offers teachers the opportunity to share lessons on best practices teaching writing. Participants also listen to guest speakers who are typically professors or composition scholars, from universities and academe, present on topics about the nature of writing instruction. Many teachers who have participated in the Summer Institute have echoed two common sentiments, (1) why aren't all professional development experiences like this one? And (2) why didn't I learn this in my teacher education program in college? This is one of the reasons teachers find this program so valuable. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the "good practices" teaching writing espoused by the NWP in order to be able to discern the effects of such a program on teachers. As teacher-educator and writing program administrator Bishop (1999) so simply concluded from her observations of writing teachers and her own classroom experiences, "We choose not to do some things and to do other things. Teaching writing is a result of an infinite number of such choices. And critiques increasingly seem to ignore the force (and success) of the practical and everyday choices made by countless writing teachers across the country" (p. 12). This is a profound statement, and one that is very true.

The Legacy of the National Writing Project

The National Writing Project (NWP) is a 44 year-old teacher development program with nearly 200 sites around the country serving about 80, 000 Kindergarten through college level educators per year (Heitin, 2016). The primary components of the NWP Summer Institute are reading and writing, reflection, inquiry, research, and collaboration, and the general structure of the NWP Summer Institute includes: "daily journal writing and reflection, writing for a variety of purposes, drafting creative writing pieces on various

genres, inquiry lessons, research best practices, and work collaboratively with peer teachers to discuss challenges encountered in the classroom and best practices" (Sanchez, 2012, p. 46). Summer Institute (SI) participants are immersed in reading and writing daily for five weeks, and adopt the role of the student in which they go through the writing process, share their writing with their peers in writing groups, research and explore topics of inquiry and professional growth, present on best practices teaching writing to their peers, and engage in writer's workshops. These daily activities provide multiple opportunities for collaboration and reflection. As Director of the South Texas Writing Project Sanchez (2012) shared, "Summer Institutes strive to provide teachers with resources and access to tools that strengthen teachers' deeper understanding of teaching while valuing teacher's voices and encouraging them to become active change agents in their classrooms and in their communities. Summer Institutes provide a platform for teachers to have a voice, with the intention that when they return to the classroom, teachers [will] provide students with a platform to find their [own] voices" (p. 47). Aside from providing a platform for teacher voices, one of the purposes of the SI is to provide a model for teachers to use in their classrooms.

Additionally, one crucial expectation of the NWP is that each fellow brings valuable expertise from his or her own classroom experiences as a practitioner. The summer institute provides teachers with an opportunity to share their knowledge and ideas within writing groups of teachers from various grade levels and backgrounds. Tedrow (2015) expounded on this: "Discussions and shared readings permeate the institute as teachers make observations and refine their thinking around practice. This process helps fellows build a vibrant community of fully engaged learners, able to reflect on their own

teaching as they reflect on the joys and struggles of being a learner in this community. After immersion in this climate, teachers are better able to shift some of its features to their classrooms, like building on student knowledge and expertise, creating a community of learners, and leading students in self and peer evaluation" (p. 26). The activities in which teachers participate in the summer institutes of today become the lesson plans in the classrooms of tomorrow.

The NWP legacy has been built on word of mouth. According to Wood and Lieberman (2000), "The National Writing Project, one of the oldest and arguably most successful teaching networks in the United States, weaves a powerful relational and intellectually rich context for the ongoing learning of practicing teachers. . .It is contended that by encouraging teachers to discover themselves as authors, the NWP spurs the development of voice, ownership, and agency in professional lives" (p. 255). The sentiment of almost everyone who has discussed its impact? It's just plain good teaching. It's invigorating. It's life-changing.

There are basic tenets which provide the backbone of the philosophy of the NWP. These axioms are often echoed again and again in professional development programs modeled after the philosophy of the NWP. Andrews (2008) suggested, "what typically prompts these Writing Project initiatives is a gap in student achievement between writing and reading, where part of the problem is that teachers of all subjects, and at primary and secondary level, are less confident at writing and at the teaching of writing than they are at reading' (p.5). Andrews listed the basic tenets of the National Writing Project as follows:

1. To teach writing, you need to be able to write;

2. Students should respond to each other's writing;
3. The teacher should act as writer alongside the students, and be prepared to undertake the same assignments as the students;
4. There is research about the teaching of writing that needs to be considered and applied, where appropriate, in the classroom;
5. Teachers can be their own researchers in the classroom;
6. The best teachers of writing teachers is another writing teacher; and
7. Various stages of the writing process need to be mapped and practiced: these include pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, conferencing, and publishing (p. 8).

In a seminal mixed-methods four year study of the legacy of the National Writing Project in three phases, researchers Whitney & Friedrich (2013) interviewed 110 teacher-consultants and surveyed 1, 848 NWP participants in order to discover how teachers describe the NWP influenced their teaching. Their study serves as a lens rich in data for researchers to observe the legacy of the National Writing Project through the testimonials of teachers who participated in the project from 1974-1994. Whitney & Friedrich shared a chart of their coding structure which is worth replicating here, as it serves as an impactful visual of the many influences of the National Writing Project on teachers. The researchers stated, "From this analysis, as set of themes were developed that rise to the level of facets of NWP legacy on these teachers in their classroom work. To be considered a theme, ideas had to spread over more than an estimated ¾ of the individuals who discussed a given topic. Then, once the themes were established, the full transcripts from all members of the classroom career grouping were reviewed to determine that these

findings were indeed representative of the ideas described by classroom teachers as a whole" (p. 10). From these themes the researchers developed the notion of three main legacies which evolved from teacher's classroom work following their participation in the NWP. These are as follows: teachers clarified or revised their philosophy of writing, they developed a scaffolded writing process for students, and finally, they "linked their teaching of writing to their own experience as writers, [positioning] themselves among students as a writer among writers" (Whitney & Frederick, 2013, p.11).

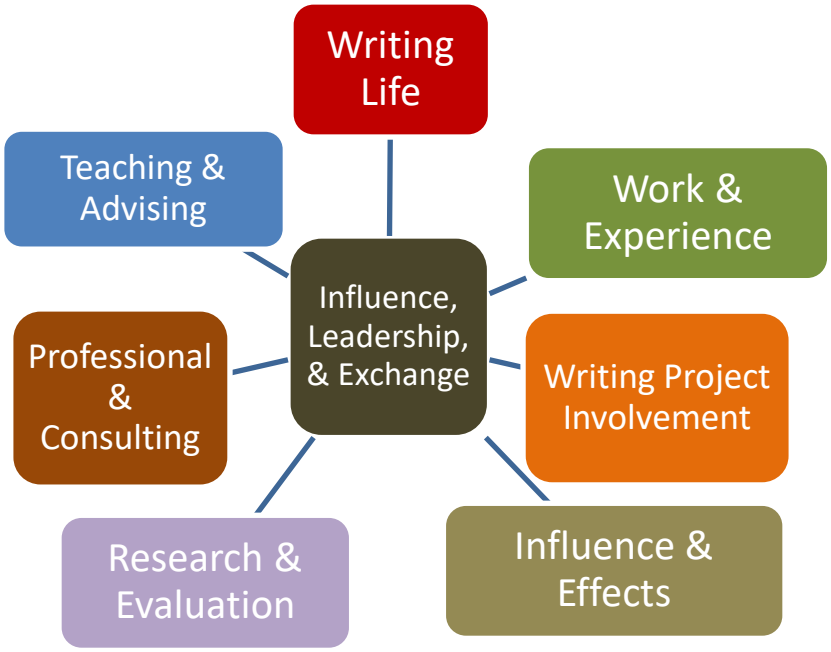

Figure 2. Themes of the Legacy of the National Writing Project

In their article, Whitney & Frederick define the *legacy of the National Writing Project* as:

> Founded in 1974 by James Gray and a group of teacher-colleagues who came together as the Bay Area Writing Project in California, the National Writing Project is a professional development network that has spread from one site to 197 university-based sites across the US. By all

> accounts, the NWP is a well-established organization generally thought to have had a significant influence on the teachers it has worked with as well as many others influenced by NWP teacher-leaders. After such a long period of time in operation, it becomes possible to talk about the organization's legacy-not legacy as in something one leaves behind after death, for NWP surely has not died, but one's contribution, that which extends beyond its immediate tangible effects and resonates in a wider sphere (p. 2).

Social-cultural Theory and the National Writing Project

The NWP Summer Institute's focus on teacher led writing groups, writing workshops, and other collaborative activities supports Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, in which Vygotsky's stressed the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky believed that community plays a central role in the process of "making meaning", and that children are first social, then independent. In his text *Mind in Society,* Vygotsky discussed three major themes: (1) Individual development, including higher mental functioning, has its origins in social sources; (2) human action, on both the social and individual planes, is mediated by tools and signs; and (3) that the first two themes are best examined through genetic, or developmental, analysis. In addition, Vygotsky recognized the primacy of social interaction in human development, in which children learn how to behave and survive in the world by imitating and replicating what their caregivers are doing. As a result, he posited that language acquisition relies on the adult to model and interact with the child in order for the child to develop language. According to Vygotsky, the primary language

interactions are: transmission, construction, transaction, and transformation in a continuing, complex interplay.

Vygotsky's four basic theoretical tenets are as follows: (1) Children construct their knowledge, (2) Development cannot be separate from its social context, (3) Learning can lead to development, and (4) Language plays a central role in mental development. Two critical facets that play a role in these ideas are the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). The concept of the More Knowledgeable Other is integrally related to the second significant principle of Vygotsky's work, the Zone of Proximal Development. Taken together, the MKO and the ZPD form the basis of the scaffolding component of the cognitive apprenticeship model of instruction. Vygotsky (1978) defined the ZPD as the distance between the "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). The ZPD is the area between the things that a learner can do on her own (the actual development level) and the things that he or she cannot yet do (the potential development level), even with assistance from the more knowledgeable other. As children learn, this zone shifts to the right because they are able to do more things on their own. Vygotsky believed that when a student is at the ZPD for a particular task, providing the appropriate assistance (scaffolding) by a MKO will help the student achieve the task by stretching their knowledge and skills, thereby extending their ZPD. Once the student, with the benefit of scaffolding, masters the task, the scaffolding can then be removed and the student will then be able to complete the task again on his or her own.

Since the NWP provides a space for teachers to collaborate with other teachers about best practices, and to share their writing with others, it supports Vygotsky's social-cultural theories in which the learner builds knowledge and understanding in the presence of others. Teachers often report feeling nervous and insecure about their expertise and writing abilities, yet when stretched to the far reaching fringes of their ZPD by other SI participants, they emerge feeling confident and valuing their knowledge and practitioner wisdom.

Discourse Communities in the National Writing Project

Part of the power of the National Writing Project is also vetted in social constructs in the discourse community that it provides for teachers, both as participants in the Summer Institute and in the local networking communities that develop in the years that follow for the teacher consultants. The National Commission on Writing (2003) report stated "Teachers need to understand writing as a complex (and enjoyable) form of learning and discovery, both for themselves and their students" (p. 5). Lieberman and Wood (1992) further noted that "providing opportunities for teachers to write and share their writing in groups" is central to the National Writing Project, while "the opportunity to write. . ." is the first expectation listed in the CCCC (Conference on College Composition & Communication) position statement on the preparation of writing teachers (as cited by Reid, 2009, pg. 197). Fassinger and Gilliand (1992) further purported this notion in their study in which they discuss the benefits of establishing a faculty writing circle on college teaching such as empathy toward students as writers, differentiating instruction for all learners, and encouraging students to evaluate and critique articles as co-scholars. They shared on page 2:

> Because all three group members spend most of our time teaching, pedagogical problems and successes often become part of our conversations. As we reflect on our years together, we recognize that our writing circle experiences have led us to adopt new teaching methods, become more empathetic towards our students as writers, and develop greater ability to reach students at different points of intellectual development.

Fassinger and Gilliand (1992) went on to say that the writing group helped them create nurturing and close classroom environments that supported a community of readers and writers who felt connected to one another as well as to their professors. They also offered both students and instructors the opportunity to think out loud, debate, build ideas, and reflect together.

Gulla (2007) developed the idea of teacher collaboration in her study on faculty writing groups in which she concluded:

> If we want to support students in becoming skilled writers, we need to work to provide opportunities for their teachers to engage in the same kind of work. When writing becomes a joyous experience for teachers, they can truly begin to invite students into the creative community. (p. 349)

In her article, she discussed her experience using a teacher writing group to teach teachers how to teach writing using creative writing, thereby helping teachers develop voice and identity that they will pass on to their future students. She shared "As the students in my class learned to use poetry as a tool for developing voice and clarifying thought, they could write about their teaching. They could write about whatever mattered

to them. And they did" (p. 337). Teachers cannot teach writing well if they are not writers themselves, and being a part of a community of writers enables teachers to share perspectives and strategies, as well as discuss theory and practice through experiential learning. This creates a synergy that helps future teachers think of how they might approach these assignments in their own classrooms. Gulla would say that that is the point: "Through writing and talking about their own composing processes, these teachers gained insights that they could immediately put into action in their teaching practices" (p. 338). Gulla further espoused the importance of a social space for writing when she asserts, "An essential part of this equation is a forum in which to discuss and make sense of our own processes, so that we might begin to generalize our understandings about writing. It is the simultaneous experiences of being involved in the writing process and doing the work of analyzing how the process works that helps us become better writing teachers" (p. 339). This double helix of adhering to the process while teaching the process is one which is espoused by the NWP time and again.

Teacher Transformation in the NWP

Whitney (2008) discussed the social-cultural theory that is entwined in the strong practices of the NWP as well as the magic of the Summer Institute and why it has such a powerful influence on teachers. In her study with writing project participants, she explored transformational learning (Kegan, 2000) and drew parallels between the notion of the transformative power of learning and the transformative power of writing. She claimed that "participants in the NWP consistently report significant transformation experiences (e.g., Liberman & Wood, 2003), and that the centrality of teachers' writing to NWP activities is evident not only in its espoused core principle that 'teachers of writing

must also write' (National Writing Project 2006), but also in the time and attention it devotes to supporting teachers as writers" (Whitney, 2008, p. 148). What is so transformative for these teachers is that they are given a space to write and to share their writing with others. In doing so, they develop their voice, confidence, and a sense of agency, where they feel empowered as writers. In a mere five weeks, teachers emerge with a changed perspective. They see writing as a natural component to teaching and learning and reading. In this process, it becomes a part of their *teacher as writer* identity, and they return to their classrooms in the fall inspired to write and to get their students writing and sharing their writing.

Lieberman and Wood further attested to the value of the learning communities supported by the National Writing Project's distinctive social practices and networks. In a two year study which spanned from 1997-1999, Lieberman and Wood observed two NWP sites, the University of California-Los Angeles and Oklahoma State University. They found two critical components which support the National Writing Project's successful approach to teacher development: "a distinctive set of social practices that motivate teachers, make learning accessible, and build an ongoing professional community; and networks that organize and sustain relationships among these communities and produce new and revitalizing forms of support, commitment, and leadership" (2002, p. 40). Through their study they concluded that all sites possess a common set of distinctive social practices which identify them as part of the National Writing Project, yet each regional site tailors its practices to meet the needs of local educators. Lieberman and Wood lauded this method of training teachers, stating, "these highly interactive and flexible social practices create a culture that supports and sustains

continual professional development, builds professional knowledge, imbues participants with a sense of belonging" (2002, p. 41). These distinctive social practices are as follows: (1) treat every colleague as a potentially valuable contributor, (2) teach other teachers, (3) share, discuss, and critique in public forums, (4) turn ownership of learning over to the learners, (5) situate learning in practice and relationships, (6) provide multiple entry points into learning communities, (7) reflect on teaching by reflecting on learning, (8) share leadership, (9) adopt a stance of inquiry, (10) rethink professional identity and link it to the professional community.

These methods of practice philosophically support the teacher as an individual who has something to contribute while situating learning in a social context and allowing teachers to reflect on theory and practice. Lieberman and Wood synthesized their findings best when they state, "For the National Writing Project, what each teacher thinks, wonders, reads, learns, and questions becomes the content for professional development" (2002, p. 43). Once teachers graduate from the summer institute, they develop local networks which enable them to support one another and stay connected. These education networks of teacher consultants provide a space for students to strengthen their work, share what they know, create professional development opportunities in schools and districts, and develop learning communities modeled after the NWP.

Teacher transformation is a common occurrence after participating in the NWP Summer Institute. The NWP model for teacher change and improvement of the teaching of writing in schools is established on five "core principals" which lead to teacher transformation (McDonald et al., 2004, p. 85):

1. Writing should not only be assigned but also taught K-16.
2. Although there is no one right approach to the teaching of writing, some practices are more effective than others; a research-informed community of practice is positioned well to design and develop comprehensive writing programs.
3. To develop professionally, teachers need frequent opportunities to systematically examine research and practice.
4. Teachers K-16 are the ideal agents of reform, and schools and universities are the ideal partners for investing together in that reform.
5. Teachers of writing must write.

There are three main components which affect the transformation of the teacher participant in the National Writing Project: Social Context, Teachers as Authors and Authorities in teaching Writing, and Self-reflection. In the NWP Summer Institute (SI), teachers engage in daily personal writing and share their writing with writing groups. They also share lessons on the teaching of writing, listen to presentations on scholars in education and composition theory, and spend time engaging in discourse which allows them to reflect upon the theory and practice of writing instruction. In his writing-to-learn research, Ackerman (1993) argued that writing is a social practice, situated in discourse communities. In discourse communities, students write to know and share their writing to build and transform knowledge. Lieberman & Wood (2001) took this notion one step further by likening writing to teaching in that both are "social acts, though much of the work must be done alone" (Lieberman & Wood, 2001, p. 182). Ershler (2001) shared his experiences asking preservice teachers to write and discuss narratives about their

teaching experiences and found that over time, "the narrative process affords teachers the opportunity to see themselves in the stories they tell" (Ershler, 2001, p. 169). In academe, composition scholars posit that writing and identity are intextricably linked. A writer's identity takes shape within the confines of a text, becoming literally inscribed in the texts themselves, thereby becoming part of a larger context of a social-cultural discourse community (e.g. Brooke, 1991; Ivanic, 1998; Ketter & Hunter, 2003; Newkirk, 1997). Over the course of time, as one begins to identify with a network community, they begin to acquire the conventions of the activities of that particular community which enables them to learn and grow as writers and develop their stance in the presence of others, which is the aim of most writing teachers on a smaller level within the classroom context. As teachers become writers themselves, they see the world of the classroom differently. They are eager to get their students writing so that their students may feel the same spark of enthusiasm and empowerment that writing brings. This kind of discourse community invigorates, and the teachers of writing who write are excited about replicating that same practice they experienced in the NWP within the walls of their own classrooms.

NWP researcher Whitney's (2008) research focuses on the notion of the transformational power of the NWP, where she aspires to uncover what makes it so life-changing for teachers. She stated, "If you ask teachers what happened to them at the NWP Summer Institute, more often than not you get a standard narrative of change, so uniform across participants that it seems almost canned" (p. 145). Even though the answer to this question is not straight forward, and the mystique of the NWP continues to perplex researchers today, apparently there are quite a few reasons for this. In a study which focused on classroom practice, Bratcher and Stroble (1994) found that teachers

who were trained under the NWP model were more focused on students and future action that on themselves and the way they present lessons. Additionally, Fox (2000) discovered that teacher renewal after the NWP was due to "the development of the teacher's voice" and "the teacher's relationship with her dual identities: her professional/personal selves and her adult/child selves" (Fox, 2000, p. xxv). Lieberman and Wood (2003) stumbled upon a golden truth for the magic the project holds in their study which focused on the way the NWP changes classroom teaching practices, citing "situating human learning in practice and relationships, guiding reflection on teaching through reflection and learning, promoting a stance of inquiry, and encouraging a reconceptualization of professional identity and linking it to a professional community" (Lieberman & Wood, 2003, p. 22). This pronouncement of social practices in which the NWP invites teachers to engage espouses "changes in thinking, theory, affect, identity, or stance" (Whitney, 2008, p. 150). Blau (1988) asserted that the NWP is a revolution in professional development in that it re-conceptualizes the role of the writing teacher and provides a writing community model for classrooms. He described the role of writing in these social contexts as a metaphor for the construction of meaning within a learning community, suggesting that changes elicited by NWP participation are evolutions in teacher identity, stance, and relationships to a professional community.

In her study which focused on seven writing project participants and their experiences, Whitney (2008) asserted that self-examination and reframing are components which emerge from the authentic experiences in the NWP Summer Institute. She shared, "The teachers engaged in self- reflection in their writing. The topics of this self-reflection were not strictly limited to teaching, though for most participant's

classrooms, related themes ran through daily life and were difficult to separate from personal ones. Topics written about in pieces collected in the study included: the future, personal and professional relationships, memories and past experiences, ideas and values, feelings, education, and teaching, daily events, and political or news events" (Whitney, 2008, p. 161). In her study Whitney found that as teachers wrote about these topics and shared their writing with the other participants, they went through a transformative process in which many of them did echo the mantra of "this changed my life!" She described this process in ten steps as follows: (1) accepting the invitation to write and share in the writing group (2) feeling anxiety about writing and sharing their writing (3) sharing and receiving feedback on writing, (4) giving oneself permission to write (5) self-examination and reflection, (6) reframing, (7) resolving to reorient, (8) trying new roles in the summer institute group and in writing, (9) building confidence and competence through new roles and relationships, (10) living in the new frame.

In the self-reflection phase, Whitney witnessed something valuable happening. As teachers began to reflect and re-examine, they "frequently began to work on more public pieces, addressing both personal and professional issues in a single piece of writing" (2008, p. 162). Over the course of the summer, teachers reported going from personal topics that they felt were too personal to share or insecure about to feeling empowered to write more professional pieces as their voices began to emerge and their confidence began to develop. This process led directly to reframing, which Whitney argued is a crucial component of the process, stating, "At the heart of the process I witnessed in this study was the reframing of meaning perspectives. By first interrogating current frames and then adjusting those frames or discovering new frames, the teachers

acquired new possible lines of action and new ways of positioning themselves in relationship to various others" (2008, p. 164). For the participants in her study, reframing led to several areas such as what writing is and who can do it, seeing the self as a writer, teaching inspiration in relation to concern for form, leadership abilities, the relationship between structure and expression in teaching, and the tensions between the affective domain of the classroom climate and curriculum. Whitney claims, "Reframing led to a new sense of authority and, therefore, opened up not only new ways of seeing but also new ways of being. And insofar as authority is a constant issue in composition processes, reframing might be particularity encouraged in writing processes where writers consider feedback and undertake revision" (2008, p. 168).

Whitney's study explored the complicated tug between personal and professional facets of teaching, the effects of stance, authority, and identity on NWP participants, and the effect of the sociocultural context on teachers as writers. In doing so, she found that personal and professional genres are woven together, and that they complement each other in the development of the teacher writer. She asserted that "a major outcome of the Summer Institute is increased confidence for teachers, the self-assurance to trust and even argue for and defend their own professional judgements. It shows; however, that this change in confidence was not merely a superficial 'ego boost' for teachers, but was instead tied to a process of serious inquiry into and adjustment of ways of thinking about teaching, learning, writing, and life" (2008, p. 178). Whitney encouraged those in teacher professional development and others who do work in the NWP to focus on why the change rather than on what the change. She offered the advice that by shifting our

attention on issues of epistemology, authority, and agency, we shift our focus on noting what teachers do to understanding why they do what they do.

Rose (2005), lamented the history of writing instruction in our country with its traditional focus on correctness and mastery of grammatical construction at the expense of ideas and creative impulses in his text *Lives on the Boundary*, stating:

> The curriculum in Developmental English breeds a deep social and intellectual isolation from print; it fosters attitudes and beliefs about written language that, more than anything, keep students from becoming fully, richly literate. . .It [the curriculum] teaches them that the most important thing about writing-the very essence of writing-is grammatical correctness, not the communication of something meaningful, or the generative struggle with ideas. . .not even word play. It's a curriculum that rarely raises student's heads from the workbook page to consider the many uses of written language that surround them in their schools, jobs, and neighborhoods. Finally, by its tedium, the curriculum teaches them that writing is a crushing bore. These students traverse course after remedial course, becoming increasingly turned off to writing, increasingly convinced that they are hopelessly inadequate" (2005, p. 211).

The NWP transforms our notion of traditional structures and practices to new ways of seeing. As educators study the history of writing instruction and its modern day use, they search for ways to adapt the way writing is taught to include all students of various levels, backgrounds, skills, and abilities. The focus is on engaging students in their writing and thinking practices to become literate, expressive, thoughtful writers of the twenty first century who possess the confidence, self-efficacy, and agency to enter the

world of work and the university with the skills they need to succeed and the drive to do so. This work begins with teachers changing the way writing is taught in their classrooms, one student at a time.

Gray (2000), Founder of the National Writing Project, said it best: "As professionals, teachers need to immerse themselves in the *why* as well as the *what* of their work" (p. 95). Therefore, we glean insight into how the learning occurs in the first place and how it is then enacted into classroom practice. Whitney (2008) offered her own kernel of insight at the close of her article where she admonishes us not to be mystified by the truth which emerges in the mist, stating, "We must take 'changed my life' claims seriously and work to shed analytical light on the heretofore 'magic' mechanisms of change in the NWP Summer Institute, to research this instance of professional development and others in a manner consistent with a view of teachers as thinkers and people rather than as the trainable enactors of others' ideas" (2008, p. 180).

Transferring the National Writing Project Model to the Classroom

Once teachers have become "transformed", how do the practices of the National Writing Project transfer to the classroom? Several studies have been done in an attempt to observe the residue that leaves a dominant impression on National Writing Project Fellows, and in the process finds its way into the classroom, influencing and directly affecting hundreds of students per year for just a handful of teachers. Delvin, a teacher at a Title I school in Las Vegas affiliated with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where over half the students are English language learners, praised the NWP as "transforming" (Smith, 2006, p. 10). As a teacher consultant with over 22 years of NWP involvement as a professional developer, classroom researcher, and new teacher mentor, she and a

network of NWP colleagues across the country have created a list of important practices to employ with students in the classroom. They are as follows: (1) make time for writing, (2) write in the content areas, (3) select topics/create writing assignments which engage students in reflection, analysis, and synthesis, provide a framework for developing and organizing ideas, specify a real audience and a genuine opportunity to communicate, and offer choice without leaving all the decisions up to the student, (4) respond to writing, (5) teach writing (in addition to assigning it), and (6) stay involved with a professional community.

A 2005 study conducted by Inverness Research Associates found that several classroom practices which have been found to correlate with higher student achievement in writing as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are practices that writing project fellows employ in their classrooms (Dickey, Hirabayashi, Murray, St. John, & Stokes, 2005, p. 8). The following figure illustrates these findings:

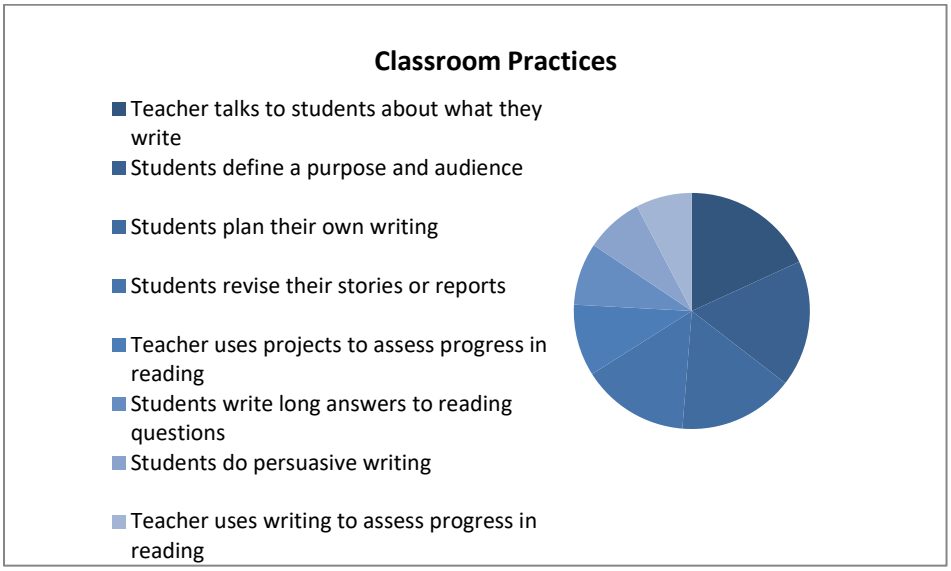

Figure 3. Best Practices Fostered by the National Writing Project

Source: The National Writing Project: Client Satisfaction and Program Impact-results from a satisfaction survey and follow-up survey of participants at 2004 Invitational Institutes, by Kathleen Dickey, Judy Hirabayashi, Allison Murray, Mark St. John, and Laura Stokes with Laurie Senauke. Inverness, CA: Inverness Research Associates.

National Writing Project's Case for Good Writing Instruction

The above graphic (Figure 3) comes from an article on Writing to Learn from the National Writing Project, and is replicated here because it illustrates the dichotomy between teaching writing and assigning writing. Unfortunately, there are teachers in schools all across the country who "assign writing". They give their students a prompt, assign essay criteria, and hand students a detailed rubric of how their writing will be assessed. Then they set a due date, take up the writing, grade it, and pass it back. This is not "teaching writing". Teaching writing involves modeling, asking questions for inquiry, building enthusiasm and trust, nurturing a community of writers, taking students through the writing process with each piece, providing them with opportunities for choice and reflection, and inviting them into the process.

Teaching writing *well* involves nudging, as Graves (1994) author of *A Fresh Look at Writing*, would say, in which a teacher pushes the student a bit outside of their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky) in order to encourage them and challenge them to challenge themselves. Graves (1994, p. 93-94) explained:

> Sometimes children get stuck in one gear, writing about the same topic or the same personal experience. When this occurs I have the same feeling about my teaching: the children are not changing or improving their work.

> We are all stalled in a stale sameness. A nudge suggests a slight push in the right direction. Nudges are based on sound observation, on listening to children, and on careful reading of their texts. To make the nudge more specific, I carry what I call a nudge paper with me-paper of sufficient size to accommodate five to ten minutes of writing. Nudges fall within the context of an overall classroom philosophy: we all try new things in order to be better writers and thinkers. I nudge the children, and often, when I write on the overhead projector, I'll invite a nudge from them.

One NWP teacher consultant echoed Graves' notion of the nudge a teacher uses to push a student to the fringes of their ZPD when she shared, "I give them an angle that would help them create ownership of their papers, and respond. I responded, they respond themselves, their peers respond and all the while using the writing process, so that the students are the focus and their writing is the focus and I'm just kind of nudging them along and guiding them" (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013, p. 14-15). The table below provides a thorough description of the differences between merely assigning writing and teaching writing and when looking closely at the facets of both it is easy to see why teaching writing requires so much work, but is worth the effort.

Table 1.

The Differences between Assigning Writing and Teaching Writing

When Writing is Assigned	When Writing is Taught
Students are asked to write only on the teacher's topics	Students have opportunities to create topics that matter to them
The teacher selects writing topics for papers without consideration of audience or purpose	Audience and purpose for papers are specifically identified in assignments
Most of a teacher's time is spent correcting papers	Most of a teacher's time is spent in class teaching writing skills and strategies
Students are asked to analyze, compare, describe, narrate, review, and summarize, without the strategies to successfully complete these tasks	Students are given writing models, assignments, and strategies to guide each of their different writing tasks
Students are not aware of significant improvement in their writing	Students reflect on significant growth-or lack of it-in specific writing skills
Students are required to rewrite-in some cases, but rewriting usually is limited to correcting grammar, usage, and so forth	Students are encouraged to revise, edit, and improve-and to correct drafts and then resubmit
Students are required to write without much forethought	Students think about what they write through brainstorming, free

When Writing is Assigned	When Writing is Taught
	writing, role playing, discussion, and other prewriting activities
Students and teachers are bored by what students write	Students and teachers are excited about what students write and make efforts to display and publish it

Source: National Writing Project: The National Writing Project's Case for Good Instruction (Manzo, 2008, p. 23)

Writing to Learn: A Major Tenet of the National Writing Project

At the Core of the National Writing Project philosophy is the notion of writing to learn. In short, writing in the disciplines is content specific. "In contrast, writing-to-learn refers to instructional strategies that utilize writing as a pathway to student learning. Thus the focus of writing is on student learning and not on the written artifacts themselves. There are numerous strategies, a few of which are one minute papers, free writes, and journal writing" (Packer, 2013, p. 86). Speculative writing, a freeing form of writing that allows a writer to think on the page and improve and clarify thinking, is another facet of writing to learn. Singh and Unnithan (1989) stated, "The major goal of speculative writing is not writing per se, but thinking. Much has been written on the relationship between writing and thought processes (see Macnamara 1977). Speculative writing helps students examine their own attitudes and feelings; it catches them 'off guard, allowing them to penetrate their preconceptions" (Metcalf 1983, p. 30). The focus is not on a finished product but on the "process that engrosses a student's attention in

seeking the unknown and clarifying the unknown" (p. 466). Speculative writing is typically personal and subjective writing in which a student writes to a leading sentence or question and responds with a spontaneous expression of ideas that are often unorganized and even fragmented bits of thought. Yet it is these ideas that pave the way for future ideas, perceptions observations, discussions, and insights. Teachers and students can benefit from this kind of writing because it enables them to think freely and discovery things they may not even know they knew.

Ackerman (1993) argued that speculation and discovery writing is at the core of expressivist rhetoric. He defined this kind of writing by stating, "Writing to Learn is based on the observation that students' thought and understanding can grow and clarify through the process of writing. A saying attributed to E.M. Forester "how can I know what I think until I see what I say?" (Auden, 1962) captures the spirit of this approach and is widely cited by its adherents. This observation has been elaborated, researched, and made the heart of a pedagogy that focuses on personal, expressivist, journal and other forms of exploratory writing" (p. 57, wac.colostate.edu/books/bazerman_wac/chapter5). Writer and teacher Murray (2009) said it best in his essay on "Writing as Process" when he stated, "A student might get the dangerous misconception that writers know the form before they know the content, and that students know what they have to say before they say it. I would not write-would not need to write-if I knew what I was going to say before I said it" (p. 18). Elbow (1998) echoed this idea in his book *Writing Without Teachers* when he argued, "This idea of writing is backwards. That's why it causes so much trouble. Instead of a two-step transaction of meaning-into-language, think of writing as an organic, developmental process in which you start writing at the very

beginning-before you know your meaning at all-and encourage your words gradually to change and evolve. Only at the end will you know what you want to say or the words you want to say it with. You should expect yourself to end up somewhere different from where you started. Meaning is not what you start out with, but what you end up with" (p. 15).

Reflection is another way that students and teachers can engage in thoughtful introspection about an idea, a topic, a lesson, or a class discussion. Amicucci (2011) claimed that "Reflection asks students to engage with their own learning processes by thinking about and commenting on them. Reflection asks students to make decisions-and commitments- about where their learning processes will go in the future and how they will move in that direction. Reflection is also necessarily personal because the processes on which students reflect are their own" (p. 36). A writer's reflection is a form of metacognition, or thinking about thinking. When a writer reflects upon their own writing process or the writing itself, the text becomes a teaching agent (Murray). A teacher's job is to facilitate learning by teaching reflection. Yancey (1998) discussed this idea in *Reflection in the Writing Classroom*, in which she explains that reflection causes "the classroom [to be] a place where students can speak on their own behalf so that they too can begin to see how they learn" (p. 42). Asking a student to reflect upon their thinking and their writing endows them with a sense of agency and ownership over their work and ideas.

Reflection can also help teachers become better teachers of writing. Keeping a reflective journal allows teachers to think about their instruction, assessments, and students, as well as their personal reactions to a particular class period, discussion,

interaction, or thought that may have come into their mind during a hectic day that they did not have time to devote attention to. This type of journaling is invaluable to a teacher's effectiveness and personal growth, as it provides a chronicling of questions and musings that often lead to great insights. Gorman (1998) shared his successes using a journal to teach writing to high school students. He explained "I found the journal invaluable in helping me improve students' literacy and learning. The habit of writing down one's ideas makes the mind want to express more" (p. 348). He went on to say that the journal he kept over two months enabled him to experiment more with a variety of strategies, rethink his judgments, and aided him in instructional decision making. He warned that in order for journaling to truly be effective, teachers need to be self-critical and must be willing to implement the actions started on paper.

The National Writing Project emphasizes the importance of reflection, whether it's the teacher reflecting on the student or the student reflecting on their learning. Participants of the NWP Summer Institute often praise the writing to learn activities they participated in, stating that they helped them understand their own writing processes. Whitney & Friedrich (2013) explored the ways writing to learn enabled teachers to teach writing. In their article, they described the focus of their study as "how do teachers describe the influence of NWP on their teaching?" (p. 1). To achieve this, they designed a qualitative study that used interview data from NWP teacher-consultants who participated in the NWP between the years of 1974 and 1994. They found that teachers clarified their sense of purpose for writing, mostly as a tool for learning and developing ideas. They also found that teachers used writing processes in order to organize and scaffold student's writing practices. Lastly, they noted that NWP participants connected

their teaching of writing to their own writing experiences, mirroring their processes, struggles, and successes. A NWP Fellow and middle school language arts and Title I teacher (1986) commented on the usefulness of reflection in teaching writing by stating:

> It [writing] also enables you to learn. I've used writing to learn more than once. . .by reading something. . .by reading it first and then writing about it, it actually helps you learn because it engages more than just your visual memory. It also engages your tactile memory. So I can see that as a really positive thing about writing to learn. Sometimes you don't understand what it is until you're writing about it, and then the learning seems to make sense. And then you can express it in a way that is clear and concise after you've been muddled. Sort of like the beginning of writing is muddled, then it becomes clear (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013, pg. 13).

This insight resonates with the quote by E.M. Forrester "How do I know what I think until I see what I say?" It is through writing that we think it, and through thinking that we know it. That very adage leads students down a path of life long writing and thinking, and can help teachers make sense of what they are doing and why they are doing it. Reflection is a cornerstone of the NWP. "Intense self-reflective practice is the sum and substance of the NWP summer institute. Participating teachers are asked at every step of the way, through conversation, reading, research, and writing (also eating, which there is plenty of), to examine and re-examine, reflect and re-reflect, respond and re-respond upon their own entrenched assumptions about the teaching of writing" (Kaplan, 2008, p. 340).

Teachers as Writers

Teachers of writing need to write in order to effectively teach their students how to write. Conversely, teachers of writing learn from their professors who write. Yet, "few professors see themselves as writers" (Elbow & Sorinellie, 2006, p. 19). Who were their balloons in their writing journey? The fatherly balloons ushered in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade of Writing, Donald Graves, Don Murray, and Tom Newkirk, were all teachers who wrote, and their writing group inspired not only Kathleen Dudden Rowlands, but also Tom Romano, Robert Infantino, Lucy Calkins, and Penny Kittle among others. This interconnected mosaic of voices of best practices in writing instruction inspired teachers all over the country to think of themselves as writers who were passionate about writing and teaching students to write. In fact, it was a writing group in 1974 led by James Gray that once served as the impetus for the NWP.

One of the most significant outcomes of the NWP Summer Institute is the fact that teachers emerge from the program feeling confident about their writing and seeing themselves as writers. Diane Wood and Ann Lieberman (2000) discussed the transformation of teacher who teaches writing to teacher who writes, stating:

> A commitment to these aspects of authorship develops in teachers as they experience every facet of the writing process during the NWP summer institutes. When asked what they gain from their summer institute experiences, every teacher said something to the effect, 'I learned I can write'. Renewed by the opportunities for self-expression writing affords, they return to their classrooms looking for ways to translate principles of authorship into their teaching. For instance, having recognized setting the joy of their own intentions and purposes

> and pursuing them in writing, they come to see that clear intentions and purposes are crucial for teaching as well. They recognize that, rather than a mastery of generic techniques, teaching requires creativity and agency, just as writing does. They internalize composition processes-drafting, getting feedback, and revising-as habits of mind useful for teaching. Finally, they take ownership and responsibility for their teaching, learning to 'author', in effect, their own professional lives (p. 262).

The NWP nudges the voice out of writers, and in doing so paves the way for teacher consultants to help other teachers find their voice, but most importantly, the end result is the students who will be encouraged to write and develop confidence and agency as authors themselves as a result of the kinds of learning they experience in NWP-modeled classrooms across the country.

Grace (1999) put it simply, "Students who write become better students, and teachers who write become better teachers. There are several reasons for this. People who write come to know themselves better, they see things in their lives they never noticed before, they become curious about unfamiliar ideas, and they find themselves slowing down. To write is to become a more reflective person" (p. 60). But it goes a step further than that. Kaufman (2002) made a case for why teachers of writing must live a literate life. He proclaimed, "Living a literate life, on the other hand, encompasses every aspect of the classroom day. It is a lived philosophy, perhaps even a moral claim that assumes every action is contextualized, whether it is the context the teacher intends to use or not. It assumes that everything we do teaches students *something*, for better or for worse. It sets the tone for the whole classroom" (2002, p. 51). Jinkins (2004) echoed

this sentiment, stating, “The time I spend writing may not necessarily compliment my teaching directly, but it feeds my soul, and it nourishes me as a teacher, deepening my inner life, sharpening my perceptions, making me more attentive to the world around me. Does writing take me away from teaching? Yes, it does. But when I return from writing to teaching, my spirit is renewed. The movement between the two is as natural as respiration” (2004, p. 67). In his article he discussed the importance of making a space for writing, the call to write, and that as teachers we must submit to both writing and teaching. He argued that it is not a balance, but rather a submission to the wistful yearning to write as it calls to you. We write because we have to.

However, not all English teachers share the belief that writing teachers should write. The National Council of Teachers of English published several articles in *The English Journal* about the notion of teachers writing which started with an article by one brave soul, Jost (1990) matter of factly claimed that high school teachers don’t have time to write and that their focus should be on teaching, not writing. She argued, “For the full time high school English teacher, writing is neither a realistic nor a professionally advantageous avocation. So I challenge all of you academics-Murray and Moffett and Knoblauch and the rest of you. Come on down here into the trenches and show me how it’s done. Spend a month as a high school teacher and find out who it is you’re talking to and what you’re talking about. The day you join a high school faculty, I’ll pick up my pen and start a novel” (March 1990, p. 66). This piece sparked so much controversy she issued a rebuttal a mere six months later, where she maintained that English teachers don’t have time to write, demanded research that proves it’s an effective pursuit, and closed with the rewards of engaging students in Shakespeare or inciting a student to share

their writing with her as "the shooting stars that mark [her] way" (September 1990, p. 33). As a response to this, NCTE published a round table piece titled "Should writing teachers write? The conversation continues", in which 22 teacher's letters in response to Jost were published as part of the discourse surrounding her argument. She made a lot of people angry. She made a lot of people write. And therein lies the irony. What Jost's letter did was bring a community of teachers, readers, writers, and scholars together to discuss the value of writing beside your students, for your students, and in spite of your students (and all of those teaching responsibilities that come with them). I should note here that several of these letters represented readers of *English Journal* from all over the country, yet five of the responses published were from The Woodlands, Spring, Somerset, Denton, and Elkhart, Texas. Reading the incited and impassioned responses of local educators in my home town about the importance of writing with your students made me feel renewed in the research and work I do as a doctoral student in literacy education.

Frawley (2015) discussed the English teacher as reader/writer binary while making quite a profound statement after an extensive review of the literature, which is "Although writing and reading are interlocked practices, a review of the relevant literature shows that English teachers have been largely positioned in terms of the binary that most are readers, not writers. It is therefore the identity of the writing teacher, as an under-researched notion, which warrants further investigation in the field of English teacher identity" (2015, p. 53). Robbins (1992) echoed this sentiment in his article in *English Journal* which followed the Jost debacle, where he blatantly claimed, "Should writing teachers write? It depends. Everyone who reads the *English Journal* knows that

English teachers have precious little time or opportunity to write much, that there are many other important demands on their time and energy, and that they go home exhausted but still facing that pile of papers to read before morning. Yet under these circumstances, some teachers write a lot, and others don't. Some use their own writing in instruction, and others who write do not" (p. 74). Fair enough. This presents an interesting question for inquiry, one I hope to explore in this study.

While teachers have credited the National Writing Project as unleashing the writer within, and celebrating the ways that the space they were afforded for personal writing and reflection led to the confidence and desire to write more professional and academic pieces, there has been much discourse surrounding the tensions between personal and professional writing in the National Writing Project Summer Institute. Whitney (2009) studied these tensions and found that there is a value of personal narratives in professional writing and academic contexts. She claimed, "As in life, personal and professional concerns are not only mixed but bound together, aspects of the same single stream. Thus in the summer institutes, teachers not only experience tension between personal and professional writing, they also use that tension in collaboration with colleagues to reframe notions of themselves as teachers, writers, and people. In other words, the tensions that crop up between personal and professional topics and forms of writing-along with the ways teachers work through these tensions in discussion with other teachers in a writing group-are not only inevitable, they are necessary components of the transformative experiences for which NWP summer institutes are known" (p. 240).

To combat the tension between these two modes of discourse, Whitney stressed the importance of teacher narratives. She argued that the voices of classroom teachers

are often muffled in a publishing world which privileges university models of scholarship, and that practitioners are constricted by time and workload factors which keep them from writing and publishing. She advised that "For teachers to learn through writing, they need opportunities to engage in the full range of writing" (p. 256) writing within a myriad of genres and for multiple audiences. She suggested that site directors and professional developers encourage teachers to seek balance of personal and professional writing, claiming, "invite teachers to try both, then devote attention to helping teachers and their writing groups explore the purposes each might serve and the connections between them. . .we must look not to the outcomes of any one kind of writing activity but value should be placed on relationships between personal writing, professional writing, and professional growth" (p. 255). What begins with the personal, ends with the professional.

Far Reaching Influences of the NWP

In a wonderful tribute to NWP mentors Donald Graves, Don Murray, and Tom Newkirk, the fatherly floating balloons of writing theorists in education, professor Rowlands (2012) wrote about the persistent influences these writing gurus have had on her own development as a writer and a teacher over the course of her career. In her article she offered the reader and teacher of writing some advice that she has amassed over the years:

> What have I learned from these men? First, how to be a teacher and how to live a teacher's life. Engage with students. Mentor. Be kind in my efforts to help students grow as readers and writers. Be generous in sharing lessons learned with my professional communities. Be resistant to the often shrill voices that clamor

> for pedagogical sameness, scripting, and intellectual narrowing. Realize that I am teaching human beings first and subject matter second. Second, trust in my authorial voice and the power of narrative in professional writing (p. 10).

Miller (1985), a university writing center tutor and professor of writing, echoed those same sentiments in her study on how teaching writing can affect a teacher's own writing processes in which she discovered that three tutors who worked in the writing center found that the teaching and tutoring they were immersed in on a daily basis enhanced their writing and helped them to grow as writers. Just as the writing process is a recursive and reflective process, so is the teaching of writing. In the act of teaching writing, a teacher positions herself as a writer who shares her writing or offers strategies to students to help them improve their own writing. The result of this process is the emergence of a teacher as writer who becomes more validated and confident in how they write, their pedagogical stance, their use of rhetorical strategies, and their understanding of the nuances of language. Miller shared:

> Yet as the academic year progressed, strategies which I introduced to my students such as writing to discover one's meaning, using talk as a heuristic, and allowing for incubation periods between drafts provided valuable litmus tests which helped to feed and support my own efforts. And eventually my many stops and starts bore fruit. It all seemed to have been a part of a necessary stage of growth-a certain Piagetian decentering of the self-during which time the heuristics enabled me to move out and beyond myself, to view things from others' vantage points and to see things not just for what they were, but more significantly, for what they might be (p. 2).

This is echoed again and again by NWP teacher-consultants, who often connect their experiences writing in the Summer Institute or in general with those of their students, and it is the bond of writers, set in a discourse community of writers, that paves way for the trust and mutual understanding that is vital for a community of writers and writing conferences between teachers and students. Whitney & Friedrich (2013) posited, "Finally, participants linked their teaching of writing to their own experience as writers. They then positioned themselves among students as a writer among writers, many times writing alongside the students. And they used their own ongoing experiences as writers to gain insight into the supports their students would need as they worked" (p. 11). This kind of support was also given by way of scaffolding and modeling, as one teachers shares her experiences with her 11th and 12th grade English classes: "But then, when it came to teaching the actual composition, how to write, I would go through a lot of the same theory that I learned at the Writing Project, but I'd aim it at the 11th grade students. And I would demonstrate most of it by actually doing it [in front of them]. So that students would see how I approached everything-everything from clustering and organizing to writing that introductory paragraph. I would do it by example, for the students. And that seemed to help them get over some barriers a great deal" (p. 23) In order to model good writing practices for the students, teachers had to draw on their own experiences as writers and make them transparent to their students.

Whyte et al. (2007) examined the influences of NWP teachers writing outside of school had on middle and high school student's achievement in writing in one academic year. The study was designed in light of the following claim which has defined the National Writing Project's model for professional development programs across the

country (Gray, 2000) for thirty years: that teachers of writing should write-and should do so publicly and in interaction with one another (Mc Donald, Buchanan, & Sterling, 2004).

The legacy of the National Writing Project has influenced four decades of teachers all over the country, and continues to do so by serving as a model for professional development in school districts and in colleges with the Writing Initiative for Academics (see Packer, 2013). Tedrow (2016) asserted, "Educators continually point to this highly effective network as a model for professional learning that helps teachers improve student achievement. In study after study, the teachers of the National Writing Project outperform their peers in teaching writing and understanding" (2016, p. 25). As cited in Street & Stang (2009), the growing body of evidence suggests that the NWP model of professional development is highly effective when participating teachers receive district support (Marshall & Pritchard, 2002). Moreover, trained teachers demonstrate changes in how they teach writing (Franscali & Silverstein, 2002), most notably in the time devoted to writing (Franscali, Nelssestuen, & Weinbaum, 2001; Fischer, 1997; Laub, 1996) and the number of writing strategies employed (Inverness Research Associates, 1997; Lieberman & Wood, 2003; St. John, Dickey, Hirabayashi, & Stokes, 2001). More than two decades of evidence continues to highlight the "positive effects of NWP training on teaching practices" (Pritchard & Honeycut, 2006, p. 284). The legacy lives on.

Self-efficacy and the National Writing Project

Goldberg (1998) shared insights about the success attributed to the NWP model, hinting that it is the insistence upon excellence that is the secret to its success, offering: He [Richard Sterling] is never satisfied that enough research has been done to demonstrate the self-efficacy of the NWP model. From Michael Scrivens early work in the late 1970's, to the Research for Action group in Philadelphia, to more recent independent work by Inverness Research Associates in California, the evidence is compelling. In March 1997 Mark St. John of Inverness stated, "Our evaluation has shown that the NWP model, implemented faithfully, produces a professional development system that meets the important criteria for any investment in education reform: it serves a large quantity of teachers; it produces quality events; it operates on a very cost-effective basis; its activities are available to all teachers and students; and, most importantly, its work has educational significance for teachers and students across the country" (p. 396). But there is much work to be done. The NWP is in its 42nd year of existence, and researchers and scholars are continuing to investigate the credence of the empowerment and transformation of teachers and students in classrooms all across the country who hail the NWP as the source of their evolution as writers and empowered change makers.

Another insight on self-efficacy of the NWP for teachers comes from a report: "The National Writing Project after 22 Years" and is articulated quite well by Smith (1996): "A final lesson of the NWP is the reason for that effectiveness: belief in teachers. 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" (1996, p. 691). Teachers have always been at the center of the NWP. They are its reason for existence. The NWP was created by a group of teachers for teachers, and its mantra of teachers teaching teachers is a core principal that has been a big part of its long-lasting success. Professor of Education and Director of the Utah Writing Project Strong (1988) echoed this sentiment in his study where he sought to investigate Tom Newkirk's scrutiny of the "justifiable euphoria about the success of the National Writing Project since many of its most basic assumptions had not been examined critically" (p. 1). He contended, "My mission at Tom Newkirk's New Hampshire Writing Project grew out of Tom's 1983 critique of the NWP model in English Education, 'Is the Bay Area Model the Answer?'. In the end, I came away from my Mission Assignment in New Hampshire not only with a taste for steamed clams and lobster, but also with a clearer sense of what the National Writing Project is all about. The change was good for me. I came to see anew how NWP is as much about teacher empowerment as it is about the teaching and learning of writing" (1988, p.3). As a NWP teacher-consultant who is aware of this truth first-hand, if I were the editor of an article, I would showcase this quote in big, bold font in the center, because it encapsulates the vision and mission of the NWP. In that same article, Strong remarked about the theory of the NWP in its beginnings, and in order to illustrate its theoretical inception, it's worth quoting here:

> To provide a theory base for the institute, NHWP brought all participants together during the second week for a series of mid-morning lectures by New Hampshire luminaries-among them, Don Graves, Jane Hansen, Don Murray, and Tom

> Newkirk. These talks were all first-rate, though not really tied to each other or to any explicit overall framework. It was in these presentations, mainly, that the Institute's political message-one emphasizing self-sponsored writing, integration of reading and writing, and teacher-as-researcher-began to resonate (1988, p.2).

There is a catching enthusiasm that swirls in the rooms of NWP summer institutes. The discourse communities that form are engaging, often with interminable effects. These communities of teacher consultants form long lasting relationships, and as teachers feel more knowledgeable and authoritative, they become more confident sharing their expertise with other teachers by way of presenting in their individual schools and districts, or by leading writing workshops for other teachers in their own classrooms after school. The following quote illustrates this agency well: "In global terms, The National Writing Project in the US, operating since 1973, has been the most significant initiative to systematize via a nationwide network the provision of opportunities for teachers to become and identify as writers" (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). This agency is life changing for most Writing Project fellows. Research findings confirm the transformational potential of the NWP regarding professional identity and a sense of agency regarding writing (Wood & Lieberman, 2000; Lieberman & Wood, 2003; Whitney, 2008; Frank, 2001; Frank, Carpender & Smith, 2003). The mystique of the NWP is difficult to define in words, but one participant captures it well, stating, "A culture of warmth, empathy, and appreciation of individual and social differences characterizes the NWP's summer institutes and extension programs. Partially in jest, one NWP site founder called the person-centered culture of the NWP 'one third seminar, one

third group therapy, and one third religious experience'" (Whyte et al, 2007, p. 12) (Dodge, quoted in Olson, 2007, p. xiii).

NWP teacher consultant and assistant professor of English education Dierking and Missouri Writing Project Director Fox (2012) examined the effects of the National Writing Project professional development model on a group of middle school writing teachers. In their introduction, they state a very important reality that faces teachers today, claiming, "Today's teachers have incurred more restrictions, rules, and guidelines than in any previous era. Their boundaries grow ever smaller with each new mandate from administrators, legislators, and departments of education, not to mention the public and popular media" (p. 129). They stated this argument as the purpose for their study which aims to provide better staff development to empower individuals in their classrooms. They added: "Drawing from theorists who influenced the development of the National Writing Project (Britton, Elbow, Emig, Graves, Moffet, Zinsser, and so on) in its over 30 years as a leader in teacher writing instruction, we see teacher empowerment as the umbrella that shelters the main themes suggested in our research: gaining knowledge and finding voice can empower teachers, having choice and control of classroom practices can empower teachers, and creating networks of support can empower teachers. These three threads, based on the tenets of the NWP, link through the potential to create confident professional educators" (p. 130).

Educational researchers argue for teacher efficacy, and teachers laud the sense of empowerment and self-efficacy they experience after a mere summer in the NWP. Blau (2003) argued the role of the NWP in building teacher efficacy:

Having experienced what it means to learn in a community of learners, teachers are inclined to count such learning as more authoritative and authentic than any other and to think of such learning as the proper aim of their own instruction. They therefore become determined to turn their own classrooms into learning communities that will function like a Writing Project, where respect for the intelligence of every learner is the starting place for all activity, where every member is seen as a source of knowledge and expertise, and where all learners are expected and required to take responsibility for their own learning, as well as assisting others to learn. In such a community, learning entails the production of knowledge as well as its reception, and knowledge is always seen as provisional and subject to challenge and refinement. (p.16)

Mascle (2000) found that writers who write make for better teachers of writing, and that the NWP Summer Institute and the multiple opportunities it affords teachers to write and share their writing in a safe space is the impetus for that kind of study. She asserted, "With more than 200 sites, NWP seeks to improve the teaching of writing … founded on the belief that a teacher who writes is a better writing teacher-which makes an NWP a good site for the study of writing" (p. 52). She found that the supportive discourse communities which nurture writers and encourage and challenge teachers to think about the way they teach writing and the theory behind those decisions, empowered teachers to want to know and do more. She added, "These findings support the idea that working in a learning community focused on writing has a long-term, positive effect on writers by decreasing writing apprehension, attending to the sources of writing self-efficacy, and fostering self-regulation" (p. 57).

Street & Stang (2009) concluded, “Considerable evidence exists (Instersegmental Committee 2000; National Commission on Writing, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003) to support the notion that writing matters-to educators, business leaders, and to the general public. As reported in “The Neglected ‘R’” (2003), “Writing is everybody’s business” (p.5). The researchers asserted, “It is vital that all students be able to write well; yet this will not happen unless the professional development of teachers across the content areas is improved. Unless teachers feel confident, comfortable, and competent as writers-they will be unlikely to feel equipped to develop their students’ writing skills “(Bratcher & Stroble, 1994). “If the recommendation from the National Commission on Writing (2003) that schools should double the amount of time most students spend writing is to have any chance of coming to fruition, then writing must be taught in all subjects and at all grade levels” (p. 91). The NWP is the leader in not only preparing, but empowering teachers to teach writing.

And the innovation of the NWP for over 40 years of existence doesn’t stop there. The NWP has teamed up with the experimental art organization NEXMAP, a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to the production of contemporary, experimental art and creative practices (www.nexmap.org), to create light up notebooks for use in classes across the content areas in an effort to fuse writing, art, and engineering. Powered by a writer’s imagination, these LED stickers aim to illuminate student learning and creativity by adding illumination to writings and drawings in student notebooks. This past summer, the team sponsored a “Hack Your Notebook Day” to provide an opportunity for educators and students to share their own creations. Jie and Freed (2015) shared, “Watching works by young people unfold, we’ve witnessed the intersection of literacy,

learning, and making. Molly Adams, a NWP high school English teacher outside of Dallas, used paper circuitry with her students during a unit on the symbolism of light in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Her students crafted light creations alongside reflective writing. They produced a 1920's era car out of wood that lit up to represent death; an eerie, light-strewn wedding cake; and a broken Coney Island roller coaster, among other objects" (p. 2). To view the webinar about this project, go to: http://www.slideshare.net/themadams/illuminating-gatsby-nwp-webinar.

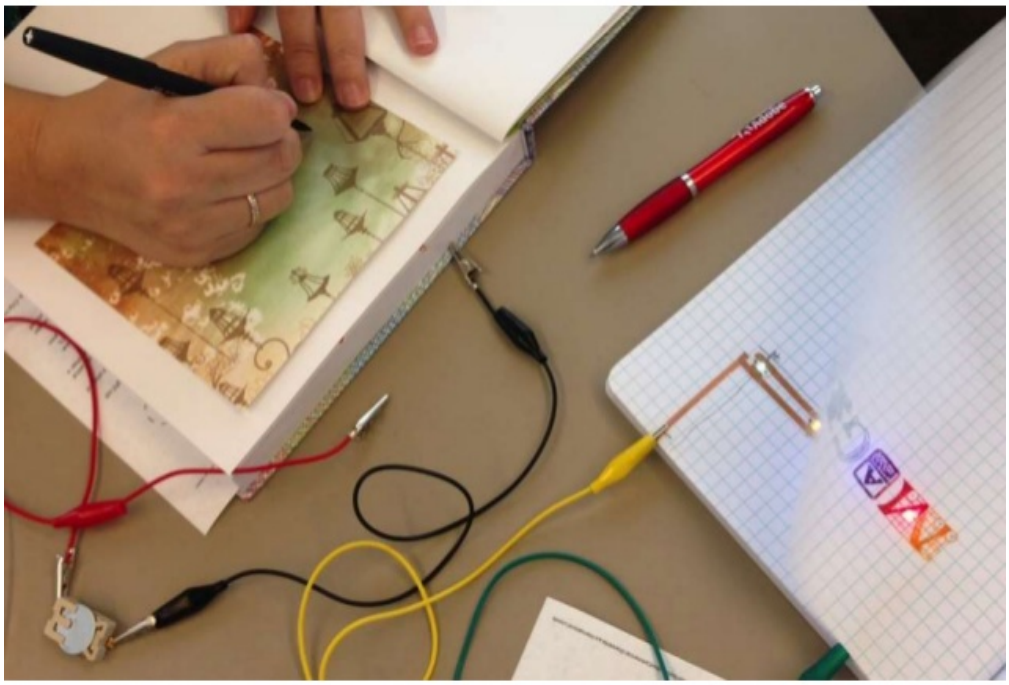

Figure 4. The NWP's Latest Innovation: Light-up Notebooks

Metaphor of the National Writing Project and The Writing Process

Perhaps it is futile to attempt to lay a finger on the transformative nature or the ephemeral legacy and staying power of the NWP. What is it that magically occurs that leads to an "AHA moment" for project participants? What is it about the process of

writing in a space of one's own that transfers so readily to the classroom? Why does the NWP continue to have such a lasting impact on teachers, academia, and professional development models across the country? Diane Wood and Ann Lieberman (2000) may have an answer. In their research with NWP fellows, they developed a metaphor of the NWP and the writing process which cleverly illustrates the recursive ways our idiosyncratic processes as writers are entwined with the kind of experiences NWP fellows have in the Summer Institute. They shared:

> The Writing Project, in taking principles of good writing and translating them to principles of good teaching, offers a powerful model for professional development. In adopting the principle of authorial voice, for instance, they reclaim a sense of professional agency, articulate their intentions, and take action on behalf of student learning. The principle of revision reminds teachers that good teaching is never finished or accomplished but always in need of improvement and refinement. The principle of obtaining feedback helps teachers to recognize their need for audiences to offer both encouragement and critique. The principle of publication imbues teachers with the responsibility to make public what they know and learn. The best teachers recognize the value of refusing to cling to final versions of good practice, and consequently, hold their work up for public scrutiny. The Writing Project sustains relationships with and among teachers for years. It contributes significantly to improving and changing actual classroom practices. We believe that the network's success lies in its deep respect for what teachers know and do. By encouraging teachers to author-

literally and figuratively-their own careers, it supports reflective practice and moral agency (p. 271-272).

This powerful metaphor is fitting for weaving the fabric of the NWP philosophies, experiences of NWP fellows, observations of NWP site directors, and findings of NWP scholars and researchers together. The ball of yarn that is the NWP is ingratiated in our writing processes, our teaching practices, and our identities themselves, unraveling in the very fabrics of our lives as teachers, scholars, and writers. One of my Macy's Day Parade balloons in the development of my life as a writing teacher, Donald Graves, said it best. He noted that teaching writing requires that the teacher be a master of two crafts, the craft of teaching and the craft of writing: "The writer who knows the craft of writing can't walk into a room and work with students unless there is some understanding of the craft of teaching. Neither can the teachers who have not wrestled with writing, effectively teach the writer's craft" (1983, pp. 6-7). In addition to educators and writers like Penny Kittle, Lucy Caulkins, and Kelly Gallagher of today, Graves was a voice of the previous three decades who advised that teachers of writing should write beside their students, and is to this day one of the most influential writing theorists of this philosophy (Cremin & Myhill, 2013; Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011; Thornton, 2010). Graves' good friend and life-long writing partner Murray (2009) adds to this insight in his essay "One Writer's Secrets", asserting, "A life of writing is a life of learning. There are the tiny discoveries that may not shake the universe but may bring a grin or sometimes even a laugh of victory from the academic at the desk. Writing is also an extension of teaching and a stimulation to teaching. . .We need to be practitioners of our discipline if we are to

stay alive and if we are to bring new ideas to our teaching" (p. 168). Teachers who write and our passionate about writing inspire students who do the same.

The National Writing Project came into being because of John Gray's passion to write and to teach writing more effectively. It began with a group of 25 teachers who became the heart and soul of the project, and their passion ignited future teachers to participate and sites to develop. None of this would have ever existed without the tenet of teachers at the center, which is the lifeblood of the NWP. Metaphorically, one could say that teachers are the heart of the NWP. Early, Saidy, and Parker (2016) discuss the heart of the NWP in their research as directors of the Central Arizona Writing Project stating, "What standardization [in testing] threatens to ignore, or even to remove from teaching, earning, and especially writing-as processes-is heart. All of my work with CAWP and NWP has actually revolved around the heart of writing in a rigorous, research-centered way. We explore what it means to write and to be a writer. We honor writing as both social and transformative art and act. We acknowledge the vulnerability we risk and we honor and celebrate the growth we open ourselves to when we challenge ourselves intellectually and academically to write in authentic ways from our hearts" (p. 106). The power of the heart and the motivation that stems from passion is undeniable. After all, this dissertation began with that same allegiance to the heart of a teacher, writer, and NWP fellow herself.

Summary

In this review of the literature I have attempted to shed some light on the legacy of the National Writing Project (NWP) by exploring the ten main tenets of the literature, such as social-cultural theory and social practices of the NWP, discourse communities

and teacher transformation in the NWP, transferring the NWP model to the classroom, best practices fostered by the NWP, the NWP 's case for good writing instruction, writing to learn, teachers as writers, far reaching influences of the NWP, self-efficacy and the NWP, and the metaphor of the writing process and the NWP. In chapter three, I will discuss my research methodology for my study and the study design.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will provide an overview of the methodology guiding this study, the purpose of which is to investigate the perceptions of National Writing Project Fellows on themselves as writers and as teachers of writing. This chapter includes the following: (a) an overview of research design; (b) the theoretical framework guiding this study; (c) interpretive phenomenological analysis; (d) the study's participants; (e) data collection procedures; (f) data analysis; (g) data coding process; (h) credibility, trustworthiness, and transferability considerations; (i) ethical considerations; and (j) researcher bias.

Methodology Paradigm

In this chapter, I will discuss the research methodology of this study including the guiding research paradigm that will be used, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis. Research methodologies are the decisions and strategies that researchers use to guide their studies so that they will be understandable to others (Schensul, 2012). In this process, I followed Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2010) 13-step methodological framework for qualitative research (Figure 6), with particular emphasis on phases two and three, the technical and applied phases. In these phases of the research plan (steps six and seven), the researcher selected a sampling framework and created a research design (Frels, R. K., Sharma, B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Leech, N. L., & Stark, M. D., 2010)

Based upon the review of the literature and the theoretical frameworks guiding this study, research questions were generated and designed to discover and compare the perceptions of National Writing Project (NWP) Fellows and Teacher Consultants (TCs)

who have participated in a Summer Institute (SI) Program. As presented in Chapter I, the guiding questions for the study are as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers after participating in a summer writing institute?
2. What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of the impact the National Writing Project has had on the way they teach writing after participating in a summer writing institute?

This study was designed as a descriptive, particularistic (Merriam, 2006), multiple-case study. Case studies are typically used as a way to study a real-world phenomenon with the intent to understand important contextual conditions (Strake, 1995; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). It is often suggested that researchers should use a particularistic case study when examining any particular situation or event (Merriam, 2006). The particularistic nature of the design of this study was to discover how teachers may perceive themselves as writers and in what ways the Summer Institute (specific event) has influenced (if at all) the way they teach writing. Descriptive studies are usually the best methods for collecting data which demonstrates relationships and describe the world as it exists (Bickman & Rog, 2008). Also, descriptive studies can also answer questions such as “what is” or “what was” or “how much” (Bickman and Rog, 2008, p. 10). Moore, Lapan, and Quartaroli (2012) posited that case studies usually consist of one or several cases of the same phenomenon and can be conducted at numerous sites. Because the teachers in this study were spread out at various school districts and schools throughout a greater geographic region, yet anchored by a major NWP local site, this was the best research method to employ.

This study utilized semi-structured, opened-ended interview questions, with the objective of understanding the perceptions of The National Writing Project Fellows and Teacher Consultants who have participated in a Summer Institute Program. Data was collected through interviews and teacher reflections noted in individual personal journals that teachers maintained on their insights regarding their participation in the National Writing Project (NWP) Summer Institute, their philosophy of teaching writing, and what they have taken from the NWP Summer Institute in building that philosophy.

This qualitative study sought to explore the myriad perceptions of pedagogical knowledge writing teachers possess after participating in an intensive summer institute as part of a NWP program. Considering my exploration of interactions, perceptions, and feelings, a qualitative research method was appropriate. Due to the nature of this qualitative study, an interpretivist and critical research paradigm guided the research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), "Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them '' (p. 3). Accuracy is a core notion of interpretivist philosophy, meaning that the researcher must precisely understand and portray the research participants' viewpoints, feelings, and experiences, among other traits, during the interviews and in the research report (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Schensul (2012) explained that an interpretivist researcher "comes to understand behaviors and the meanings attributed to them through immersions into the setting and interaction with the study participants" (p. 74). Furthermore, Schensul (2012) stated that a critical researcher "believes that social and political structures shape and hold power over the lives of

individuals, creating various types of disparities" (p. 77). The critical researcher is aware of this and takes it into account when analyzing the data.

A qualitative approach is recommended for studies where the researcher attempts to describe the perceptions of participants (Stake, 2010), because qualitative research gives us insight into the participants' experiences and personal perspectives (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). The particular descriptions and themes developed in the context of a specific site is the value and capstone of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, this study employed a descriptive case study research design which consisted of multiple case studies, compiled to illustrate the phenomenon in greater depth and in natural settings (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Patton, 2002; Stake, 2005; Yin 2009). In addition, data from multiple case studies are more easily generalized, which provides a higher degree of confidence of the findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Consequently, Barone (2011) suggested that a case study promotes an understanding of intricate circumstances that cannot be made clear in most other research designs. Yin (2009) stated case studies are the preferred method when open-ended questions (those which seek to know how or why) are being asked, and when the attention is on phenomenon within a real-life context such as this. Analysis of the data using a qualitative design allowed the researcher to thoroughly investigate the participants' perceptions of the effects of their participation in the NWP Summer Institute.

Using a multiple-case study design may not only expand the potential for future research, but it can also increase the reliability of the study itself (Yin, 2003; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014, p. 33) suggested that:

Multiple-case sampling adds confidence to the findings. By looking at a range

> of similar and contrasting cases, we can understand a single-case finding, grounding it by specifying how and where and, if possible, why it carries on as it does. We can strengthen the precision, validity, stability, and trustworthiness of the findings.

In other words, multiple-case study design follows a replication strategy (Yin, 2009). Data from a multiple-case study may be used to replicate the study as well as to triangulate the data. Triangulation of the data can assist the researcher in deciding about any necessary changes in the study's design based upon discoveries during data collection (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2013). This study triangulated data by asking the teacher participants to respond in the same way to specific reflection and interview questions, so that the researcher could determine whether or not the data was similar in different circumstances (Stake, 1995). In addition, the researcher enlisted the assistance of another qualitative researcher who was familiar with the study design to read her interview, journal, and follow-up questions in order to ascertain whether there was any bias in the researcher's perspectives. Moreover, the fact that the data in this study was gathered from multiple-cases and locations decreased questions about the reliability of the data as well as increased the chance of exemplary outcomes (Merriam, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Grant and Osanloo (2014) defined a theoretical framework as "the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research study", adding that "It serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions" (p. 12). In their article where they liken the theoretical framework to the blueprint of a house,

they distinguished a theoretical framework from a conceptual framework, asserting, “a theoretical framework is derived from an existing theory (or theories) in the literature that has already been tested and validated by others and is considered a generally acceptable theory in the scholarly literature”, in contrast, a conceptual framework is “the researcher’s understanding of how the research problem will best be explored, the specific direction the research will have to take, and the relationship between the different variables in the study”(p. 16-17). Additionally, Cozby & Bates (2012) concluded that a theory is comprised of a combination of numerous ideas concerning a particular subject or phenomenon that relates to human conduct which involves learning, memory, and personality.

Social-cultural theory/Constructivism, Self-efficacy theory, and Reader-Response theory provide the theoretical framework for this study. Constructivism, an off-shoot of social-cultural theory and a theory of knowledge in response to behaviorism, is a theoretical perspective which addresses the understanding individuals seek from the world in which they live and work (Cresswell, 2007). Constructivists are concerned with the learning and mental processes of individuals, whereas social cultural theory views learning as an act of enculturation, something that is a part of the everyday activities in the teacher writing and workshop groups in the NWP Summer Institute. According to Belenky et al (1997), the basic insight of constructivist thought is that “All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known” (p. 137). A tenant of constructivism is the need to understand the unique perspective of each individual (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The goal of this study is to examine in-depth consideration (Bernard & Ryan, 2010) of the phenomenon of perceptions of teachers who

participated in the NWP Summer Institute within the last ten years. When I think of the ways in which constructivism may be woven into the focus of my research questions which seek to know and understand the perspectives of someone, I am reminded of the notion of "real talk" in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al, 1997). The researchers share:

> Constructivists make a distinction between 'really talking' and what they consider to be didactic talk in which the speaker's intention is to hold forth rather than to share ideas. In didactic talk, each participant may report experience, but there is no attempt among participants to join together to arrive at some new understanding. 'Really talking' requires careful listening; it implies a mutually shared agreement that together you are creating the optimum setting so that emergent ideas can grow. It reaches deep into the experience of each participant; it also draws on the analytical abilities of each. Conversation, as constructivists describe it, includes discourse and exploration, talking and listening, questions, argument, speculation, and sharing (p. 144).

Belenky et al went on to say that dialogue has the power to empower people into ways of knowing. They asserted, "Lev Vygotsky (1962, 1978) and his colleagues suggest that exterior dialogues are a necessary precursor to inner speech and awareness of one's own thought process", which (like play itself) "is a precursor to symbolism and meaning-making" (p. 33). Metaphors enable us to make sense of the world around us in the presence of others in that they open up our minds and perceptions to the ways that we perceive the world as we try to make sense of it. The researchers argued, "Without playing, conversing, listening to others, and drawing out their own voice, people fail to

develop a sense that they can talk and think things through (Vygotsky, 1978). As a researcher, I was interested in the dialogue, discourse, or dialectic that emerged from the journals (dialogue of the participant with the self or an imagined reader), and the interviews. I believe that truth emerges when we are reflective and given the opportunity to think aloud in the form of shared discourse. It is in those moments that insights materialize.

Students must be taught how to assert themselves and express their views in their writing. Teachers need to empower them to have a sense of agency about their arguments and positions, and teach them how to look at all sides of an issue when developing their assertions. Mascle (2014, p.50) claimed:

> Due to the ever-changing and shifting contexts for writing our students face, fostering agency, or their capacity to act on their own initiative, is an important and necessary part of learning to write. . .yet our educational system and writing classrooms do not attend to agency, . . .which is inhibited by writing apprehension. The fear and loathing of writing, also known as writing apprehension, plays a large role in the lack of transfer because it interferes with the practice and study of writing as well as a willingness to accept agency.

Self-efficacy theory explores the nature of agency in teachers and students, and how it transfers from teacher to student to the larger world of being a citizen in a democratic society.

Self-efficacy theory, a construct of socio-cognitive models of behavior and learning, is a theory that posits the nature of a person's sense of empowerment and confidence that derives from a particular experience, defined as "a person's belief that he

or she is capable of dealing with complex tasks" which is an important factor in developing human agency (Bandura 1997). Self-efficacy theorist Albert Bandura (1982) defined perceived self -efficacy [as] concerned with judgements of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (p. 122). Klassen, Tze, Betts and Gordon (2011), have defined self -efficacy in teachers as "the confidence teachers hold about their individual and collective capability to influence student learning (p. 21). Teacher's self-efficacy can be defined as their beliefs about their capability to teach their subject matter even to difficult students. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to influence their instructional behavior and many other related outcomes (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Bandura (1997) described four sources of self-efficacy which have shown staying power over time:

1. *Mastery experiences*: for a teacher this would equate to successful classroom practice.
2. *Physiological and emotional states*: the way in which particular feelings such as excitement or anxiety are elicited in teaching situations, by either positively or negatively impacting self-efficacy.
3. *Vicarious experiences*: an example of this would be observing a master teacher, mentor, or role model in which the observant desires to emulate their skills or practices.
4. *Social persuasion:* an example of this would be positive feedback received in the context of a professional development situation (Bandura, 1997, p. 51)

As Lavelle (2006) noted, “few studies have considered teachers’ beliefs about their own writing skill” (p.75). In an exploratory study, she examined teacher beliefs about writing competence and discovered a relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance. According to Locke, Whitehead, and Dix, (2013), “There does not appear to be research framed conceptually in relation to self-efficacy in relation to Writing Workshop teacher participation, even though Writing Workshop principles and practices are premised on their transformational potential in respect of teacher self-confidence as writers and teachers of writing” (p. 58). There is a long history of research on self-efficacy as an aspect of teacher competence (e.g., Klassen et al, 2011) in which teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are thought to play an important role in the educational process. Holzberger, Philipp, and Kunter (2013) asserted that “In line with previous studies (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998; Woolfolk et al., 1990) teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs showed higher instructional quality, as indicated by the three dimensions of cognitive activation, classroom management, and individual learning support, whether instruction was rated by the teachers themselves or by their students” (p. 782). Teachers who possess self-efficacy produce students who possess self-efficacy. According to Selvester and Summers (2012), teachers and students need to take risks together by co-constructing opportunities for students to voice their opinions, their beliefs, and their desires without censorship” (p. 20). This self-efficacy empowers students to feel a sense of agency, “Literate thinking assists adolescents in negotiating the sociocultural contexts in which they form their identities, assert their sense of agency, and participate in their literacy development” (Langer, 1987).

Darling-Hammond (2006) argued that what teachers know and do in the classroom with their students has the most influence on what their students learn. In their teaching practices, teachers must possess the confidence and ability to lead their students intellectually and ethically. Teachers who possess self-efficacy "are able to examine the postmodern social, political, cultural, and historical uses of literacy. They claim their own authority and empower their students with the critical skills to generate and interrogate texts, and analyze language choices, purposes, and possible meanings in order to discover how texts are ideologically positioned" (Selvester and Summers, 2012, p. 67). This transference of agency is seen in the way students respond to texts in discussion as well as in their own writings. Selvester and Summers (2012, p. 81) shared:

> When teachers and students engage in discussions to interpret a writer's intent, message, historical context, biography, and style, students learn that there are multiple interpretations of a text's meaning and that the interpretation is contextualized socially, culturally, linguistically, politically, and historically. They learn to value the diversity of their voices and gain confidence in the power of their own personally generated meaning.

This theory of transference is seen in the literature regarding the legacy of the National Writing Project and is further supported by Rosenblatt's Reader-Response Theory.

Reader Response Theory is an important facet of the theoretical framework of this study. Since I am interested in the perceptions of NWP fellows on their experiences teaching writing and as they see themselves as writers (and therefore readers), and the nature of their feelings of empowerment to enact those theories in the classroom as

practice, it is vital that I acknowledge a theory that is laden in many of the tenets of the National Writing Project model of best practices of writing instruction. In an interview with Louise Rosenblatt, Karolides (1999) clarified her myriad of theories and philosophies regarding teaching literature and writing and being a citizen in a democratic society. In this interview, Rosenblatt contended that it is natural to teach the way that we have been taught. She discussed her reader response theory in which she asserts that what readers make of their interplay with a text depends on what they bring to it "in linguistic and life experiences, in assumptions about the world, and in personal preoccupations" (p. 161). As a teacher of literature, she recalled feeling amazed at the differences in experiences and interpretations that a reader brings to a text, noting "important as the text may be, you can't explain these differences by simply looking at the text. The patterns of signs on the page remains the same, the difference is in the reader's activity in relation to those signs" (p. 163).

She added that the signs on the page are the only observable, empirical aspect shared by readers. She attested that meaning occurs during the exchange between the text and the reader. Drawing on our "personal reservoirs", and using selective attention, we construct meaning. Rosenblatt asserted, "The important thing is that the reading be learned as a means of making meaning, either predominately efferent or predominately aesthetic, and that skills be acquired as tools in a really meaningful activity. The problem, then, is to create a situation in which students from the beginning and throughout their education see reading as a purposive activity" (p. 167-168). She concluded with the notion that reading and writing are entwined, and that one may not consider one without the other, stating:

> My transactional view of language applies to all modes of language behavior. A speaker assumes a listener, and a reader assumes a writer, and vice versa. . . I decided that I could no longer write about reading without also dealing more fully with writing. Both writer and reader transact with texts, both compose meanings. That is why all the transactional concepts hold for both. But there are differences that should be kept in mind. The reader starts with the author's text and tries to build a meaning consonant with it. The writer starts with a blank page; as the text emerges on the page, its author is its first reader. Reading is part of the writing process (p.167-168).

This idea that reading and writing are a part of a transactional process that the writer goes through is crucial to understanding the effects of the NWP Summer Institute pedagogical processes on teachers.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

According to Smith (2011), "Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a recently developed qualitative approach which, since its inception, has rapidly become one of the best known and most commonly used qualitative methodologies" (p. 9). IPA has theoretical roots in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. Phenomenology is the philosophical movement concerned with lived experience and the desire to construct the detailed examination of experience on one's own terms.

In psychology, idiography describes the study of the individual, who is seen as a unique agent with a unique life history, with characteristics setting him/her apart from other individuals. In IPA research, the researcher talks to the participants in order to analyze how they make sense of what they say regarding the experiences that they have had. In

this process, the researcher attempts to discover their perceptions of what the participants think is happening to them.

Smith and Osborn (2007) defined interpretive phenomenological analysis as a theory which aims "to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world" (p. 53). In this form of analysis, the researcher attempts to get close to the participant's personal world through the process of interpretive actions based on the researcher's perceptions of the participant's meaning-making of their experiences. This method poses the question, does the researcher see something that the participant may not even be aware of? "Thus, a two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, is involved [in which] the participants are trying to make sense of their world, [and] the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (p. 53). IPA is therefore theoretically connected to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Packer and Addison, 1989; Palmer, 1969; Smith, 2007).

Smith and Osborn asserted that "The power of the IPA study is judged by the light it sheds within the broader context" (2007, p. 56). They also added that IPA researchers wish to analyze in great depth and detail how participants perceive and make sense of things which are happening to them. This analysis method is appropriate for this study because this particular study attempted to investigate teacher perceptions, and in doing so the researcher employed a double hermeneutic in order to understand the way in which the participants understand their experiences. Smith (2004) argued that a paramount goal of interpretive phenomenological research is to make a contribution to research through "interrogating or illuminating existing research" (p. 43). That was the nature and aim of this study.

Additionally, Smith, Flowers, and Larking (2009) advocated for analytical processes to be iterative, fluid, engaged, and multi-directional. As such, analysis involves immersive and intense reading and re-reading of the text, initial noting on exploratory levels of relationships, processes, places, events, values and principles, fluid textual analysis of exploratory noting, developing themes, and searching for connections and patterns. Additionally, analyzing data involves a pre-analysis decision model to explore biases, assumptions in data analysis, and intra-coder agreement through member checking for informant feedback (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Smith and Osborn (2007) posited that there is not a singular prescriptive methodology for conducting interpretive phenomenological research studies, noting, "IPA studies are conducted on small sample sizes. The detailed case-by-case analysis of individual transcripts takes a long time, and the aim of the study is to say something in detail about the perceptions and understandings of this particular group rather than prematurely make more general claims. This is described as an idiographic mode of inquiry as opposed to the nomothetic approach" (p. 56). Therefore, I employed their suggestion of an idiographic approach that began with particular examples and worked up to more general categories and claims. Moreover, an emic perspective (Creswell, 2009) was used where the views of the participants are the primary consideration of the analysis.

Study Location

The participants for this study represented multiple school districts and school sites in and around the greater Houston area in the Southeast Texas region. The study was conducted at Sam Houston State University at The Woodlands Center in The Woodlands, Texas.

Participants

Participants in the study were selected from a purposeful, convenient sample of National Writing Project Fellows who have participated in the Summer Institute within the last ten years. The participants were a representative sample of all grade levels from kindergarten through college, and represented various positions in local school districts in the southeast Texas region. All participants provided IRB adult informed consent for participation in the study. Participants were given Southern pseudonyms in an attempt to reflect my love for the great state of Texas.

In order to obtain teacher participants, I sent an initial invitation letter to 20 teachers I know of who have participated in the summer institute over the last ten years, explaining the general purpose of the study, and requesting that any teachers who were interested in participating contact me via e-mail. Next, I randomly selected six teacher participants from the sample who responded to me via e-mail. This type of selection process is purposive sampling (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Johnson & Christensen, 2012), where the purpose of the participants are specified by the researcher. I met with the six teacher participants, individually, over Google Hangout, explaining in detail the purpose of the study, how data will be collected, and answered any questions they had, making them feel comfortable sharing their perceptions with me. As is stated by Stake (2005), the

readiness of participants is significant for the researcher to productively analyze the information and experiences from participants who appear to offer the opportunity.

Data Collection

Following the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Sam Houston State University, consent from participating teachers was obtained. After the approvals were completed, the researcher met with the participants of the study to clearly explain the overall purpose of the study and answer any questions concerning the study. The data collection process in qualitative research involves four types of data, which include interviews, observations, audio-visual materials, and documents (Creswell, 2009), each of which are represented in this study. All responses from participants, either in writing or by verbal interview, were transcribed, organized by date and activity, and then coded using Saldana's (2009) coding descriptions as a guide. As themes emerged, the researcher analyzed cases through cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2013), which helped to focus themes and identify generalizability of teacher perceptions.

The data from open-ended questions through personal digitally recorded one-on-one interviews, the researcher's observations documented through a reflexive journal, as well as teacher reflections, provided a more extensive perspective of the findings (Creswell, 2009). A researcher's role is that of a learner- one who is willing to listen (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). As Belenky et al wisely shared, "Gradually, as we read and reread the interview transcripts, we came to feel. . .that the women's epistemological assumptions were central to their perceptions of themselves and their worlds. Epistemology became the organizing principle for our data analysis and for the book that

we were beginning to imagine" (1997, p. xiii). It is through the reading of the data and truly listening to the voices of participants that knowledge emerged.

Interviews

Interpretive phenomenological research studies typically are conducted using small samples sizes and do not aim to make general claims and, therefore, require a flexible data collection instrument (Smith & Osborn, 2007). According to Smith and Osborn (2007), there are a number of ways to collect sufficient data for interpretive phenomenological research studies, such as personal accounts and journals, but they suggest semi-structured interviews as the preferred method. I used semi-structured interviews because they allowed me to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions will be modified based on the participants' responses, enabling me to probe further when interesting ideas emerge (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Epistemologically, the researcher adopts the constructionist view that interviews are less representations of a stable external reality than accounts co-constructed by interviewer and interviewee, which, in patterned ways, constitute meaning in the world they are referenced to (Silverman, 2006). Johnson & Christensen (2012) described an interview as an interpersonal encounter. The qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The purpose of interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees share (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaningful level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on an allegorical level (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews are particularly useful for uncovering the story behind a participant's experiences as the researcher attempts to describe the perceptions

of participants (Stake, 2010). A strong interview consists of questions which are neutral, non-leading, and non-suggestive (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011). Additionally, Bodgan and Biklen (2007) characterize interviewing as "a purposeful conversation that is directed by one in order to get information from another" (p. 93).

Semi-structured face to face interviews were conducted with the intention to elicit the perceptions of the participants (Bogdan & Bilken, 2006; Creswell, 2003). During the interview process, questions were asked to obtain detailed information from the participants about the research topic. Interviews were structured with specific wording while allowing for flexibility and exploration (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011) when applicable. Creswell (2009) demonstrated that interviewing, and specifically one-on-one interviews, provides the researcher with the advantage of controlling the questioning. The researcher in this study engaged in open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview to provide beneficial qualitative data (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Creswell 2009). The researcher used thematic analysis when coding the interviews, which “is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Although the interview questions were open-ended, they were framed to deliberately probe teacher responses in relation to themes such as changed self-perception in relation to writing and changed self-confidence in relationship to teaching writing.

Interviews allowed me to obtain pertinent information on the perceptions of NWP fellows and teacher consultants as they attempted to make sense of their experiences in the NWP Summer Institute and how those experiences have transferred to the classroom setting. The interviews provided descriptive data in the participants’ own words to garner insight into the participant’s perceptions (Bodgan & Bilken, 2006). According to

Schensul (2012), semi-structured interviews are "used to collect similar information from a larger sample of individuals, numbering at least twelve to fifteen and usually not more than ninety" (p. 90). Interviews with each research participant were audio- taped for transcription. Transcription and codification took place within five days of the interview. The interview questions were formative in nature. I used an interview guide to allow for the opportunity to structure questions for any additional probes in order to follow up for further information. In addition, memos and field notes were recorded throughout the study with the intention to assist in validation and help to provide traingulation. Those notes assisted me in monitoring how personal beliefs influenced the interpretation of data.

The qualitative research interview sought to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaningful level (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews are particularly useful for unveiling the story behind a participant's experiences as the researcher attempts to describe the perceptions of participants (Stake, 2010). A good interview consists of questions that are neutral, non-leading, and non-suggestive (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011).

During the interview process, open-ended questions were asked to obtain detailed information from the participants without leading their responses. Interviews were structured with specific, clear wording (while avoiding jargon), allowing for flexibility and exploration (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011) when applicable. Creswell (2009)

argued that interviewing, specifically one-on-one interviews, provides the researcher with the advantage of controlling the questioning. The researcher in this study engaged open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview in order to provide beneficial qualitative data (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Creswell 2009). The researcher asked all participants the same questions, but remained open to the possibility that additional questions could arise from their answers. Interviews allowed the researcher to obtain relevant information on the perceptions of teachers who participated in the NWP Summer Institute.

Interviewing is characterized by Caulley (2007) as conversation purposed towards getting information from another. For the purpose of this study, six, semi-structured interviews were conducted using a face-to-face format. I utilized digital audio recording to document the interviews as they occurred. Audio recordings constitute raw data (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Processing this data required time and repeated evaluation to understand distinctions and likenesses. In addition, I recorded notes in a reflexive journal concerning any information which was not digitally recordable, including facial and body expressions as well as my own thoughts and observations of the interviews.

Interviews were audio taped, transcribed, and coded for analysis purposes. Two types of codes (i.e., theme codes and memos) were incorporated. Bernard and Ryan (2010) defined these types of codes as follows: “Theme codes show where the themes identified actually occur in a text [while] memos are field notes about codes and contain our running commentary as we read through texts'' (p. 76). Smith and Osborn (2007) asserted that “one needs to be disciplined to discern repeating patterns but also acknowledge new issues emerging as one works through the transcripts. Thus, the researcher aims to respect convergences and divergences in the data-recognizing ways in

which accounts from participants are similar, but also different" (p. 73). As previously noted, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and presented back to the participants for accuracy of content through member checking (i.e., descriptive validity, Maxwell, 1996). Additionally, during data collection, it was important to explore my own perceptions and experiences as an interviewer and researcher. Thus, I participated in debriefing interviews designed to elucidate initial impressions and in order to address researcher bias (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008).

The use of digital recording devices aided the researcher in documenting participants' responses and discourse. Silverman and Marvasti (2008) suggested that analysis of digital recording increases confidence in data existence. No video recording took place. All digital recordings were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. Transcriptions and any reflexive journal entries relating to an interview were used concurrently to assure the certainty of the data collected. Transcription of participant responses and dialogue took place promptly following the event (Merriam, 1998). As an observer during the audio recording, this allowed for analysis and expansion of my thoughts through the use of a reflexive journal.

Teacher Journals

Teachers were asked to write a journal entry of about 3-5 pages in which they reflected upon their philosophy of teaching writing and reflected upon the "aha moments" and "take-aways" from their experience in the NWP Summer Institute. These journals were coded according to first and second cycle coding (Saldana, 2009) to identify patterns and themes that emerged. The journals served to convey descriptive data regarding how the teacher teaches writing and how they believe the summer institute has

affected their philosophy of teaching writing. Participants in this study received instructions on how to keep a reflective journal as well as guiding questions for journal entries.

Some studies have found that when teachers were asked to keep reflective journals they struggled to actually write reflectively unless they had guiding questions or tasks (Zeki, 2012; Liu & Zhang, 2014). For teachers to become comfortable, confident, and successful in the classroom, they need to reflect upon their actions and the lessons they teach (Lakshmi, 2014; Rahgozaran & Gholami, 2014). Using a reflective journal as a part of this multiple-case study will help teachers understand their perceptions more clearly. The guiding questions I provided them with helped teachers focus their thoughts about their past and present experiences teaching writing and focalize on their memories and experiences in the NWP Summer Institute.

Reflexive Journals

A reflexive approach to the research process is widely acknowledged in qualitative research (Ortlipp, 2008). Journals allow for the refining of ideas, beliefs, and responses during the research process (Janesick, 1999). Reflexivity enables the researcher to become more self-aware and to acknowledge their own biases (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Instead of attempting to restrict researcher values through method or by classifying beliefs, the purpose of reflexivity is to intentionally recognize those values (Ortlipp, 2008). Researchers are encouraged to consider and talk about themselves and their experiences during the research process. Increasingly, qualitative research is "presented in ways that make it clear how the researcher's own experiences, values, and positions of privilege in various hierarchies have influenced their research interests, the

way they choose to do their research, and the ways they choose to represent their research findings" (Harrison, Mac Gibbon, & Morton, 2001, p. 325). Reflexive journals are often used to record insights, document possible themes, and analyze particular expressions (Wertz, 2005).

Morrow (2005) suggested that the self-understandings which arise during the reflexive journaling process can be scrutinized and then embodied into the analysis. When the qualitative researcher acknowledges the human element involved during the analysis process, assumptions, points of view, and consequences may become clear (Wertz et al., 2011). A reflexive journal can serve as a mirror which allows the researcher to respond to the research process in a more authentic way (Morrow & Smith, 2000; Russell & Kelly, 2002).

The act of reflexivity is a process of self-reflection which will serve to engage understanding of the events under study (Kleinsasser, 2000). Reflexivity allows the researcher to unravel individual and philosophical commitments and closely examine philosophy and beliefs (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Kleinsasser, 2000). Reflexive journal writing can deepen the researchers' understanding of the aspects involved in the research process (Borg, 2001). Reflexivity provided me with an avenue for immediate reflection regarding my impressions, interpretations, and thoughts related to the study. According to Kleinsasser (2000), reflexivity is writing to learn and unlearn. "When thinking becomes visible, it can be inspected, reviewed, help us for consideration, and viewed as a set of data" (Kleinsasser, 2000, p. 159). Reflexivity helped in identifying and understanding my own biases and providing further opportunity for triangulation of data sets at multiple levels (Janesick, 1999).

Furthermore, Janesick (2004) explained that the value of the reflexive journal is that it can be used as a data set to complement other techniques and can provide yet another opportunity for data triangulation. After each interview, but before transcribing the interview, I wrote in a journal. In addition, following transcription and data analysis of each interview, recorded my observations in a journal. This process allowed me to explore my thoughts, frustrations, reactions, and experiences throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Data Analysis

Analyzing qualitative data begins with a look at the overall picture and classifying emerging themes from the literature review and in the data collection (Mills, 2007). The analysis of data will include thoroughly evaluating data and determining the themes that emerge using an In Vivo coding scheme (Saldana, 2013). Throughout the course of this qualitative study, the researcher engaged in careful and concise data analysis, which is defined as the re-examination, re-categorizing, or otherwise recombining the data in order to derive empirically based conclusions (Ryan & Bernard, 2003: Yin 2009).

Audio recordings constitute raw data (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Evaluation and interpretation of digital audio recordings will provide for identifying recurring themes, phrases, and ideas. In addition, the researcher analyzed concurrently notes from the reflexive journal concerning any information, which was not digitally recordable. Loose coding categories identified similarities and differences and allowed for organization of data. Attention to the researcher's reflexive journal allowed my thoughts to become visible. Kleinsasser (2000) stated that "when thinking becomes visible, it can be inspected, reviewed, help us for consideration, and viewed as a set of data" (p. 159).

Hatch (2002) contended that the perceptions and experiences of the researcher be considered to avert bias and assumptions. Reflexivity also helped in identifying and understanding my own bias. A reflexive journal enabled me to document thoughts, experiences, questions, and draw conclusions while being cognizant of the intersections of my perceptions and those of the participants.

The analysis for this study consists of a constant comparative approach, categorical coding, and triangulation. A constant comparative approach continuingly inspects and compares the data (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008). Effective qualitative data analysis strategies consist of using analytic tools inclusive of thinking techniques used to facilitate coding, questioning to start the line of inquiry and guide theoretical sampling, comparative analysis to determine similarities and differences within the data, and word meanings which are interpreted from the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). According to Corbin & Strauss (2014) and Yin (2009), constant comparison is among the most analytical of tools at a researcher's disposal. The researcher employed a constant comparative approach and coding to cultivate and categorize the themes and patterns and developing themes identified during the study.

Data Coding Process

Categorizing and coding qualitative data classifies, summarizes, and accounts for data collected during fieldwork (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012), establishing a framework for systematizing and portraying data (Patton, 2002). Categories and codes form the basis for the emerging data (Creswel1, 1994). Data was analyzed in this study through segmenting and coding. Segmenting data is the process of dividing the data into meaningful analytical parts, and coding is the process of marking the data segments

(Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Coding data is achieved through descriptive words, symbols, or category names (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Furthermore, Patton (2002) asserted that coding provides standardization and rigor to the analytical process.

Coding allows the researcher to analyze and interact with data by asking questions of the collected data (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012). According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), qualitative researchers traditionally produce their code and category names directly from their data. Data analysis consists of open, focused, and selective coding. Through open coding, also called initial coding, the researcher begins to clarify and evaluate (a) the participants' main concerns; (b) the participant's assumptions; (c) specific processes and actions; and (d) hidden processes and patterns (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012). I used open coding to discover the significant and frequent information contained in the data. Focused coding provides a venue for examining large amounts of data (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012). I used focused coding to group, re-group, and categorize data. Selective coding occurs through a constant comparative analysis of the data as categories interrelate (Corbin & Strauss, (2014). I used selective coding to fully identify and elaborate upon existing themes.

All responses from participants, either in writing or by verbal interview, were transcribed, organized by date and activity, and then coded using Saldana's (2009) coding descriptions as a guide. As themes emerged, the researcher will analyze cases through cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2013). A cross-case analysis can help to focus themes and identify generalizability of teacher perceptions. Initially, I coded the interviews and journals through an inductive descriptive coding approach. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, a descriptive code assigns labels to data to summarize in a word

or a short phrase the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (2014, p. 74). I then employed In Vivo coding, in which I recorded codes using the words or short phrases from the participant's own language" (p. 74). In looking at the transformations that may occur as a result of participating in the NWP Summer Institute over time, I employed process coding, because it "connote[s] observable and conceptual action in the data. . .[by] imply[ing] actions intertwined with the dynamics of time, such as things that emerge, change, occur in particular sequences, or become strategically implemented" (p. 75). In the first cycle of inductive coding, I summarized and organized the data, and in the second cycle of coding, I categorized the data according to themes and constructs which generated pattern codes, which tended to consist of the following summarizers: "categories or themes, causes/explanations, relationships among people, and theoretical constructs" (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, p.87). I mapped these pattern codes and created a Wordle, which is defined by its creator, Jonathan Feinberg (2014), as "a toy for generating 'word clouds' from text. . .[which] give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text" (http://www.wordle.net/create) so that I could visually discern what patterns have emerged, as well as a concept map tied to my theory and research questions. The final part of this process included a narrative description in which I elaborated on my findings in the pattern codes, weaving first cycle codes into the narrative and supporting it with field note data (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014).

Additionally, I documented my findings with jottings, which Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (2011) refer to as "analytic sticky notes" (p. 93). These jottings recorded my "fleeting and emergent reflections and commentary on issues that emerged during fieldwork and especially data analysis" (p. 94). Jottings can include inferences, personal

reactions, doubts about the quality of some data, a second thought or mental note, elaboration or clarification of an idea, or a cross-reference to material in another part of the data set. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) asserted that "jottings can strengthen coding by pointing to deeper or underlying issues that deserve analytic attention" and that "one way of retaining mindfulness in coding is occasional jotting" (p. 95).

After some time had elapsed, I revisited the data and wrote analytic memos, which are defined as "a brief or extended narrative that documents the researcher's reflections and thinking processes about the data" (p. 95). Like jottings, memos are a way of capturing thoughts about the data collection process (data collection, data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, conclusion testing, and final reporting). Saldana (2013) asserted that analytic memos can be developed to explore the following: "how the researcher personally relates to the participants, research questions, code choices and operational definitions, emergent patterns and themes, connections, emergent theory, problems, personal and ethical dilemmas, and future directions" (p. 96)

The process went through involved many layers of coding, memoing, and reflecting by way of a journal, narratives, and jottings. All interviews were transcribed manually and verbatim. Responses to all questions were tallied and then coded for thematic categories. I read through the transcriptions, looking for key words, phrases, and concepts which corresponded to the interview questions. Content analysis, according to Patton (2002), refers to "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (p. 453). Coding the transcriptions allow for classification of elements in the data into useful categories (Schensul, 2012). A myriad of coding techniques exists and

should be used to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data. In the first round of coding, I employed line by line, open coding to discover which themes emerged. After the completion of the initial round of coding, I used a second cycle of axial coding which allowed me to sort, synthesize, and organize large amounts of data (Strauss & Corbin. 1998). Second cycle coding provided a method to refine the first round of coding into more precisely defined categories or themes by using pattern codes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). In order to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data, I enlisted the help of a trusted colleague check the appropriateness of all codes and categories that emerged. As mentioned earlier, I also kept a reflexive journal to record all observations, field notes, and thoughts. A reflexive journal, according to Wertz (2005), allows a researcher to record insights and reflections, along with pointing out possible themes and analyzing expressions, while axial coding aids in the discovery of themes. I also incorporated the use of memos in my research design. Bernard and Ryan (2010) defined memoing as "keeping running notes about each of the concepts identified, including hypotheses about how the concepts may be related" (p. 273). Data was analyzed for recurring themes which served as another method of interpreting the data and revealing the crux of the participants' perceptions (Patton, 2002). Yin (2011) considered interpreting “the craft of giving your own meaning to your reassembled data and data arrays. This phase brings in the entire analysis together and stands at its pinnacle" (p. 207). I employed an etic and emic onlooker role during data collection. An etic perspective refers to an external, social scientific view of reality (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). An outsider’s viewpoint maintains a degree of objectivity and abstraction (Patton,

2002). In contrast, an emic onlooker, or insider perspective, includes meanings and views of the participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

Credibility, Trustworthiness, and Transferability

Standards and objectivity must be maintained in qualitative inquiry where the researcher is the instrument of data collection in qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). Therefore, the researcher must consider, address, and report potential bias and error (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, Morrow (2005) stated that credibility is internal consistency, achieved, in part, through in-depth field observations and reflexivity. The credibility for this study was supported by my familiarity with the participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) professed that establishing credibility is foundational for establishing trustworthiness. Mertens (2012) asserted that research has transferability when a study can be generalized to like samples from the same population.

Creswell and Miller (2000) defined validity as "how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them" (p. 124). Four strategies ensured the validity of this study's findings: (a) peer reviews, (b) member checks, (c) a reflexive journal, and (d) triangulation. Periodically throughout the study, I engaged in peer reviews. Peer reviews, also known as peer-debriefing, occur when someone familiar with the research reviews the data and research process. This person can challenge any assumptions made, ask difficult questions, provide written feedback, and help generate ideas (Creswell & Miller. 2000; Mertens. 2012). In order to accommodate this, I had a cohort member and colleague review my work throughout the entirety of the study. Additionally, participants of the study received an opportunity to look at preliminary findings. This process, known as member checking, allows

participants the opportunity to confirm that the researcher made accurate interpretations (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Mertens, 2012). Lastly, a reflexive journal containing personal thoughts (beliefs, biases, and perceptions during the entire data collection period) was kept by the researcher. This journal assisted me in assessing the trustworthiness of my account of the data collected (Creswell & Miller. 2000) and provided for triangulation. Triangulation occurs when the researcher includes information from different sources in order to corroborate findings and enhance the accuracy of interpretations (Creswell & Miller. 2000; Patton, 2002).

Ethical Considerations

Marshall and Rossman (2001) asserted that ethical research is "grounded in the moral principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice" (p. 47). I used this as a guideline for my research, along with the guidelines established by the American Psychological Association (2011) and the Institutional Review Board at Sam Houston State University. All participants were explicitly informed of the purpose and intent of the study and were asked to sign informed consent forms of participation. To protect the identity of participants, all personal names, and the name of the participating schools, were kept confidential with pseudonyms used in their place (Patton, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Stake 2010). Data files, electronic and written, were kept in a locked, secure location and will be stored for three years before being destroyed.

Researcher Bias

As qualitative research techniques attest, I, the researcher, served as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis for my study (Merriam, 2002). Consequently, there was a possibility that my preconceived ideas may have influenced either my (the

researcher's) or the participant's actions during data collection and analysis stages, thereby influencing the outcome of the study (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). In order to nullify any bias, I engaged in formal debriefing of interviews with a trusted colleague (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008) as well as undergo frequent member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to present a description of the rational and methodology that was used to present data pertaining to this multiple case study. The research methodology addressed the following: (a) an overview of research design; (b) the theoretical framework guiding this study; (c) interpretive phenomenological analysis; (d) the study's participants; (e) data collection procedures; (f) data analysis; (g) data coding process; (h) credibility, trustworthiness, and transferability considerations; (i) ethical considerations; and (j) researcher bias. Chapter IV will address the research questions and present the data collected during the research process, including a discussion of the findings in the context of the conceptual framework and review of the literature as well as the legitimation of findings.

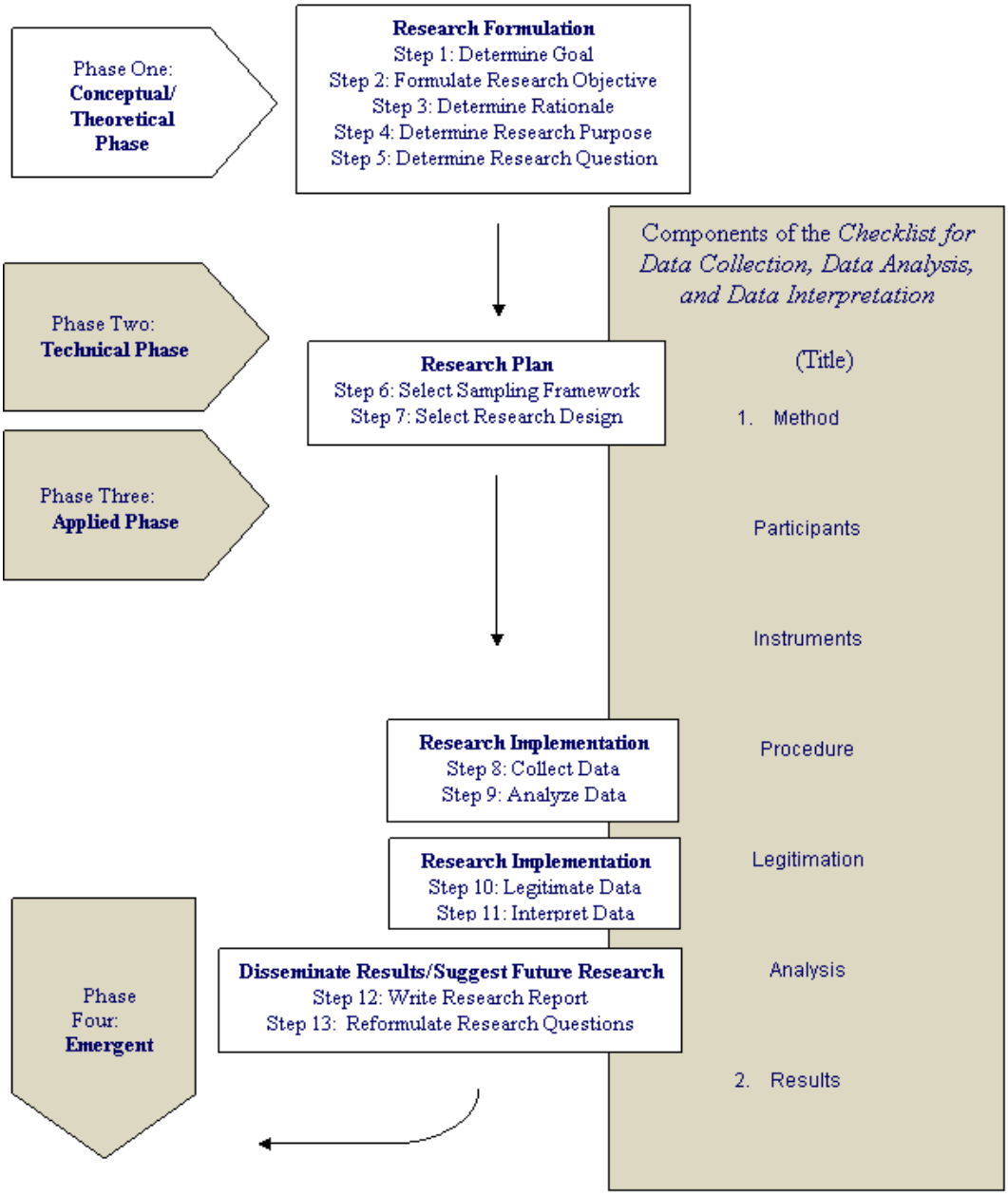

Figure 5. Integration of the four-phase model, the checklist, and the 13-step methodological framework with respect to writing a research report.

Source: Frels, R. K., Sharma, B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Leech, N. L., & Stark, M. D. (2011). The Use of a Checklist and Qualitative Notebooks for an Interactive Process of Teaching and Learning Qualitative Research. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, *11* (1), 62-79.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS, DATA, AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I analyzed the data from six former participants of the National Writing Project Summer Institute whom I interviewed for my study, which followed Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2010) 13-step methodological framework for qualitative research. During this analysis, I employed Steps 9 and 10: analyzing the data and interpreting the data. Furthermore, I discuss the methods of analysis that I used; the themes that emerged from the data; and the evidence which represented each theme. Lastly, I answer the following research questions, integrating the themes into my analysis:

1) What are the perceptions of National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers?

2) What are the perceptions of the National Writing Project Fellows on the impact the National Writing project has had on the way they teach writing?

In the analysis of the data from the six participant interviews, their journal reflections, and balloon metaphors, I provide analyses of the data, which resulted in themes that emerged from interview transcripts, teacher reflection journals, participant balloon metaphors, and my own analytic memos. Additionally, I provide a cross-case analysis of the data corpus, and in this cross-case analysis, I compare and contrast the themes for the six participants in order to get a list of repeating themes and motifs which converged in my study. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) argue that the purpose of "a cross-case analysis is to enhance generalizability or transferability to other contexts", helping us to answer the question "do these findings apply beyond this one specific

case?" (2014, p. 101). Perhaps the most important reason for cross-case analysis is to deepen understanding and explanation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Steps Eight and Nine: Analysis Methods

In order to analyze the data, and with the purpose of triangulating the data, I employed two methods of analysis: thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and cross-case analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). I also shared my analytic memos and analysis of the data with several colleagues while on a Faculty Writing Retreat with Point Loma Nazarene University in Malibu, California from May 29-June 1, 2018 at the Serra Retreat Center for the sole purpose of member checking my interpretations of the data corpus.

Thematic Analysis. Thematic analysis can be defined as drawing out and inferring themes and patterns from data (Aronson, 1995; Benner, 1985; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cresswell, 2014; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014). As Benner (1985) suggested, "The interpreter identifies common themes in the interviews and extracts sufficient interview excerpts to present evidence to the reader of the theme" (p. 10). Thematic analysis allowed me to infer relevant themes and patterns as I read and analyzed interview transcripts, teacher reflection journals, balloon metaphors, and analytic memos. Thematic analysis is made up of six phases: (a) Phase One: Familiarizing Yourself with the Data; (b) Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes; (c) Phase Three: Searching for Themes; (d) Phase Four: Reviewing Potential Themes; (e) Defining and Naming Themes; and (f) Producing the Report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Table 1 provides a chart of the six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 2

Six Phases of Thematic Analysis

Six Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	Analysis Processes
Phase One: Familiarizing Yourself With the Data	Read and re-read the interview transcripts
Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes	Created first-and second-cycle codes (Saldaña, 2013)
Phase Three: Searching for Themes	Read and analyzed codes for themes.
Phase Four: Reviewing Potential Themes	Reviewed and revised themes.
Phase Five: Defining and Naming Themes	Created definitions for themes and named themes.
Phase Six: Producing the Report	Constructed and revised the report.

Phase one: Familiarize yourself with the data. During this phase, I transcribed the interviews, using my audio recordings for the transcription. I used REV Transcription Service (Rev.com: San Francisco, CA) to transcribe my interviews. Once the transcriptions were completed, I listened to the audio recordings multiple times, while reading the transcriptions, making note of the times in the interview that were recorded as inaudible, and filling in the gaps. While going through this second-cycle transcription

process, I frequently jotted down my thoughts and reflections in analytic memos, reviewing my notes multiple times before beginning the coding process.

Phase two: Generating initial codes. During Phase Two, I coded the interview transcriptions and the teacher reflection journals using In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo coding is the process of extracting exact words or phrases from the data (Saldaña, 2013). Next, I coded the interview transcriptions and the teacher reflection journals employing Process coding (Saldaña, 2013). When employing Process coding, the researcher studies the data, interprets actions, and lists the verbs as gerunds (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo and Process coding made up the first cycle of my coding process, which can be defined as extracting initial codes from the data (Saldaña, 2013).

Phase three: Searching for themes. I employed second-cycle coding during my search for themes. Second-cycle coding can be defined as using another coding process to re-examine the data (Saldaña, 2013). I listed all the In Vivo and Process codes (interview transcripts and teacher reflection journals) on a large white board in my office and marked the number of times they repeated and were echoed by more than one participant. I then highlighted the codes that repeated most frequently.

I read and re-read codes over the course of several weeks from March-April of 2018. Many times during or after studying the codes, I generated analytic memos, jotting down my inferences, thoughts, and reflections as they arose. Additionally, I wrote my research questions on the white board as a visible reminder, which enabled me to view the themes through the lens of the research questions. Also, I created a list of questions in an attempt to be mindful as I explored themes in my data; Saldaña (2013) recommended keeping a list of questions such as “What assumptions are they [people] making? What

do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes?" (p. 22). Referring to these questions focused my inferring and reflecting as I studied the codes for recurring themes. As I reviewed the codes, I noted my thinking and reflections in the form of analytic memos, and began jotting down themes that emerged from the data.

Phase four: Reviewing potential themes. As I reviewed the themes that emerged from reading and re-reading the codes generated from the interviews and the teacher reflection journals, I revised the themes, deleting themes that did not align with the research questions, and adding themes as I continued to refine and analyze my codes.

Phase five: Defining and naming themes. As I determined the themes emerging from the data sets, I constructed definitions for each theme, integrating relevant quotes from the interview transcripts and field notes from the teacher reflection journals. Concurrently, I created unique motif phrases for the themes, using quotes from the data to refine the theme titles.

Phase six: Producing the report. I wrote the report after I inferred and defined the initial themes and continued to revise the report until my final stages of the research process.

Thematic Analysis. Interviews and teacher reflection journals were first analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis consists of inferring themes through a six-stage process: (a) Phase One: Familiarizing Yourself with the Data; (b) Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes; (c) Phase Three: Searching for Themes; (d) Phase Four: Reviewing Potential Themes; (e) Defining and Naming Themes; and (f) Producing the Report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In Vivo coding and Process coding were employed for first cycle coding of thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo coding can

be defined as extracting repeated words or phrases that may stand out prominently in some way to the researcher in which the qualitative researcher codes the data in such a way that it prioritizes and honors the participant's voice (Saldaña, 2013). Process coding may be defined as inferring codes by examining the process that is occurring during a particular response from the participant. Saldana describes it as "Using gerunds ("-ing" words) exclusively to connote observable and conceptual action in the data" (2013, p. 266). In this next section, I look closely at the themes that emerged from each of the participants in my study. Tables 2-7 provide code maps of the various codes for each participant in my study, which led to the final list of themes.

Table 3

Code Map for Edith

In Vivo Coding	**Process Coding**
No formal writing instruction	Learning
Previous focus on teaching reading	Shifting
Cherished writing journal	Valuing
Learn from other teachers	Teaching
Opened my mind	Changing
Safe environment	Risk taking
Gained confidence	Growing
True readership	Understanding
Self-expression/personal writing	Expressing
Vulnerability	Sharing
Encouragement	Supporting

In Vivo Coding	Process Coding
Modeling	Knowing
Community of writers	Engaging
Reflection	Reflecting

Table 4

Code Map for Eudora

In Vivo Coding	Process Coding
Never before discussed teaching writing	Silencing
Teacher as writer	Teaching & writing
Validated my need to write	Vilifying
Felt a difference every day	Feeling
Felt nudged by NWP	Nudging
Freedom/encouragement	Freeing
Personal writing/expression	Expressing
Sharing writing	Sharing
Gaining confidence	Asserting
Writing enhances reading	Connecting
Writing as a way of life	Living
Camaraderie	Engaging
Encouraged & empowered	Empowering
Discovered myself	Discovering

Table 5

Code Map for Francie

In Vivo Coding	**Process Coding**
Implement practices in classroom	Trying
Struggle with process	Learning
Reading like a writer	Changing
Rewarding experience	Fulfilling
See teachers being inspired	Inspiring
Don’t know as much as I thought	Realizing
Teach writing instead of assigning it	Transforming
Write with my students	Writing
Felt empowered	Empowering
Online format not effective	Frustrating
Cultural literacy	Shifting
Developed voice	Emerging
Changed the way I teach	Changing

Table 6

Code Map for Flannery

In Vivo Coding	**Process Coding**
Learn strategies to teach writing	Learning
Personal writing	Expressing
Trust the process	Trusting

In Vivo Coding	Process Coding
Don't teach to the test	Changing
Self-efficacy	Empowering
Time to write	Freeing
Share writing with other teachers	Sharing
Development as a writer	Growing
Let my guard down	Exposing
Reading/writing connection	Connecting
Creative release of NWP	Creating
Cherish journal	Valuing
More effective in F2F format	Frustrating
Hands on/immersed in learning	Doing

Table 7

Code Map for Scarlett

In Vivo Coding	Process Coding
Let my guard down	Exposing
Writing in variety of genres	Dabbling
Creative release	Expressing
Changed me as a professional	Transforming
Convey love of writing	Celebrating
More reflective after NWP	Reflecting
Encouraged to share thoughts	Sharing

In Vivo Coding	Process Coding
Motivated me	Motivating
Show students they are writers too	Affecting
More comfortable teaching writing	Comforting
Writing is social & interactive	Engaging
Cherished my journal	Valuing
Gained confidence	Empowering
Loved collaborative component	Connecting

Table 8

Code Map for Charlotte

In Vivo Coding	Process Coding
Personal writing	Expressing
Immediately use in classroom	Trying
Developed voice/confidence	Asserting
Connect with other teachers	Sharing
Opened my mind	Enlightening
Changed the way I teach	Transforming
Empowered me to empower kids	Empowering
Writing/thinking connection	Connecting
Cherish personal journal	Valuing
Membership in a discourse community	Entering
Let teachers be free to write	Writing

In Vivo Coding	Process Coding
Bond with other NWP fellows	Bonding
Freed me from isolated world	Freeing
Exposure to scholars in the field	Exposing

Predominant Themes

Ten themes that emerged from second-cycle coding were: a) first teaching writing experience ever, b) valuing and cherishing the writing journal, c) the collaborative experience of sharing writing with other participants and garnering new perspectives, d) entry into a discourse community of scholars in the field, e) gained confidence/empowerment/self-efficacy, voice, f) creative release/therapeutic nature of the experience/self-discovery, g) immediate transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom/changed the way I teach, h) writing as a way of life/freedom to write/a space to write, i) teachers teaching teachers, j)Teacher Writer/Writer Teacher dichotomy: discovering that you are a writer on some level (rediscovery, validated, emerged). I will discuss each theme in greater depth in the following section: explicating themes.

Cognitive mapping (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Northcutt & Mc Coy, 2004), is a detailed visual representation of cognitive processes. Word Clouds can show such processes because they can be used to show the frequency of words in a text. I created one with the program "Word it Out" (worditout.com) that visually illustrates the following recurring motifs in the interviews and journals: transformation~self expression~teachers teaching teachers~writing journal~encouragement~joy of writing poetry~confidence~strategies~writing each

day~writing process~community of writers~ reflection~mentor texts~implement into the classroom~inquiry based writing~reading like a writer~inspirational~teaching rather than assigning writing~write beside them~empowered~teacher stories~teacher as writer~validated her need to write~be myself~felt a difference every day~boy writers~freedom to write~genres~self-efficacy~creative release~publication~shared perspectives~opened my mind~safe environment~true readership~reading/writing connection~multigenre project~more writing~Voice~network of educators~calming~honest~authentic~creative~freedom~discourse community~third space~bonding~changed the way I teach~models~exploring genres~shared my writing with students~cultural literacy~sharing~discovered self~audience~teacher writer~writing teacher.

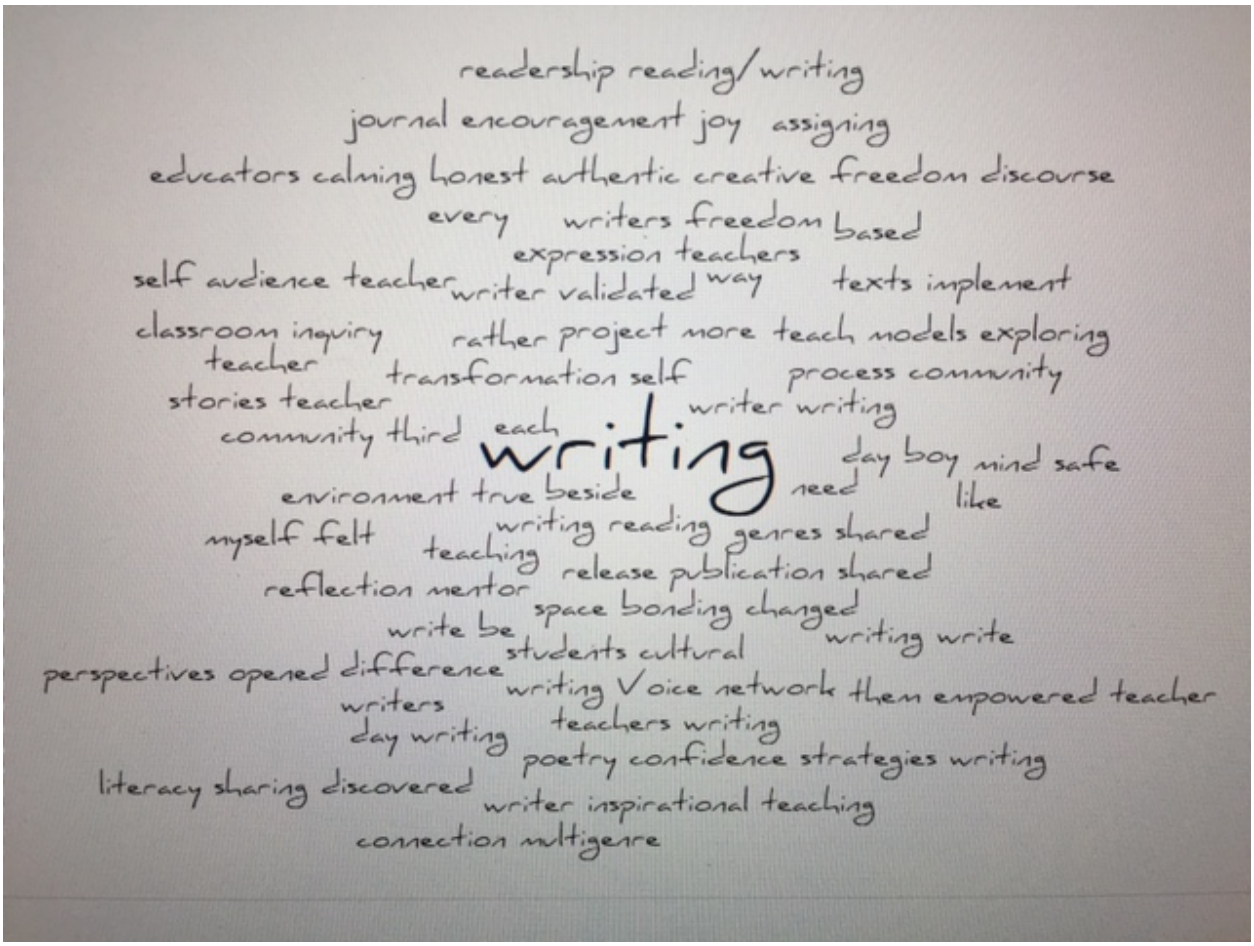

Figure 6. Word it Out

Explicating Themes:

First Teaching Writing Experience Ever

Five of the six participants stated that their experience as a fellow in the National Writing Project Summer Institute was their first "course" ever on the teaching of writing. Only one participant who had her master's degree in curriculum and instruction with 18 hours in English had a previous course on the teaching of writing. All participants stated that they felt uncomfortable teaching writing, and that they were never trained prior to the NWP on how to teach writing. They described their previous writing pedagogy as a journey of trial and error, in which they navigated the process alone. Several participants

shared that they worked in English departments and elementary schools where their colleagues never discussed teaching writing with the exception of the research paper or writing workshop. Each of the participants stated that the focus in their schools had always been on teaching reading rather than on teaching writing. When immersed in a discourse community whose primary aim was to focus on best practices in the teaching of writing, these NWP Fellows expressed feelings of relief, joy, validation, excitement, enthusiasm, uneasiness, and anxiety.

Valuing and Cherishing the Writing Journal

Each participant in the NWP mentioned the personal journal and class book, which was published at the end of the Summer Institute. All six participants spoke very fondly of their journals, recalling the process of creating it and stating that it was an extremely profound and personal experience for them. Each of them stated that they cherished their journals, and that they still had them and often revisited them when they wanted to recall where they were at that time in their life emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. This idea struck me as significant, not only because it was echoed time and again in the interviews, but because it resonates with Parker Palmer's notion of "who is the self that teaches?" (Palmer, 1998, p.4) validating that an effective teacher must engage in continuous reflection, stillness, and contemplation as they attempt to understand who they are emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Palmer mused, "Occasionally, when it goes deeper still, we ask the 'why' question: for what purpose and to what ends do we teach? But seldom, if ever, do we ask the 'who' question- who is the self that teaches? How does the quality of my selfhood form-or deform-the way I relate to my students, my subject, my colleagues, my world? How can educational institutions

sustain and deepen the selfhood from which good teaching comes? (p. 4) In this regard, the journal serves not only as an impetus for personal expression, contemplation, introspection, and reflection, but also as a tool to fully develop as an educator. One participant discussed how she profoundly remembers writing about the loss of her grandmother as a child, another recalls writing about her childhood, another celebrates writing poetry. Whatever the content, the journal was a vital tool in the metacognitive work fellows endured to reflect upon their lives, ideas, values, feelings, discoveries, musings, and speculations.

The Collaborative Experience of the NWP

Each participant discussed the value of the collaborative nature of the NWP. One of the most significant experiences for them was the multiple opportunities they were given each day to share, collaborate, and discuss ideas with their table groups or as a class. Sharing their writing was a valuable experience for all of them, and many of the fellows stated that they appreciated having an audience for their work. They welcomed feedback and enjoyed going through the stages of the writing process with their colleagues in a workshop environment. They also stated they enjoyed the lesson demonstrations and that they gleaned several new ideas of implementing strategies teaching writing in their classrooms across grade levels and content areas. Perhaps the most impactful statement about the collaborative nature of the NWP was the opportunity to see other teacher's perspectives and to understand idiosyncratic ways of teaching and learning. One participant even noted that the director and other faculty members took the journals home every night and commented on them with sticky notes, and that ever since

then that is something that she has implemented with her own students because the authentic feedback made such a powerful impact on her.

Entry into a Discourse Community of Scholars in the Field

Half of the participants stated their experience with the personal writing served as the impetus to help them develop their voices as scholarly writers, equipped with the self-efficacy to do so. Most participants echoed that they gained exposure to seminal texts literacy scholars, and the articles, guest speakers, texts, and discussion topics immersed them into a discourse community of scholars where for once in their lifetimes they felt a part of the dialectic. This fruitful dynamic offered these teachers the opportunity to contribute and be a part of a conversation about best practices teaching writing that they had never before experienced. Four of the participants shared that the books and articles that they were exposed to incited them to read more scholarship in the field, enabling them to discover more authors and gain exposure to new ideas regarding teaching reading and writing.

Confidence/Empowerment/Self-efficacy/Voice

National Writing Project Fellows may have used different words to describe it, but every single one of them spoke or wrote about how the Writing Project Summer Institute empowered them to use their voice and knowledge to implement change in their classrooms, schools, and districts. Each of them shared that at the end of the four or five weeks, they left the Summer Institute feeling more confident and assured about who they were as professional educators, and that they felt as if their voice was important and vital to inciting change. Not only that, they felt heard and encouraged. With a renewed sense of authority that quickly transferred to agency, these teachers possessed the self-efficacy

to share what they knew and had learned with other teachers, administrators, district leaders, fellow graduate students, and most importantly, the students who would enter their classrooms in the fall.

Creative Release/Therapeutic/Self Discovery

NWP fellows claimed that there was something magical about their way of thinking that "opened up their mind[s]". They described the feeling as being that of a much needed creative release (especially while in the midst of master's/doctoral course work), or as a vital outlet for a school year's worth of pent up stress and mental exhaustion. They talked about the therapeutic nature of journaling, sharing, reflecting, pondering, meditating, and even going outside to write in the summer sun and be alone with one's thoughts for a time. Each of the participants stated the NWP Summer Institute offered them stillness, a pause, a third space all their own to write, think, and reflect. The notion of a "Third Space", which comes from post-colonial theory and is an offshoot of post-structuralism. acts as an ambiguous area that develops when two or more individuals interact, challenging our sense of our identity as a homogenizing, unifying force, In this ambivalent area of discourse:

> cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation. As a result, the hierarchical claims to the innate originality or purity of individuals are invalid. Enunciation implies that individuals have no fixity and even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized, and read anew (Bhabha, 1994, p. 7).

That space was neither their own personal classroom nor the college classroom (although housed on a college campus), rather it was a "third space" all their own that

they looked forward to every day of summer with wistful anticipation. It was a neutral space carved out just for them, a place to be a writer, and only a writer, if even for an ephemeral moment in time. In that space they discovered themselves. They explored their fears, dreams, desires, ambitions, goals, and writing baggage.

The NWP Fellows made it clear that they have never experienced anything like this in any other professional development experience before, nor do they think they will ever experience it again. In fact, three of the participants experienced the NWP twice, and this was one of their motivations to do so, and three others said that if given the opportunity they would like to participate in it again. Two of the participants participated in the Summer Institute a second time after I had interviewed them in the spring. They shared that the discussions we had about their experiences in the NWP motivated them to participate in the program again.

Immediate Transferability to the Classroom

All six NWP participants stated they took something back to the classroom and implemented it in the fall semester, whether it was a strategy used to teach writing, a new way of looking at their curriculum, a new lesson from their colleagues' presentations, a different way of teaching the writing process, or a changed perspective on how to teach writing. This immediate transferability incited teachers to feel energized for the new school year and equipped them with enthusiasm to try something new. This refreshed attitude and perspective affects students in innumerable ways. Enthusiasm is catching, and passion invigorating. A child can learn anything from a teacher who loves what they are teaching and has the freedom to teach the way that they believe is best. In this regard, the far reaching effects of the NWP Summer Institute is tenfold. It branches out to

hundreds and thousands of students every year, paraded out of the classrooms of those teacher consultants who have caught the spirit of the legacy of the NWP.

Writing as a Way of Life/Freedom to Write

Most participants celebrated the fact that they finally felt the freedom to write and to continue writing for themselves and their students long after their final session had met. They shared that they looked forward to writing each day of the institute, and that although it was a lot of work, it was by far the most rewarding work they had done in a professional development setting. They offered that their way of thinking shifted and that they began to value time and space for writing more. Many of them lamented the end of the Summer Institute, stating that they felt an emptiness when it was over and they were no longer immersed in the daily rhythms of writing. Their remedy was a commitment to this renewed way of existing as a teacher who is free to write.

Teachers Teaching Teachers

Perhaps the next most significant notion that emerged from the NWP participants is the concept of "teachers teaching teachers". Teachers lauded the idea that they learn best from each other, that they are praised for being knowledgeable, skilled professionals who have a lot to offer their colleagues, and that they are given the opportunity to share what they know with each other. In most professional development programs, teachers are talked to from an expert who shows little value and respect for what they do on a daily basis in their classrooms. They are rarely asked to contribute their own ideas or share their unique experiences and perspectives, and sit passively as knowledge is imparted to them from someone in a position of power. In the NWP model, teachers are invited to share what they know. Teachers are ushered into the conversation by the

director who facilitates their whole class discussion and listens as they share in their table groups. This kind of social constructive environment creates an atmosphere where knowledge is constructed together, and where authentic learning occurs.

Teacher Writer/Writer/Teacher Dichotomy

Most teachers feel a tension between the Teacher Writer/Writer/Teacher Dichotomy without actually being cognizant of it. They are torn between being a teacher who writes and a writer who teaches. Typically, the teacher overshadows the writer and the writing falls by the wayside due to the myriad of responsibilities teachers face in a school day. The participants in the NWP leave the Summer Institute feeling as though this tension has been dissolved into a new identity. Many of the fellows share that they emerged with the conviction that they are "a teacher who writes." They claim that they discover that they are in fact a writer on some level, whether it be that they rediscovered their love of writing and feeling of being a writer, that they already felt that way but that feeling was finally validated by the NWP, or that they emerged as a writer for the first time.

For example, Francie always considered herself a writer, but lost her writer self over the years. The NWP helped her rediscover that part of herself again. The notion of inquiry based writing really spoke to her, and after her experience in the Summer Institute, she began writing in front of her students as well as alongside them. Since the NWP, she has published her student's writing in her college *Writing Across the Curriculum Journal* and just recently published an essay in *Texas Council of Teachers of Language Arts Journal*. She created a writing group and "third space" in her classroom once a month for teachers to come and write. Admitting that she had to bribe people to

come by offering food and door prizes, she proclaims that it is getting more successful with each passing month. I have included her reflection she wrote about the group's first meeting here because it so eloquently illustrates the baby steps that this work takes and why we even bother:

Writing Baggage 26 Feb. 2018

> I'm listening to teachers unpack their writing baggage. One says she has nothing to write about, or it's still in process, in her head, not ready for the page. One is breathless with excitement to finally have the time to get it down, because there's never time. Why is there never time? Another chats about her kids -- task avoidance -- because she hates her handwriting, or the pinky finger injury from her childhood pains her when she writes. I sit here writing about other people. Gee, I wonder why…A room full of intelligent, articulate writing teachers -- none of whom considers herself a writer (except maybe the breathless one). But we're all writers, aren't we? It's what we tell our students? Every one of us has an answer when our students proffer up reasons they can't write. We know what to say to our students; we're their biggest supporters. But we don't say it to ourselves. Savanah exudes
>
> kindness. I can only imagine how uplifting her writing voice would be, if only she could get out of her head. Shelby is a true artist -- imagine the beauty she would put down on the page if only there were time. Deidra is compassion incarnate. Imagine the empathy that would radiate from her words, if only she could empathize with herself. Me? Well, there's the rub. What am I? Who am I? What do other people see in me? What does my voice sound like? What would

my words do, if only I could look within myself? Are they worth putting to paper? What would teacher me say to student me? Kid, you've been to hell and back. You've seen things, felt things deeply. You've stood on the brink, teetered on the edge. Show them what you've seen. Make them feel what you've felt.

Kid, you got this.

Turn your tears into words. Make sentences out of your laughter. Produce a paragraph of pain. Compose epics of your emotions, trilogies of your tribulations. Build a library of your loves. Do not doddle on the doubt. Don't hover over the hang ups, trip on the trivial. Leap into the language. Suck it up and spew it out. Let it be gross and messy and stupid. Life is gross and messy and stupid. Let your words make mistakes. Let them run amok and make fools of themselves. Your words are your children. They toddle and fall on their plump little butts. They stick things in their mouth and drool on themselves. It takes time and follies and bad choices to become mature, complex adults. Let them. Let your words be stupid, until they're not anymore. Because one day, they won't be. One day they will command armies. One day they will heal the sick. One day they will raze an empire and rebuild a nation. One day they will know what to do and will do it with expertise.

For now -- let them toddle.

Francie shared that at the end of the workshop she wrote an email to everyone with the hope that it will draw more people. I think I will have our principal put something in the staff newsletter so other departments can join if they want. She shared her e-mail with me, and I think it is worth including here because it

enables us to see the empowering and cathartic third space that emerges when teachers write together:

> Ink and Coffee Stains met today. Savanah, Shelby, Deidra, and I spent a little time chatting about writing -- our loves, our hang-ups. It's casual, come and go -- so Savanah stayed and wrote for a bit, then had somewhere to be. She only stayed for a few minutes, but plans to stay longer next time. Before she left she hugged me and said, "Thank you for this. I feel so empowered!" The rest of us wrote for about an hour or so (actually closer to two). Shelby wrote about tiny houses and what they represent about our psyche and why we hold on to stuff. (I think she was also inspired to start a children's story.) Deidra worked on two pieces of fiction: she won't let me say much, but one is about the way lives intersect and the other is a modern retelling of a classic. I wrote about us and why it's so hard to write and why we should do it anyway (It was quite cathartic).

Manifesting out of raw desire and a compulsion to write, the spirit of the legacy of the National Writing Project takes on a life of its own, breathing life into new members, until eventually a network is formed. Delicate and vulnerable, the teacher consultant leads her tribe, motivating and nudging and encouraging them along the way. It is her sole belief in the value of this work that drives her, and with time and effort and a little luck, she will lead other teachers to trust their voice, share their souls, and sign up for the next summer institute.

Flannery articulates this notion as she shares a story in her interview. In her experience in the NWP, she met a NWP site director in Texas. When sharing her thoughts with the site director her enthusiasm about her experience, the director replied,

"That's just what we do. We are all Writing Project people and we support each other". She shared with me another story of a Writing Project fellow, who wrote about her grief in her journaling during a NWP Summer Institute. Her writing led to a published book. Out of the Writing Project Summer Institute she not only left with a lighter heart from having an outlet for her grief, but also a published memoir.

Consequently, Flannery writes as a scholar and doctoral candidate for national conferences, scholarly journals, her school district, and as a literacy coach; however, she shares that she does not really feel like (and nor has she ever felt like) a "real writer". Her experience in the NWP validated the fact that she is indeed a writer, and she has published a few articles after being in the Summer Institute. Additionally, Edith never felt like a writer until she participated in the NWP. Since then, she has encouraged her students to write for publication and just recently accompanied a student of hers on a trip to Washington D.C. to accept a writing award for an essay contest. She shares, "I was actually able to take an eighth grade student of mine to Washington D.C. because her essay won nationally in the state of Texas. That was a huge leap for both of us. Ten years later that's where I am now in teaching writing, how exciting is that?" As a literacy coach, Charlotte also emerged from the NWP feeling like a writer. She never considered herself a writer previously, and in fact struggled with writing in graduate school. However, equipped with the self-efficacy she possessed after the Summer Institute, she has gone on to implement writing in her school and community by having students publish their work and has presented to teachers for professional development and at national and international conferences. Moreover, Eudora was validated by her experience in the NWP. She always considered herself a writer, and is a blogger and

published writer. Her participation in the Summer Institute motivated her to create a "writing room" for teachers at her school to come and write after school every other week and share their writing. Feeling like a marginal writer her entire academic career, Scarlett emerged from the NWP with the motivation to write. She is now an assistant professor who has the confidence to teach graduate students to write. These are the various ways the experience of the NWP Summer Institute has either validated, revived, or created writers who teach.

In answering my research questions, I employed a phenomenological approach, in which I attempt to understand the perspectives of my participants as they attempt to understand their perspectives. In other words, as a researcher, I am attempting to understand their reality as they attempt to understand it and share it with me. In this process, I am unpacking their thoughts and perceptions as they are trying to make sense of their thoughts and perceptions.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

According to Smith (2011), "Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a recently developed qualitative approach which, since its inception, has rapidly become one of the best known and most commonly used qualitative methodologies" (p. 9). IPA has theoretical roots in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. Phenomenology (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Smith et al., 2009; van Manen, 1990; Wertz et al., 2011) is the philosophical movement concerned with lived experience and the desire to construct the detailed examination of experience on one's own terms. Saldana (2013) describes it as "the study of the nature or meaning of everyday or significant experiences" (p. 272). In psychology, idiography describes the study of the individual,

who is seen as a unique agent with a unique life history, with characteristics setting him/her apart from other individuals. In IPA research, the researcher talks to the participants in order to analyze how they make sense of what they say regarding the experiences that they have had. In this process, the researcher attempts to discover their perceptions of what the participants think is happening to them. Smith and Osborn (2007) define interpretive phenomenological analysis as a theory, which aims "to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world" (p. 53). In this form of analysis, the researcher attempts to get close to the participant's personal world through the process of interpretive actions based on the researcher's perceptions of the participant's meaning-making of their experiences. This method poses the question: does the researcher see something that the participant may not even be aware of? "Thus, a two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, is involved [in which] the participants are trying to make sense of their world, [and] the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (p. 53). IPA is therefore theoretically connected to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Packer & Addison, 1989; Palmer, 1969; Smith, 2007).

Smith and Osborn (2007) asserted that "The power of the IPA study is judged by the light it sheds within the broader context" (p. 56). They also added that IPA researchers wish to analyze in great depth and detail how participants perceive and make sense of things, which are happening to them. This analysis method is appropriate for this study because this particular study attempts to investigate teacher perceptions, and in doing so the researcher must employ a double hermeneutic in order to understand the way in which the participants understand their experiences. Smith (2004) argued that a

paramount goal of interpretive phenomenological research is to make a contribution to research through "interrogating or illuminating existing research" (p. 43). That is the nature and aim of this study.

Additionally, Smith, Flowers, and Larking (2009) advocated for analytical processes to be iterative, fluid, engaged, and multi-directional. As such, analysis involves immersive and intense reading and re-reading of the text, initial noting on exploratory levels of relationships, processes, places, events, values and principles, fluid textual analysis of exploratory noting, developing themes, and searching for connections and patterns. Additionally, analyzing data involves a pre-analysis decision model to explore biases, assumptions in data analysis, and intra-coder agreement through member checking for informant feedback (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Smith and Osborn (2007) claimed that there is not a singular prescriptive methodology for conducting interpretive phenomenological research studies, noting, "IPA studies are conducted on small sample sizes. The detailed case-by-case analysis of individual transcripts takes a long time, and the aim of the study is to say something in detail about the perceptions and understandings of this particular group rather than prematurely make more general claims. This is described as an idiographic mode of inquiry as opposed to the nomothetic approach" (p. 56). Therefore, I will employ their suggestion of an idiographic approach that begins with particular examples and works up to more general categories and claims. Moreover, an emic perspective (Creswell, 2009) was used where the views of the participants are the primary consideration of the analysis.

As previously stated, Interpretive phenomenological research is inherently ideographic, beginning with closely examining one case to a degree of closure before

moving on to a detailed examination of a corpus of cases (Smith, 2004). When individual analysis of each case has been completed, the researcher can conduct a cross-case analysis for convergence and divergence of themes (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The following section explores a cross-case analysis of this study.

Participant Perceptions

In going through first and second cycle coding and undergoing a cross-case analysis of all six participants in reviewing the themes that emerged from their interviews, reflection journals, and balloon metaphors, I have selected some quotes from each participant to share in this discussion that speak to my research questions and illustrate what my participants took away from the National Writing Project Summer Institute and how it helped them to frame their perceptions of themselves as writers and teachers of writing.

Research Question I

What are the perceptions of National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers?

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of the National Writing Project Fellows on the impact the National Writing project has had on the way they teach writing?

Participant #1: Edith

Edith teaches English to 6th and 9th graders at a private school in east Texas. She holds a master's degree in Instructional Leadership with a minor in reading and is currently a doctoral candidate in literacy. She never had any formal instruction in the teaching of writing, and appreciated the fact that English professors worked with education professors to direct the Sam Houston Writing Project because "as iron sharpens

iron" she learned so much from their expertise. When I asked Edith the question, "In what ways did it help contribute to perception of seeing yourself as a writer then, just in general? Looking at yourself finally as a writer, not just a teacher writing?" She replied, "I think what happened that it actually could be an enjoyable experience and to be able to enjoy something so much that you really want to go and share that joy with somebody else. That became paramount to my teaching-that was the addition." When asked what made it so enjoyable she responded, "I saw other men and women thoroughly enjoying teaching, the teaching of writing and I loved it and that was when I began to purchase books on people who were just really great at that particular aspect in education and I devoured them after that so that I could see what it was that I needed to do to be better, especially as I started to teach the higher grades. I saw that the critical thinking skills that are so touted today in our society, our educational society, we actually have that in writing. Kids are totally engaged when they are working to put together a piece that expresses their thoughts about a particular literary piece, that's necessary."

Participant #2: Flannery

Flannery is a 3rd-5th grade instructional reading coach in east Texas who has a master's degree in reading and a doctorate in literacy. When I asked her "In what ways did the summer institute contribute to your perception of yourself as a writer?" She replied, "I have never had a huge self-efficacy for myself as a writer. So it didn't contribute. I didn't feel extremely confident when I left the writing project. I loved all the things that I learned, but that's just something I struggle with. So didn't feel like, oh now I know this, and I know this, and I've learned ... I can share this." She went on to say that she felt it was a valuable experience and learned a great deal about herself and teaching

writing, that she enjoyed the time to write and share with her colleagues, but that it was not transformative. When I asked her if she felt like it transformed her she replied, “Yeah I don't think it was ... I don't remember it being like, wow I'm gonna do this ... I mean we talked about maybe, like where do you go, what's life after this? And what can you do with it? But I've experienced different pieces of, different parts of the writing that we've done before, a lot of it wasn't new. And I enjoyed it immensely, and I learned a lot. But I don't feel like I was transformed, no.”

After I interviewed Flannery this spring, she became enthusiastic about trying the NWP again. She shared with me that reflecting upon the role that the summer institute had played in her life encouraged her to try it one more time. She sent me some comments as a follow-up to her interview after completing the project this summer:

> I really liked the Writing Project this summer, although it was very, very different. I encouraged a teacher on my campus to enroll and I took it with her, which was exciting for me (hopefully for her, too). Our director used the book *The Creativity Project* by Colby Sharp as our text, and her prompts for our writing came from that text. She had attended some big learning conference in Dallas and had found out about this text at the conference. In the text, children's authors answer specific prompts tailored specifically for them (in writing and drawing). We also used a website called Write About and that is where we posted our writing and responses to others' writing. Part of the project was to select one piece to publish in a periodical. Our selections (mine was poetry) will be published this fall. We had synchronous Zoom meetings, and almost all of us attended each time. There were 8-9 of us in the group. She did say that we would

> discuss becoming NWP consultants, but that meeting got cancelled at the end of the project. I enjoy F2F better, because of the collaboration, feedback, and time devoted to writing. I'm more disciplined when I have a structured schedule - someone else is providing the time for me to write - rather than creating my own set time for writing at home. I wouldn't say that this was a transformative experience for me, but it was enjoyable. I plan on using Write About with my students this fall.

Participant #3: Francie

Francie is a dual credit English teacher at a high school and community college in east Texas. She had one course in graduate school on the teaching of writing for her master's degree in curriculum and instruction with 18 hours in English, but she never really learned how to teach writing. She shared that she "used writing to have them [students] tell me what they learned about the literature, but that I didn't teach them how to write". When I asked her if she considered herself a writer she responded, "I do now. I didn't before, when I was first slated to teach the dual credit 1301 and 1302, and I found out that it was truly a writing course, I thought, 'Oh crud, how am I gonna do this?' Because teaching literature was easy for me, but the idea of trying to teach someone how to formulate their thoughts that are in their head, and get them down on paper in a way that makes sense to other people, I thought how can you possibly do that? But the more I ... Well actually I think teaching writing, I guess I was always kind of a writer. I loved writing in high school, writing for personal reasons, and then I fell away from it. And then once I had to start teaching it, I had heard people saying you can't teach writing if you're not a writer, you can't teach someone to do something you don't do. And it forced

me to start actually doing the writing assignments that I was asking my students to do, so that I could model for them what it's like to go through that writing process, and it, you know, it's kinda crap the first time. And it made me more of a writer."

Her only reticence about the Writing Project is that it was entirely online. She laments, "online might work for some people, but it didn't work for me. Discussion boards can sometimes work, but when you're typing, you think through your thoughts ahead of time and then put them down. And instead of thinking one thought and then getting feedback on that thought and then developing that thought, and then moving on to the next one, you don't really get to develop your ideas by seeing the reactions from other people, until you've already put them down in the little discussion box. So I don't think it's as beneficial."

However, she did appreciate the books they read and responded to online. She shares, "Okay, so one thing, the textbooks we were required to read, a couple of them really focused on this idea of activism. . .they seemed to indicate that education is leaning toward activism in the classroom. Teaching students through the lens of basically looking at what problems there are in the world, and then finding a way to correct those problems. So whether you're teaching math or science or English, it's about finding societal problems in those content areas, investigating, researching, and then writing. The notion that they're not just writing to write the assignment and have this great idea in class, or this great discussion. And then it fizzes away and they get their grade, and they get it back from their teacher, but actually developing a way of being, or a mindset, habit of mind, where they feel like, 'Wow, writing empowers you, wow, my voice matters.'" She

added that her exposure to the ideas espoused in these books has changed the way that she teaches her literature and writing courses both at the high school and college levels.

Another disappointment she shared was one echoed by several of the participants, and that is the desire to write more and have more time carved out to just sit and write. She states, “I thought there would be more actual writing. I expected to do more actual writing workshop, and I'm not sure why I expected that. I kind of expected it would be teachers who enjoy writing, and love writing, coming together and maybe sharing prompts and trying out writing, sharing our writing with each other. And then in the process of doing the writing, and sharing our writing with each other, also then kind of organically having conversations about, ‘Okay now how would this work in the classroom? Because what you just did in your writing is fantastic, so can you tell me your thought process and let's talk about how we can transfer that to lesson plans, and helping our students do this thing that we just did.’ I really wanted to do, and I kinda wanted to grow as a writer myself, not just as a teacher, but just as a writer. And it was all education and pedagogy, and it was very little actual writing.”

As part of my phenomenological approach, I prodded her, “So it felt more, maybe what I'm hearing you say, is like a class, or an academic action that you were going through with assignments and readings, of responses to that, rather than a workshop experience, or seminar, where you're writing and you're sharing your writing, and you're developing yourself as a writer, and you're coming into your voice, and you're having an audience finally for everything that's in your head. All of those things, those pieces were not a part of that?”, and she responded with, “exactly!”

After participating in this study in the spring of 2018, Francie was motivated to participate in the summer institute again. When I asked her how it went the second time around, she responded:

> The 2018 SHWP was an exercise in creative writing, using technology as a platform for "publishing" in a writing community, and remembering what it's like to be a student. *The Creativity Project,* while an interesting concept, is geared toward children's literature, and creative writing and not as useful in a high school classroom as other writing texts might be. We used Write About, an online platform for writing, posting, and commenting in a writing community. The site also included thousands of writing prompts (which was the most useful part). I liked concept of using an online platform where students can share and respond to each other's writing; however, it seemed it would be overwhelming to monitor the comments. The writing project instructor had only recently been introduced to the website and it felt as though we, the participants, were guinea pigs, testing it out. The writing project was, once again, completely online. It was clear none of us were very comfortable during video conferences. One, we didn't know each other but had to jump right into having discussions about writing, and two, the technology never seemed to work very well, making conversations awkward and stilted. The one thing I got out of this one was remembering to put myself in my students' shoes. We were asked to write creatively in timed situations and I struggled greatly. We were also asked to create a video that included a voice recording of us singing a song we wrote. I was extremely uncomfortable. This made me reflect on what I ask my students to do and to keep in mind the

difficulty they face. While I can write expository pieces with ease in timed situations, creative writing was extremely difficult. I may have students who feel the same way, or who have the opposite struggle.

Francie's feedback illustrates that no two summer institutes are ever the same, especially in the same university setting. As a researcher, I appreciate her candid remarks, and feel very fortunate to have had two of my study participants out of six become motivated about trying the summer institute again after having discussions during the interview process and reflecting on how they felt about their previous experiences in their journals. While Francie voiced some concerns with her experience in the project (technology, assignments, the text), she allowed herself to be a reflective learner, and, as a result, took away two very positive insights: one, she was faced with the struggle and discomfort students also face with written assignments, and two, she was exposed to something new with the online community of writers forum, something that she would not have experienced otherwise. Her challenges with the online forum are unfortunate. While offering the NWP Summer Institute online offers an opportunity for access for people in many different locations, my research has shown that it is never as effective as it can be in a face to face or even hybrid format. There are so many benefits to working collaboratively in a group setting-to hearing other people read their writing aloud, to workshopping with them on our writing, to listening to them read a picture book or a poem, or share a lesson or an experience with us. It is also beneficial to have guest speakers come and visit the group of NWP fellows.

As Moje et al (2004) suggested, "Discourses of upper level content and literacy learning are a means of producing new knowledge. . .[however], we cannot know what

these new understandings look like until we construct them, we cannot study their effectiveness until we enact them, and it is difficult to construct and enact them without a change in policies and perspectives that shape classroom practices" (2004, p. 68). Furthermore, third spaces which are face-to-face widens the area beyond that summer group to professors, librarians, other teachers or grad students, guest speakers in the community, etc. It is always effective to hear another person's perspective or learn from their shared experience or expertise. The most important thing about this project is the community that is formed, both within the summer institute and beyond it, as teacher consultants. It is that community that burgeons and continues the commitment to the legacy that was started 44 years ago in a little classroom in northern California. The following figure illustrates the far-reaching influences of the summer institute.

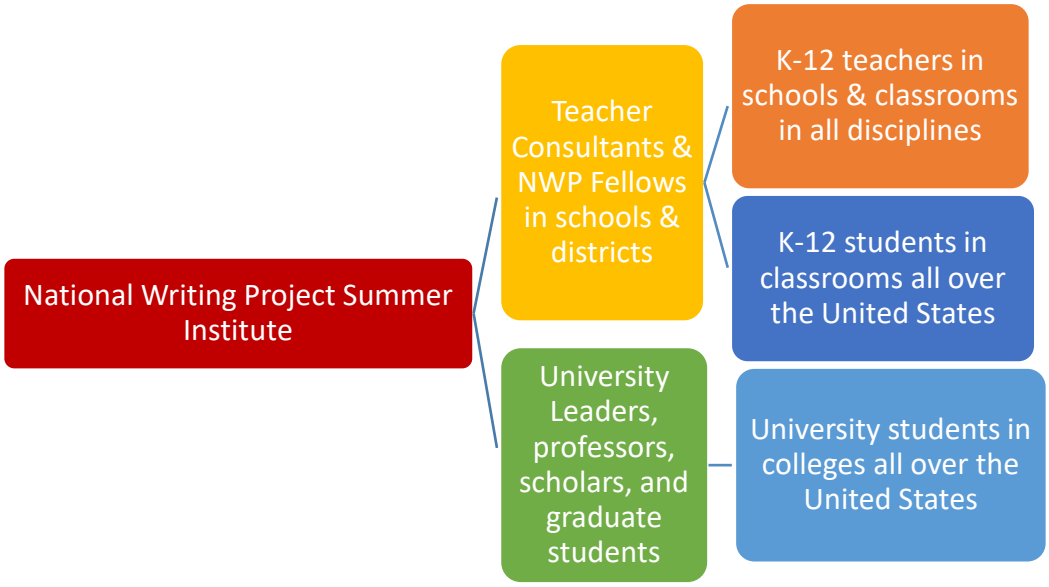

Figure 7. The Network Community of the National Writing Project

Participant #4: Charlotte

Charlotte is a former fourth grade teacher and literacy coach at the elementary level who has a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and is working on her doctorate in literacy. She had a lot to say about her experiences in the NWP and how much it transformed her life and way of thinking about reading and writing. She recalls:

> I'm one of those people who tries everything out that I learn. I was really excited at the time because I had done so much math stuff when I was self-contained. When I went back to writing teacher I was like, oh my goodness, now I have all these tricks and tools and things that I can bring to my classroom. I felt confident in it because I had actually gone through a long summer and a lot of writing, so, I was not scared of it. I was very confident. I didn't feel like just a teacher or just somebody working on their master's, I felt like a community of literacy people, that I knew a lot because they would share their stories and I learned through the people that were around. You're engulfed with so much information. . . I was really intrigued the whole time I was there.

She goes on to explain how it changed the way she taught, and how it became an entire mind shift that completely revamped the way she looked at the reading/writing/thinking connection. She comments:

> I taught from a Basal 'cause that's what we did. We got this brand new Basal called *Treasures*. We taught from worksheets and that's what your expectation was and this was written by these people with their doctorate. I was sitting around people that were working on their

> doctorate that hadn't written a textbook but they come up with some ideas that were so much beyond the Basal. I knew my kids got bored of listening to a book on tape, highlight and read to them in class every day, but that's what we did. There was nothing else. Or, getting a writing Texas source writing book and opening to page 81 and doing practice problems every day. There was no real personal connection to that subject, it was just, doing the job, getting the grade and moving on.

Charlotte credits this shift in her perspective to the teachers she collaborated with in the project and the knowledge and shared experience of the director and the books and seminal thinkers she was exposed to. She reflects:

> That taught me a different way of thinking, completely; it opened my mind. It changed my whole entire life in one simple summer of being with a bunch of people that I belonged to, feeling supported and connected and, I guess even, pushed me further to think about critical thinking. I never thought about critical literacy, I never thought about fear, I didn't think about depositing and all the theories and all the stuff. From there on out I changed my whole direction and decided, hey, let's see what reading's all about and still took courses on ad leadership because I still wanted the same door and some of that, and took some math courses to see how it is to be a leader in developmental administration. The reading was popping up in everywhere. Instead of saying math is everywhere, now I can literally say, literacy is everywhere.

She then says something pretty profound about the NWP, something I had always felt but had yet to articulate myself, and that is the idea of teachers being free to write. She shares:

> Maybe that freedom is what teachers need. To teach when they're ready to teach, talk when they're ready to talk, maybe not be a force fed everything. Maybe that was the purpose of it. When I thought about it, I thought, oh gosh, it's not structured, oh my goodness. Why do we not know ahead of time what books we're bringing? Why can't I bring a copy of this book and why ... I felt that uneasiness of not knowing what I was going to write every day and not knowing what I was to expect every day. It felt like a retreat, instead of over a campfire, we bonded over literature. Who thought that would be fun?

Every single participant in this study echoed this same sentiment. The NWP Summer Institute was fun. It was enjoyable. They felt comfortable and welcomed and accepted and supported for who they were and what they had to say, and they left with the assertion that not only should all professional development be like this, but also all teaching and learning should look like this. That resting idea sparked change in a lot of classrooms the previous fall semester. A mind shift ushers in a behavioral shift. Teachers attempt to replicate that feeling, that sense of wonder and community, in their classrooms. The idea that learning should be fun is not a complex one, but one educators need to be reminded of in the era of accountability, standardized testing, and cookie cutter teaching.

Participant #5: Eudora

Eudora is a former high school and college level English teacher in east Texas who currently teaches composition and rhetoric and technology. When asked "Are there any activities that you participated in that you have taken back to your own classroom and implemented? In what you find them to be effective?" She replied, "It wasn't the activities that freed me (since I was the only high school teacher) but rather the freedom to teach in a way that was right for me rather than obeying the mandate of colleagues to teach their way. The National Writing Project gave me the credentials I needed to say to myself, 'I know what I am doing and I don't have to cowtail to anyone else.' It was a great feeling to know NWP had my back!" When I asked her, "In what ways did the NWP Summer Institute contribute to your perception of yourself as a writer?" She responded, "It gave me self-confidence, not only as a writer, but as a writer who knew how to teach it." She attributed this to the collaborative nature of the program, sharing, "I wasn't alone anymore. Even after it ended, I participated in group meetings and held writing groups for teachers on my campus. I always felt the support of that summer group, even as the years have passed. It gave me self-confidence and that will transform anyone. I could feel more independent, strong, and assured that it was okay to emphasize writing in the classroom. It enhances literature rather than competing with it."

As part of my phenomenological lens, I prompted her further, asking, "How did it change your perception towards teaching, learning, or yourself as a writer or teacher of writing?", in which she replied, "I am always open to how educators teach writing in the classroom. I am exposed to a plethora of new books each year that have a new angle on how to write and/or how to implement it in the classroom. I appreciate the new activities

and ideas. However, NWP told me to enjoy writing, write my heart out, and then permit my students to do the same. After we get the material out of us and onto the page, then we can structure it into the form we wish to publish. The focus on enjoying writing sounds simple and obvious, but when new students say they hate to write the first hurdle is to lead them to love it. NWP helped me to free my students and the transformation of them is amazing. It works for every age group. Honestly could not imagine changing anything about my Summer Institute experience. It was a special time in my life when I needed encouragement and assistance to be an English teacher who didn't have to hide the fact that she was a writer and NWP provided it for me."

Participant #6: Scarlett

Scarlett is a former kindergarten teacher and literacy coach who is currently an assistant professor of literacy education at a university in central Texas. She holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and a doctorate in literacy. She had no background on teaching writing before entering the Writing Project, and claimed that she is much more comfortable teaching writing now than she ever was before. She shared that the journal was the most profound aspect of the summer institute for her, and that since then she has always used writer's notebooks in her classes and encourages her teachers to do the same because they provide students with a sense of ownership and independence. She adds that her journal helped her to see herself as a writer and that "at the time I did not feel like a scholar, but I am slowly starting to now". She claims the NWP gave her the confidence she needed to write and that the collaborative learning environment helped her form that growth mindset. She shares, "We came from various backgrounds and thus bringing our background knowledge to [the table] helped each

other grow." She adds that she wishes that there was a NWP Alumni group to "help people to not only remember their experience but to keep the knowledge they learned alive". This sentiment was echoed my all the participants who claimed that they wished they had some way to network and connect with other Writing Project fellows that was more formal than simply exchanging contact information, such as a follow up retreat, professional group, or seminar.

The Balloon Metaphor

Writing is a journey. It often begins before we can speak or articulate words in the form of scribbling, and is a vital component of our emergent literacy. As writers, we are influenced by other writers by the nature of our reading, (Applebee, Britton, Bruner, Elbow, Emig, Graves, Murray, Newkirk, Piaget, Rosenblatt, Vygotsky). In his text *The pleasures of reading in an age of distraction,* Jacobs (2011) discussed the concept of social reading, which allows us to feel connected with others, urging us to see things we didn't see in our own reading, a gift that is invaluable, and that can only come in the presence of others. He layers this idea with the notion of "accidental sagacity" (p. 145), or unexpected surprises, that readers often get when they delve into a text which may lead them down a path of other texts and new ideas, other writers, and future reads. This serendipitous knowledge and experience often merges in the form of new wisdom, a spark which, after all, perpetuates the desire to read. Additionally, teachers often influence our conception of ourselves as writers, and can have positive or negative lasting effects on our writing psyche. I call this "writing baggage", and attempt to unpack this baggage with my students at the beginning of the year when I ask them to reflect on three essential questions, "How I Learned to Write?" "What Makes Good Writing?" and "Who am I as a Writer?" I front

load my writing course with metaphors and philosophical questions before I ever get to the textbook in an attempt to get students to think meta-cognitively about themselves as writers before we begin the real act of trudging through patterns of discourse in an effort to find their own writing voice and stance. Therefore, it makes sense that an academic writer who also uses metaphors and philosophical questions to probe, nudge, and engage her readers spoke to me.

Bishop (1999) in her article "Places to stand: The reflective writer-teacher-writer in composition, discussed the attack of creative writing teachers in academe, considers the dichotomy between expressivist and social constructivist rhetoric, and laments the writer-teacher teacher-writer binary in a philosophical probing of composition theory and the *real* writer's place in it all, ending with the ironic notion that although literature professors are the gods at the top of the academic mountain, if it weren't for creative writing professors and writers in general, they would have nothing to write about. She summed up her metaphor in one sentence: "Composition, of course, has long existed in a service relationship to both literature and creative writing, although it has come into sharper focus as the necessary foothill-region of the English Mount Olympus" (p.18). One of her kernels of wisdom that she shared grabbed a hold of me, both as a writer and an emerging scholar, and that is the insightful balloon metaphor. She offered, "The expressivist 'position', then, is often embodied by non-expressivists as constructions of Donald Murray and Peter Elbow-who certainly are often cited in CCC (College Composition Communication) pages. These individuals, in their author functions or rhetorical constructions, are raised and dismissed, treated as fatherly Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloons, floated through critiques as unitary and non-representative figures whose simplified positions can be

quickly-via synecdoche-argued against" (Bishop, 1999, p. 11). She went on to praise Murray and Elbow and several other writing gurus in her discussion of composition theory, and in doing so makes a strong case for expressionist rhetoric, which is the back bone of the National Writing Project (Lieberman & Wood), but what spoke to me was her Macy's Parade Metaphor.

In reading those few lines and following the development of her argument and the reason for her metaphor, or more specifically, the metaphor's raison d'etre, I began to conceive of my writing life, my writing history, my writing muse, and the very impetus for my study on writing teachers, as a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade of sorts with each professor who taught me a little bit about writing, and a lot about myself as a writer, as balloons floating down the path, which I see as my writing journey. The visual that I saw is described in Appendix C, with each writing teacher who inspired me given their own balloon, and the string that holds the balloon inscribed with the gift they gave me as a writer. I could also do this with mentor texts, and writers both in composition theory and classical literature or popular culture who pulled me into the written word and made me wistful to write a few words of my own, but I felt it fitting for this study that I share my own balloon metaphor, and what inspired me to become a student of literature, an English teacher, a scholar, a writer.

In order to get a better sense of how my participants perceived themselves as writers on their writing journey, and to see the influences along the way as they developed as writers, I asked them to create their own balloon metaphors (Appendices D-I). William Broz, a professor at a university in Texas, argued that writing methods students need

personal & distant mentors to guide & support their developing teaching practices. For him it was Cleo Martin (Iowa Writing Project), whose mentor was Don Murray; as luck would have it his dissertation committee chair was Bonnie Sunstein, a mentee of Don Murray. Throughout his development as a scholar he felt he was often *reading upstream* (Alan Jacobs). In reflecting on his mentors, he mentioned the notion of pedagogical process of thinking on the ceiling (Sunstein), of discovering the Oz behind the curtain of writing instruction (Broz), and developing one's own ideas about teacher knowledge & apprenticeship of observation (Grossman, 1990) as metacognitive practices. This is especially significant to the work we do in the National Writing Project because we are a network of teachers teaching teachers. We build a legacy that influences others before us and after us.

In order to illustrate the data which emerged from the balloon metaphors, I have created a balloon matrix of themes that "floated" through the data, as conveyed in figure 8. This cross-case display (Gibbs, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Shkedi, 2005) illustrates the contrasts and ranges of perceptions (Saldana, 2013).

Figure 8. Themes for the Balloon Metaphors

Summary

In Chapter IV, I have provided the findings for the cases of six former National Writing Project Fellows' perceptions of themselves as writers and teachers of writing. The findings were derived from interviews, teacher reflection journals, and balloon metaphors. For my data analysis, I conducted a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of each single case, using the methods of In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) and Process coding (Saldaña, 2013). Following the single case analysis of each participant, I then employed a cross-case analysis of the data gleaned from all six participants (Stake, 2006, Yin, 2014). Lastly, I answered the research questions, incorporating the themes generated from the analyses. Next, in Chapter V, I will discuss Steps 11 and 12 in Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2007) 13-step methodological framework for qualitative research: (a) Step 11: Legitimate Data, and (b) Write the Research Report. Additionally, I will provide discussions and implications based on the collected data and the findings discussed in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter IV, I discussed the analyses that I used during the research, presenting the themes that emerged from those analyses. Chapter V includes Steps 10-13 of the Qualitative Data Analysis Model (QLM): (a) Step 10: interpret data; (b) Step 11: legitimation of the data; (c) Step 12: write the qualitative research report; and (d) Step 13: reformulate the research questions (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). Thus, Chapter V contains the following sections: (a) Overview, (b) Discussion of Findings, (c) Discussion of Findings in the Context of the Conceptual Framework, (d) Discussion of Findings and the Review of Literature, (e) Legitimation of Findings, (f) Recommendations for Future Research, (g) Implications for Practice, and (h) Conclusions.

Overview

The National Writing Project model of teachers as writers and teachers teaching teachers forms the basis of my philosophy for this study and is vital to the success of all classroom teachers of writing. Fruscella (2012) discussed the life changing experience of the National Writing Project Summer Institute (SI), sharing that "Every day I left the SI, I felt challenged to view my students and teaching with a new perspective, employed with new strategies of instruction, equipped with the most confounding recent research in educational issues, and supported by a network of teachers teaching teachers" (2012, p. 18). This sentiment echoes the idea that most studies look to the National Writing Project Model as being an "exemplar of an educational improvement infrastructure" (St. John & Stokes, 2008). Teachers who have been trained under the National Writing Project model are better teachers of writing.

Discussion of Findings

Step 10: Interpret data

Research question #1: What are the perceptions of National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers? The themes of valuing the writing journal, writing as a means of self-discovery and creative release, gaining confidence and self-efficacy, and writing as a way of life/having the freedom to write, each figured predominantly into my findings in seeking an answer to my first research question. The journaling in the NWP Summer Institute allowed for a much needed creative release, which led to self-discovery, which enabled the fellows to gain confidence about themselves as teachers and as writers, feeling that their voice was of value and that they had much to contribute, thereby leading them with conviction to the notion that they wanted the freedom to write and to continue that practice of writing and reflecting as a way of being and a habit of mind.

Research question #2: What are the perceptions of the National Writing Project Fellows on the impact the National Writing project has had on the way they teach writing? The themes of never having any previous training teaching writing, the teacher as writer: writer as teacher dichotomy, the collaborative notion of teachers teaching teachers facet of the NWP, and the transferring of pedagogical skills to the classroom each figured predominantly into my findings in seeking an answer to my second research question. Coming in with very little training or writing pedagogy, most NWP fellows (and not all, because some of the fellows are invited to the NWP Summer Institute because they have a strong background in teaching writing), learn, develop, attempt, and implement the best practices teaching writing espoused by the NWP, and under the model

of teachers teaching teachers and collaborative learning, they become equipped to take that new pedagogical philosophy back to the classroom and share what they have learned with other K-12 teachers across the curriculum.

In an attempt to simplify the themes when connecting them with my conceptual framework and literature review, and since so many of them overlap and interconnect, I have created three main themes from the ten sub themes (which ultimately where distilled from a list of 30 themes). Figure 9 illustrates those themes. The following is a list of the ten sub themes, which emerged from the interviews and teacher reflection journals:

Theme 1: first teaching writing experience ever

Theme 2: valuing and cherishing the writing journal

Theme 3: the collaborative experience of sharing writing with other participants and garnering new perspectives

Theme 4: entry into a discourse community of scholars in the field

Theme 5: gained confidence/empowerment/self-efficacy, voice

Theme 6: creative release/therapeutic nature of the experience/self-discovery

Theme 7: immediate transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom/changed the way I teach

Theme 8: writing as a way of life/freedom to write/a space to write

Theme 9: teachers teaching teachers

Theme 10: Teacher Writer/Writer Teacher dichotomy: discovering that you are a writer on some level (rediscovery, validated, emerged).

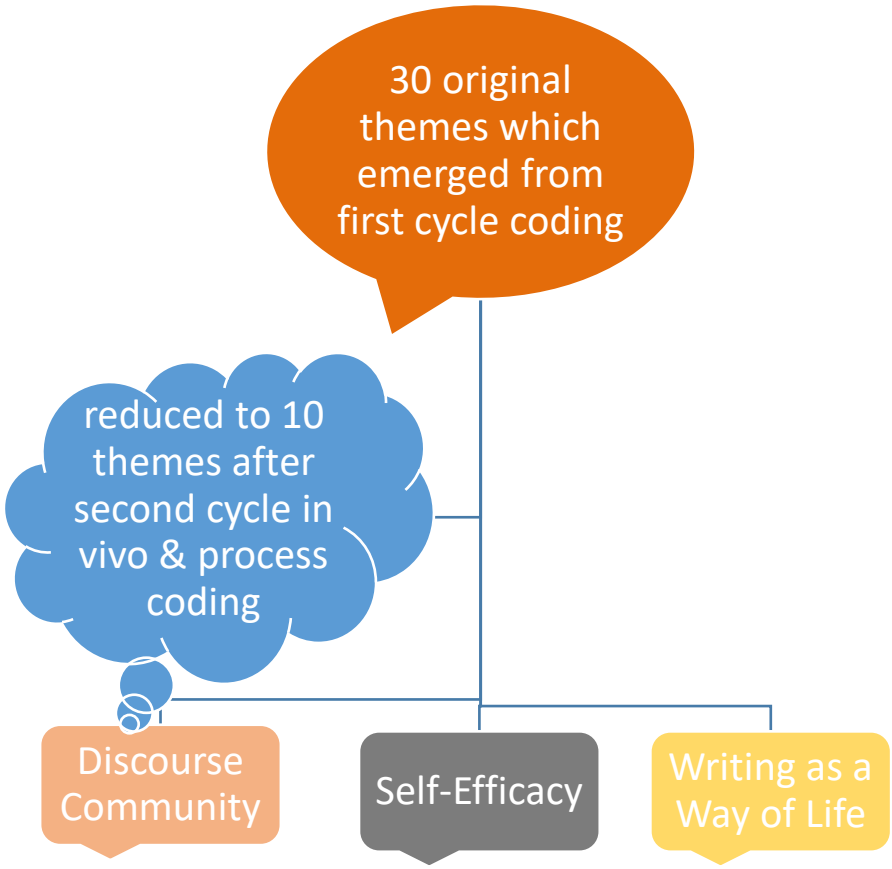

Figure 9. Distillation of Themes

Discussion of Findings in the Context of the Conceptual Framework

Theme #1: Discourse Community of the NWP

Constructivism, an off-shoot of social-cultural theory and a theory of knowledge in response to behaviorism, is a theoretical perspective which addresses the understanding individuals seek from the world in which they live and work (Cresswell, 2007). Constructivists are concerned with the learning and mental processes of individuals, whereas social cultural theory views learning as an act of enculturation, something that is a part of the everyday activities in the teacher writing and workshop groups in the NWP Summer Institute. According to Belenky et al (1997), the basic insight of constructivist thought is that "All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is

an intimate part of the known" (p. 137). A tenant of constructivism is the need to understand the unique perspective of each individual (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). It is a theory, which is based upon observation and scientific study, about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (Bereiter, 1994). When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, changing what we believe, or discarding the new information as irrelevant. In this sense, we are active creators of our own knowledge. One of the themes that emerged from this study is that teachers learned from each other. The collaborative nature of the NWP, the time each day to share in small groups and partnerships, the writing workshop model, and the lesson share among teachers each contributed to instances where teachers experienced the act of constructing knowledge together, thereby gaining entry into a discourse community of scholars, teachers, and writers who care about literacy in our schools and desire to learn ways to promote it.

As an example, Charlotte illustrates the power of collaboration she experienced in the NWP in her narrative:

> I didn't feel like just a teacher or just somebody working on their master's, I felt like a community of literacy people, and that I knew a lot because they would share their stories and I learned through the people who were around me. You're engulfed with so much information. I was really intrigued the whole time I was there. I found a group of educators who were outside of the box thinkers that wanted to learn and I had not been surrounded by teachers that were that

> dedicated before. They brought a whole different perspective for me versus an administrator, like that program where I was working with principals, it was all about drilling and testing and budgeting. That was really boring and then math was all about numbers, and then this group was all about trying to empower your voice and I was like, wow, that's pretty powerful. What I learned is through writing, you can say what you think to a mass amount of people through different ways. It was pretty profound for me, connecting with so many different people, and it was a community. I'm very thankful for it. That's what was cool about it because it freed me from this isolated world that I had been in for so long.

Additionally, Scarlett shares how the collaborative nature of the NWP Summer Institute changes her as a professional, and how where she is today may not have been possible without that experience. She asserts:

> Currently, I am an assistant reading professor at a university in Texas. We do not have the Writing Project here. Thanks to Kim, I am thinking about looking into how I might be able to establish one. Working with some of the public schools out here in west Texas, I can see the need. We learn best from our peers. The writing project I attended provided us with ample opportunities to teach one another. We did this by sharing our experiences and being reflective. This might seem silly, but I still have my notebook that I created during the writing project. It resides on my bookshelf. Sadly, I have not looked at it since then. I took the journal down from my shelf and read through it. My writings brought laughter

> and tears. My journal reminded me of the sense of empowerment the gave me. I was a confident writer, who felt I could empower others.

Moreover, Edith shares her sentiments on the profound effects of the collaborative environment in her reflection journal, stating:

> I still have my journal from the 2006. As I peruse the pages, I re-live some of the "Ah-ha" moments from that workshop. One participant took the time to comment regularly on my entries with her small post-it notes. She encouraged, commented, and reflected on those tiny notes, and the pieces of yellow notes are still there twelve years later for me to re-read. To this day, I encourage, comment, and reflect in my own students' journals on tiny post-it notes. Another educator showed me the joy of writing poetry and how to make it fun and creative for myself as well as my students. My students benefit today from these wonderful poetic experiences. An additional activity at was that each attendee of the project was responsible for a lesson that was to be shared with each other. We had such fun learning from one another! These practices are so much a part of my own pedagogy now that I had forgotten from whence they came!

Theme #2: Writing as a Way of Life

When I think of the ways in which constructivism may be woven into the focus of my research questions which seek to know and understand the perspectives of someone, I am reminded of the notion of "real talk" in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al, 1997). The researchers shared:

> Constructivists make a distinction between 'really talking' and what they consider to be didactic talk in which the speaker's intention is to hold forth rather than to share ideas. In didactic talk, each participant may report experience, but there is no attempt among participants to join together to arrive at some new understanding. 'Really talking' requires careful listening; it implies a mutually shared agreement that together you are creating the optimum setting so that emergent ideas can grow. It reaches deep into the experience of each participant; it also draws on the analytical abilities of each. Conversation, as constructivists describe it, includes discourse and exploration, talking and listening, questions, argument, speculation, and sharing (p. 144).

Belenky et al went on to say that dialogue has the power to empower people into ways of knowing. They asserted, "Lev Vygotsky (1962, 1978) and his colleagues suggest that exterior dialogues are a necessary precursor to inner speech and awareness of one's own thought process", which (like play itself) "is a precursor to symbolism and meaning-making" (p. 33). Metaphors enable us to make sense of the world around us in the presence of others in that they open up our minds and perceptions to the ways that we perceive the world as we try to make sense of it. Belenky et al attested, "Without playing, conversing, listening to others, and drawing out their own voice, people fail to develop a sense that they can talk and think things through (Vygotsky, 1978).

As a researcher, I am interested in the dialogue, discourse, or dialectic that will emerge from the journals (dialogue of the participant with the self or an imagined reader), and the interviews. I believe that truth emerges when we are reflective and given the opportunity to think aloud in the form of shared discourse. It is in those moments that

insights emerge. The notion of writing as a way of life or a habit of mind is not something that can be taught, per se, but something that is caught from good teaching, a safe and nurturing environment, and from being given the opportunity (time, space, and motivation) to write. Edith illustrates how this concept evolves in her teaching journal as she reflects:

> Finally, in the pursuit of excellence in the teaching of writing, I have learned via research the important practices that make a huge difference in a writer's developmental growth over a period of time. All students need to be writing from the first day they enter the classroom. For example, ELL students are never to be excluded from the importance of knowing what good writing looks like, that writing sentences must look like sentences, with a capital at the beginning and the correct punctuation mark at the end. Students are to engage in writing process strategies such as prewriting and drafting. Supporting students in the process of writing communicates a writing work ethic within the community of writers so that they learn to give and receive feedback in an effective manner developing a reflective writing concerning their growth over time. Helping kids develop the techniques necessary to analyze the rhetorical situations for their writing gives the students the lifelong ability to expresses themselves thoughtfully and expressively. I am that teacher of writing today because of the SHWP I attended in 2006. The sheer joy of learning writing using a "teachers teaching teachers" model in a safe environment allowed writing doors to open for me that, up until that time, would have stayed closed for years to come had I not been a part of the SHWP endeavor.

Furthermore, Eudora shares her experience in the NWP that led to writing as a way of life, reflecting:

> When I taught English at the high school, none of my colleagues talked about writing or shared my interest in it. Although I loved literature, as a writer my learning wasn't complete until I wrote about the subject I was studying. I could better understand the feelings and motives of characters when I free wrote about them for then it solidified in my mind. A setting would become real to me when in a journal I related it to one with which I was familiar and described it in my own words. A plot made better sense to me when I outlined it on paper and saw how the writer structured it. A poem became clearer to me if I could write freely about what I did or didn't like about it before trying to analyze it. Because I tend to teach like I learn, I assumed writing was a given in the classroom and it was therefore natural for me to walk students through a novel, short story, or poem in a similar manner. But nobody in the department would talk to me about using personal writing as a tool for understanding a text. I might as well have been talking about money, the way others reacted when I tried to broach the topic. The research paper was regarded with fear and trepidation, dreaded by both teachers and students, and seemed to be the only writing required, with the exception of the essay portion of a unit test. Then I learned about the National Writing Project that not only taught teachers how teach writing in the classroom, but focused on the teacher as a writer herself and validated her need to write. I couldn't believe what I was hearing, so afterwards I went up to the speaker (a professor who was a NWP leader) for clarification. Yes, it was true: The teacher as a writer and

> stressing writing in the classroom. Sign me up! I was not disappointed. Each day during the three-week intensive training the focus was first on me as a writer and then on me as a writing teacher. In short, it was allowing me to be myself and teach as I needed to rather than trying to copycat colleagues. I don't know if anyone noticed the difference in me, but I felt it every day. Writing practice, reading a poem and writing a response, and grammar warmups using the activities in books that NWP had provided made grammar fun and became mainstays in my lesson planning. Because of NWP I had a better understanding of how boys think and write. Later on I received an email from a former male student who said, "I know I am the last person you would ever believe would write poetry, but after our poetry research paper I started writing. Now my professor wants to include my poem in an anthology." Although no colleague showed interest in my classroom writing activities when I tried to share them, I no longer needed their affirmations for now I was getting it from my students and I felt NWP urging me to proceed.

Consequently, Francie says that while her experience in the NWP didn't develop her sense of self as a writer, it did as a teacher of writing. Since she already considered herself a writer, it did not transform her in that way; however, it did transform her in the way she taught writing, and she emerged with a philosophy aligned to inquiry-based writing, noticing, developing a sense of agency in students to write about critical issues, and writing authentically as a part of life-as something that we just do as people to express ourselves and change our world. She shares:

> It contributed to my perception of myself as a teacher of writing. But it didn't feel like it was about me as a writer, it felt like it was about me as a teacher. Which I guess they're intertwined, if you're teaching writing, you are a writer. But it didn't seem like the focus was on developing us as writers. But it was more about developing pedagogy and techniques for teaching writing. I mean I've had those ideas, and I have tried to encourage our teachers to write and publish for our students so that they can see how teachers write. I guess it's possible that on some level, that the program inspired that. But I can't think of a direct correlation between this happened in the program, and that's what made me want to publish, or get other teachers to publish, or showcase our writing. Now I'm pretty comfortable with it [teaching writing]. Like I said, at first I wasn't, I thought writing was teaching someone how to write a thesis statement, where to put it at the end of their introduction, and teaching someone grammar. But I've gotten more and more comfortable with teaching writing in an authentic way, not trying to pin them into certain categories of writing, and formulaic writing, but using authentic writing that you'd find in articles, like magazines and journals, and using those as models to help them figure out how to do their own writing.

Additionally, Flannery shared that the journaling helped her to clear her thoughts and was a welcomed way of writing in the midst of course work for her doctorate. She shared with me that it instilled in her a way of being that she misses to this day, stating, “I remember feeling the same way, we'd journal in the morning, and then I'd just was wistful to do that all day. And then I remember thinking how neat it would be to close with that time at the end of the day. . .And just reflect, either on what we had done for the

day, and let that segue into new thoughts, or whatever. But to have, even if it was only for a half an hour, time to write again."

Theme #3: Self-efficacy Theory

Students must be taught how to assert themselves and express their views in their writing. Teachers need to empower them to have a sense of agency about their arguments and positions, and teach them how to look at all sides of an issue when developing their assertions. Mascle (2014) asserted:

> Due to the ever-changing and shifting contexts for writing our students face, fostering agency, or their capacity to act on their own initiative, is an important and necessary part of learning to write. . .yet our educational system and writing classrooms do not attend to agency, . . .which is inhibited by writing apprehension. The fear and loathing of writing, also known as writing apprehension, plays a large role in the lack of transfer because it interferes with the practice and study of writing as well as a willingness to accept agency" (p. 50).

Self-efficacy theory explores the nature of agency in teachers and students, and how it transfers from teacher to student to the larger world of being a citizen in a democratic society.

Self-efficacy theory, a construct of socio-cognitive models of behavior and learning, is a theory that posits the nature of a person's sense of empowerment and confidence that derives from a particular experience, defined as "a person's belief that he or she is capable of dealing with complex tasks" which is an important factor in developing human agency (Bandura 1997). Self-efficacy theorist Albert Bandura (1982)

defined perceived self -efficacy [as] concerned with judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (p. 122). Klassen, Tze, Betts and Gordon (2011), have described self -efficacy in teachers as "the confidence teachers hold about their individual and collective capability to influence student learning (p. 21). Teacher's self-efficacy can be defined as their beliefs about their capability to teach their subject matter even to difficult students. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to influence their instructional behavior and many other related outcomes (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Bandura (1997) detailed four sources of self-efficacy which have shown staying power over time:

5. *Mastery experiences*: for a teacher this would equate to successful classroom practice.
6. *Physiological and emotional states*: the way in which particular feelings such as excitement or anxiety are elicited in teaching situations, by either positively or negatively impacting self-efficacy.
7. *Vicarious experiences*: an example of this would be observing a master teacher, mentor, or role model in which the observant desires to emulate their skills or practices.
8. *Social persuasion:* an example of this would be positive feedback received in the context of a professional development situation (Bandura, 2014, p.51)

As Lavelle (2006) noted, "few studies have considered teachers' beliefs about their own writing skill" (p.75). In an exploratory study, she examined teacher beliefs

about writing competence and discovered a relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance. According to Locke, Whitehead, and Dix, (2013):

> There does not appear to be research framed conceptually in relation to self-efficacy in relation to Writing Workshop teacher participation, even though Writing Workshop principles and practices are premised on their transformational potential in respect of teacher self-confidence as writers and teachers of writing (p. 58).

There is a long history of research on self-efficacy as an aspect of teacher competence (e.g., Klassen et al, 2011) in which teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are thought to play an important role in the educational process. Holzberger, Philipp, and Kunter (2013) asserted that "In line with previous studies (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998; Woolfolk et al., 1990) teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs showed higher instructional quality, as indicated by the three dimensions of cognitive activation, classroom management, and individual learning support, whether instruction was rated by the teachers themselves or by their students" (p. 782). Teachers who possess self-efficacy produce students who possess self-efficacy. According to Selvester and Summers (2012), teachers and students need to take risks together by co-constructing opportunities for students to voice their opinions, their beliefs, and their desires without censorship" (p. 20). This self-efficacy empowers students to feel a sense of agency, "Literate thinking assists adolescents in negotiating the sociocultural contexts in which they form their identities, assert their sense of agency, and participate in their literacy development" (Langer, 1987).

Darling-Hammond (2006) argued what teachers know and do in the classroom with their students has the most influence on what their students learn. In their teaching practices, teachers must possess the confidence and ability to lead their students intellectually and ethically. Teachers who possess self-efficacy "are able to examine the postmodern social, political, cultural, and historical uses of literacy. They claim their own authority and empower their students with the critical skills to generate and interrogate texts, and analyze language choices, purposes, and possible meanings in order to discover how texts are ideologically positioned" (Selvester & Summers, 2012, p. 67).

Charlotte's narrative effectively illustrates the way self-efficacy is enacted after experiencing the NWP Summer Institute, leading to authentic pedagogical changes in the classroom. She reflects:

> Basically, it [the NWP] changed everything-my pathway in getting my doctorate, my direction as a teacher, from thinking that I might be teaching math to being a literacy coach. It changed my thinking of teaching from a Basal, writing, to teaching with books and connecting reading and writing. I remember my principal coming in and she was so mad at me. She said, "You're teaching these kids reading and I don't know what you're doing because your course is supposed to be writing!" I was like, let me explain this to you. Reading is writing. She goes, "That is nonsense, your kids don't even know if they're in a writing class or a reading class!" I said, creating a topic sentence, finding a conclusion, knowing those types of mechanics for the STAR test, that is, technically reading, because if

> you don't understand what you're reading, you can't understand how to help somebody's writing.

Charlotte went on to say that it gives you the confidence to critique the practices that you see in the classroom. "That is part of the writing project equips you with. You go through that program and you come out going, 'hey, I know a thing or two. What you're doing over here, it doesn't look so good'. That's okay. It's not that it's a mean thing, but it empowers you. Getting the kids empowered by talking in their own voices. Feeling empowered in what I am doing to stand up to my principal. I could not have said the year before, this is why kids are struggling with expository writing, it's because it's a different way of thinking. I never understood that until I was in the NWP."

Additionally, Edith shared that the nurturing and nudging atmosphere of teachers collaborating together helped her to develop self-efficacy, stating:

> I think what I saw was a safe environment. We were allowed to share and everybody was ... And it wasn't this gooey, "Oh yeah, I love that, I like that," but there was an acceptance for your different way, perhaps, of writing. Someone else's thoughts totally might be outside the box of what it generally would be thought and yet it was so interesting and so people would share it. People felt comfortable sharing their writing and ideas in a collaborative, supportive way. I liked that. So I guess I did see it as transformative in that it gave me the confidence to then turn right around and be able to share that with students. That was huge. Before I would not have, did not have the confidence to do that.

It is evident from these testimonies that the experiences in the NWP Summer Institute led to teacher's development of self-efficacy, voice, confidence, and a sense of empowerment.

Discussion of Findings and the Review of the Literature

Theme #1: Self-Efficacy/Teacher Transformation/Confidence

In sharing the reflection journals and compelling voices which emerged from my participant interviews, I have illustrated clearly that the concept of Self-Efficacy/Teacher Transformation/Confidence, which has also been referred to as the "Writing Project Mystique" (Whyte et al, 2007) resounds time and again as a vital facet of the experience of the NWP Summer Institute. The literature that explores this notion echoes this same sentiment throughout the past four decades, as illustrated in the report: "The National Writing Project after 22 Years" and is articulated quite well by Smith (1996): "A final lesson of the NWP is the reason for that effectiveness: belief in teachers. 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 in 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. 691). Teachers have always been at the center of the NWP. They are its reason for existence. The NWP was created by a group of teachers for teachers, and its mantra of teachers teaching teachers is a core principal that has been a big part of its long-lasting success.

Professor of Education and Director of the Utah Writing Project Strong (1988) echoed this sentiment in his study where he sought to investigate Tom Newkirk's scrutiny of the "justifiable euphoria about the success of the National Writing Project

since many of its most basic assumptions had not been examined critically" (p. 1). He contended "my mission at Tom Newkirk's New Hampshire Writing Project grew out of Tom's 1983 critique of the NWP model in English Education, 'Is the Bay Area Model the Answer?'. In the end, I came away from my Mission Assignment in New Hampshire not only with a taste for steamed clams and lobster, but also with a clearer sense of what the National Writing Project is all about. The change was good for me. I came to see anew how NWP is as much about teacher empowerment as it is about the teaching and learning of writing" (p.3). As a NWP teacher-consultant who is aware of this truth first-hand, if I were the editor of an article, I would showcase this quote in big, bold font in the center, because it encapsulates the vision and mission of the NWP. In that same article, Strong remarks about the theory of the NWP in its beginnings, and in order to illustrate its theoretical inception, it's worth quoting here:

To provide a theory base for the institute, NHWP brought all participants together during the second week for a series of mid-morning lectures by New Hampshire luminaries-among them, Don Graves, Jane Hansen, Don Murray, and Tom Newkirk. These talks were all first-rate, though not really tied to each other or to any explicit overall framework. It was in these presentations, mainly, that the Institute's political message-one emphasizing self-sponsored writing, integration of reading and writing, and teacher-as-researcher-began to resonate:

There is a catching enthusiasm that swirls in the rooms of NWP summer institutes.

The discourse communities that form are engaging, often with ephemeral effects.

These communities of teacher consultants form long lasting relationships, and as

> teachers feel more knowledgeable and authoritative, they become more confident sharing their expertise with other teachers by way of presenting in their individual schools and districts, or by leading writing workshops for other teachers in their own classrooms after school (Strong, 1988, p. 2).

The following quote illustrates this agency well: "In global terms, The National Writing Project in the US, operating since 1973, has been the most significant initiative to systematize via a nationwide network the provision of opportunities for teachers to become and identify as writers" (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). This agency is life changing for most Writing Project fellows. Research findings confirm the transformational potential of the NWP regarding professional identity and a sense of agency regarding writing (Frank, 2001; Frank, Carpender & Smith, 2003; Frank, 2001; Lieberman & Wood, 2003; Whitney, 2008; Wood & Lieberman, 2000).

The mystique of the NWP is difficult to define in words, but one participant captures it well, stating, "A culture of warmth, empathy, and appreciation of individual and social differences characterizes the NWP's summer institutes and extension programs. Partially in jest, one NWP site founder called the person-centered culture of the NWP 'one third seminar, one third group therapy, and one third religious experience'" (Whyte et al, 2007, p. 12) (Dodge, quoted in Olson, 2007, p. xiii).

The primary components of the NWP Summer Institute are reading and writing, reflection, inquiry, research, and collaboration, and the general structure of the NWP Summer Institute includes: "daily journal writing and reflection, writing for a variety of purposes, drafting creative writing pieces on various genres, inquiry lessons, research best practices, and work collaboratively with peer teachers to discuss challenges encountered

in the classroom and best practices" (Sanchez, 2012, p. 46). Summer Institute (SI) participants are immersed in reading and writing daily for five weeks, and adopt the role of the student in which they go through the writing process, share their writing with their peers in writing groups, research and explore topics of inquiry and professional growth, present on best practices teaching writing to their peers, and engage in writer's workshops. These daily activities provide multiple opportunities for collaboration and reflection. As Director of the South Texas Writing Project, Sanchez (2012) stated:

> Summer Institutes strive to provide teachers with resources and access to tools that strengthen teachers' deeper understanding of teaching while valuing teacher's voices and encouraging them to become active change agents in their classrooms and in their communities. Summer Institutes provide a platform for teachers to have a voice with the intention that when they return to the classroom, teachers provide students with a platform to find their voice (p. 47).

Aside from providing a platform for teacher voices, one of the purposes of the SI is to provide a model for teachers to use in their classrooms.

The NWP legacy has been built on word of mouth. According to Wood and Lieberman (2000), "The National Writing Project, one of the oldest and arguably most successful teaching networks in the United States, weaves a powerful relational and intellectually rich context for the ongoing learning of practicing teachers. It is contended that by encouraging teachers to discover themselves as authors, the NWP spurs the development of voice, ownership, and agency in professional lives" (p. 255). The sentiment of almost everyone who has discussed its impact? It's just plain good teaching. It's invigorating. It's life-changing. Whitney's study explored the complicated tug

between personal and professional facets of teaching, the effects of stance, authority, and identity on NWP participants, and the effect of the sociocultural context on teachers as writers. In doing so, she found that personal and professional genres are woven together, and that they complement each other in the development of the teacher writer. She asserts that "a major outcome of the Summer Institute is increased confidence for teachers, the self-assurance to trust and even argue for and defend their own professional judgments. It shows; however, that this change in confidence was not merely a superficial 'ego boost' for teachers but was instead tied to a process of serious inquiry into and adjustment of ways of thinking about teaching, learning, writing, and life" (2008, p. 178). Whitney encouraged those in teacher professional development and others who do work in the NWP to focus on why the change rather than on what the change. She offered the advice that by shifting our attention on issues of epistemology, authority, and agency, we shift our focus on noting what teachers do to understanding why they do what they do.

Gray (2000), Founder of the National Writing Project, said it best: "As professionals, teachers need to immerse themselves in the *why* as well as the *what* of their work" (p. 95). Therefore, we glean insight into how the learning occurs in the first place and how it is then enacted into classroom practice. Whitney offered her own kernel of insight at the close of her article where she admonishes us not to be mystified by the truth which emerges in the mist, stating, "We must take 'changed my life' claims seriously and work to shed analytical light on the heretofore 'magic' mechanisms of change in the NWP Summer Institute, to research this instance of professional development and others in a manner consistent with a view of teachers as thinkers and people rather than as the

trainable enactors of others' ideas" (2008, p. 180). The NWP nudges the voice out of writers, and in doing so paves the way for teacher consultants to help other teachers find their voice, but most importantly, the end result is the students who will be encouraged to write and develop confidence and agency as authors themselves as a result of the kinds of learning they experience in NWP-modeled classrooms across the country.

Theme #2: Teachers as Writers and Writers as Teachers/Writing as a Way of Life

Each participant in my study has testified that they developed in one way or another as writers and as teachers of writing as a direct result of participating in the NWP Summer Institute. The literature enveloping the construct of the teacher as writer/writer as teacher dichotomy echoes this same sentiment. Grace (1999) put it simply, "Students who write become better students, and teachers who write become better teachers. There are several reasons for this. People who write come to know themselves better, they see things in their lives they never noticed before, they become curious about unfamiliar ideas, and they find themselves slowing down. To write is to become a more reflective person" (p. 60). But it goes a step further than that. Kaufman (2002) made a case for why teachers of writing must live a literate life. He proclaimed, "Living a literate life, on the other hand, encompasses every aspect of the classroom day. It is a lived philosophy, perhaps even a moral claim, that assumes every action is contextualized, whether it is the context the teacher intends to use or not. It assumes that everything we do teaches students *something*, for better or for worse. It sets the tone for the whole classroom" (p. 51). Jinkins (2004) echoed this sentiment, stating, "The time I spend writing may not necessarily compliment my teaching directly, but it feeds my soul, and it nourishes me as a teacher, deepening my inner life, sharpening my perceptions, making me more attentive

to the world around me. Does writing take me away from teaching? Yes, it does. But when I return from writing to teaching, my spirit is renewed. The movement between the two is as natural as respiration" (p. 67). In his article, he discusses the importance of making a space for writing, the call to write, and that as teachers we must submit to both writing and teaching. He argues that it is not a balance, but rather a submission to the wistful yearning to write as it calls to you. We write because we have to.

While teachers have credited the National Writing Project as unleashing the writer within, and celebrating the ways that the space they were afforded for personal writing and reflection led to the confidence and desire to write more professional and academic pieces, there has been much discourse surrounding the tensions between personal and professional writing in the National Writing Project Summer Institute. Whitney (2009) studied these tensions and found that there is a value of personal narratives in professional writing and academic contexts. She stated:

> As in life, personal and professional concerns are not only mixed but bound together, aspects of the same single stream. Thus in the summer institutes, teachers not only experience tension between personal and professional writing, they also use that tension in collaboration with colleagues to reframe notions of themselves as teachers, writers, and people. In other words, the tensions that crop up between personal and professional topics and forms of writing-along with the ways teachers work through these tensions in discussion with other teachers in a writing group- are not only inevitable, they are necessary components of the transformative experiences for which NWP summer institutes are known" (p. 240).

To combat the tension between these two modes of discourse, Whitney stressed the importance of teacher narratives. She argued that the voices of classroom teachers are often muffled in a publishing world which privileges university models of scholarship, and that practitioners are constricted by time and workload factors, which keep them from writing and publishing. She advised that "For teachers to learn through writing, they need opportunities to engage in the full range of writing" (p. 256) writing within a myriad of genres and for multiple audiences. She suggested that site directors and professional developers encourage teachers to seek balance of personal and professional writing, claiming, "invite teachers to try both, then devote attention to helping teachers and their writing groups explore the purposes each might serve and the connections between them. . .we must look not to the outcomes of any one kind of writing activity but value should be placed on relationships between personal writing, professional writing, and professional growth" (p. 255). What begins with the personal, ends with the professional.

Theme #3: Discourse Communities

Part of the power of the National Writing Project is also vetted in social constructs in the discourse community that it provides for teachers, both as participants in the Summer Institute and in the local networking communities that develop in the years that follow for the teacher consultants. The National Commission on Writing (2003) report stated: "Teachers need to understand writing as a complex (and enjoyable) form of learning and discovery, both for themselves and their students" (p. 5). Lieberman and Wood (1992) further noted that "providing opportunities for teachers to write and share their writing in groups" is central to the National Writing Project, while "the opportunity

to write. . .” is the first expectation listed in the CCCC (Conference on College Composition & Communication) position statement on the preparation of writing teachers (as cited by Reid, 2009, pg. 197). Fassinger and Gilliand (1992) further purported this notion in their study in which they discuss the benefits of establishing a faculty writing circle on college teaching such as empathy toward students as writers, differentiating instruction for all learners, and encouraging students to evaluate and critique articles as co-scholars. They added:

> Because all three group members spend most of our time teaching, pedagogical problems and successes often become part of our conversations. As we reflect on our years together, we recognize that our writing circle experiences have led us to adopt new teaching methods, become more empathetic towards our students as writers, and develop greater ability to reach students at different points of intellectual development” (p. 2).

Fassinger and Gilliand (1992) went on to say that the writing group helped them create nurturing and close classroom environments that supported a community of readers and writers who felt connected to one another as well as to their professors. They also offered both students and instructors the opportunity to think out loud, debate, build ideas, and reflect together.

This is echoed again and again by NWP teacher-consultants, including all six of my participants in this study, who often connect their experiences writing in the Summer Institute or in general with those of their students, and it is the bond of writers, set in a discourse community of writers, that paves way for the trust and mutual understanding that is vital for a community of writers and writing conferences between teachers and

students. Whitney and Friedrich (2013) posited, "Finally, participants linked their teaching of writing to their own experience as writers. They then positioned themselves among students as a writer among writers, many times writing alongside the students. And they used their own ongoing experiences as writers to gain insight into the supports their students would need as they worked" (p. 11). This kind of support was also given by way of scaffolding and modeling, as one teachers shares her experiences with her 11th and 12th grade English classes: "But then, when it came to teaching the actual composition, how to write, I would go through a lot of the same theory that I learned at the Writing Project, but I'd aim it at the 11th grade students. And I would demonstrate most of it by actually doing it [in front of them]. So that students would see how I approached everything-everything from clustering and organizing to writing that introductory paragraph. I would do it by example, for the students. And that seemed to help them get over some barriers a great deal" (p. 23) In order to model good writing practices for the students, teachers had to draw on their own experiences as writers and make them transparent to their students.

Gulla (2007) developed the idea of teacher collaboration in her study on faculty writing groups in which she concluded:

> If we want to support students in becoming skilled writers, we need to work to provide opportunities for their teachers to engage in the same kind of work. When writing becomes a joyous experience for teachers, they can truly begin to invite students into the creative community (p. 349).

In her article, she discussed her experience using a teacher writing group to teach teachers how to teach writing using creative writing, thereby helping teachers develop voice and identity that they will pass on to their future students. She shared "As the students in my class learned to use poetry as a tool for developing voice and clarifying thought, they could write about their teaching. They could write about whatever mattered to them. And they did" (p. 337). Teachers cannot teach writing well if they are not writers themselves, and being a part of a community of writers enables teachers to share perspectives and strategies, as well as discuss theory and practice through experiential learning. This creates a synergy that helps future teachers think of how they might approach these assignments in their own classrooms. Gulla would say that that is the point: Through writing and talking about their own composing processes, these teachers gained insights that they could immediately put into action in their teaching practices" (p. 338). Gulla further espoused the importance of a social space for writing when she asserted:

> An essential part of this equation is a forum in which to discuss and make sense of our own processes, so that we might begin to generalize our understandings about writing. It is the simultaneous experiences of being involved in the writing process and doing the work of analyzing how the process works that helps us become better writing teachers (p. 339).

This double helix of adhering to the process while teaching the process is one which is espoused by the NWP time and again.

Step 11: Legitimation of the Data

Utilizing Onwuegbuzie and Leech's (2007) qualitative legitimation model, I sought to increase internal and external credibility. As noted in Chapter 3, this model addresses threats to internal credibility (i.e., truth value, applicability, consistency, neutrality, dependability, and credibility of interpretations/conclusions pertaining to a group or setting) and external credibility (i.e., the degree to which findings can be generalized across settings) that can occur at one or more of the three stages of the research process: the research design/data collection stage, the data analysis stage, and the data interpretation stage. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), the vitality of trustworthiness in qualitative research cannot be overemphasized. Trustworthiness can be defined as a form of validity or "truth value" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). In order to establish validity and trustworthiness, I employed the Qualitative Legitimation Model (QLM) (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). This model allows the researcher to list and examine the threats to internal and external validity when conducting qualitative research. Internal validity can be described as researcher ethics (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), suggesting that internal validity is the way the researcher conducts a study within the frames of honesty and objectivity. On the contrary, external validity can be defined as the transferability or generalizability of the research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). When constructing the QLM, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) compiled and defined a number of threats to internal and external credibility, creating a resource for qualitative researchers to refer to when conducting research. In reviewing the QLM, I determined that the following threats were applicable to my

research. Table 2 conveys the threats to internal and external validity that I explored throughout my study.

Table 9

Threats to Credibility

Threat to Credibility	Internal and External	Stage of Research Design	Method to Evaluate/Increase Legitimation
Ironic Legitimation	Internal	Data Interpretation Stage	Member checking Triangulation of Methods
Face Validity	Internal	Study Design Data Collection	Member checking Triangulation of data collection Analytic memos
Threat to Credibility	Internal and External	Stage of Research Design	Method to Evaluate/Increase Legitimation
Descriptive Validity	Internal	Data Collection	Member checking Audio recordings Triangulation of data collection

			Methodology in Context
Researcher Bias	Internal	Data Interpretation	Member Checking Triangulation of data collection Audio Recordings Post Interviews
Confirmation Bias	Internal	Data Interpretation	Post Interviews Analytic Memos
Action Validity	External	Data Analysis Data Interpretation	Triangulation of methods and data collection

Threats to Internal Validity

Ironic Legitimation

The threat of ironic legitimation can be described as the threat of the numerous inferences that may develop from analyzing data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). As a qualitative researcher, I had to work under the assumption that every qualitative research study contains multiple truths. I recognize the truth, which emerges in my interpretation of the data may not be the only interpretation in existence. Therefore, I attempted to

decrease the threat of ironic legitimation by sharing some of my findings and emerging themes with my participants and colleagues in order to make sure they were valid. Additionally, I employed thematic analysis and cross-case analysis as a means of triangulating my methodology.

Face Validity

The threat of face validity may be regarded as a failure to enlist a sufficient number of participants, a failure to conduct too few interviews, or a failure to spend sufficient time observing participants (Lather, 1986). In order to curtail this, I enlisted six participants in my study, which in my research and discussions with my dissertation chair and colleagues I concluded was a sound number of participants for a study such as this. Also, I employed member checking by requesting that the participants review their interview transcripts as well as my emergent themes and to respond to me should any concerns arise. Additionally, I enlisted the assistance and feedback with a few of my colleagues who are also qualitative researchers at Point Loma Nazarene University to ensure that I was on the right track with my inferred themes and analysis. Finally, I constructed analytic memos during my data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation stages. I re-read these reflexive memos many times as I considered the research questions.

Descriptive Validity

Descriptive validity is an additional threat to trustworthiness or internal credibility. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), a researcher should strive to provide an honest description of the events that occur in a research study. In an effort to reduce the threat of descriptive validity, I audio recorded the participants' interviews.

Recognizing descriptive validity as a salient threat, I enlisted the help of a transcription service to transcribe my interviews in an unbiased and neutral process. I also made detailed notes immediately after listening to the interviews and while reading the transcripts in an effort to prevent descriptive validity.

Researcher Bias

Researchers' biases can pose a threat to internal validity during data collection and data analysis. Therefore, it is vital that researchers acknowledge their biases, but remain as objective as possible while interviewing, taking detailed field notes, analyzing data, and making inferences based upon their data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Therefore, I used the following to eliminate as many threats as possible: a) member checking with my colleagues and participants; b) Triangulation of data corpus; and c) audio recordings of the interviews, and d) jottings and analytic memos.

Confirmation Bias

According to Greenwald et al (1986), confirmation bias may occur when a researcher fails to recognize that other interpretations may exist in addition to the researcher's interpretation contained in the written research report. Therefore, in an effort to reduce confirmation bias, I enlisted a good friend and colleague of mine from cohort six who graduated and is familiar with the process to help me develop my interview protocol, and provide feedback for me regarding my questions. Also, I used a reflexive journal to document analytic memos as interpretations and inferences occurred to me. As with the post interview, the analytic memos were invaluable as I completed the data collection, the data analysis, and the data interpretation. Indeed, another researcher

analyzing the same data may arrive at an entirely different interpretation of that data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Phillips, 1987).

Threats to external validity

Action validity. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), when a research study is utilized by other researchers in order to replicate further studies, action validity is used. Therefore, if my qualitative study is replicated by future researchers, action validity may be established. As a result, I employed triangulation of data a) interviews, b) teacher reflection journals, and c) triangulation of methodology such as: a) thematic analysis, and b) cross-case analysis to increase the chance that future researchers will replicate my study.

Researcher reflexivity: Reflexive journal.

Reflexive journaling (Janesick 1994) helped sustain my reflexivity and illuminated my preconceived biases throughout each stage of my research. Prior to beginning research and throughout the research process, I recorded my thoughts and reflections in a journal. Following transcription and data analysis of each interview respectively, I also wrote in a journal. This allowed me to explore my thoughts, reactions, and new ideas that emerged or connections that were made throughout the data collection and analysis process. With respect to the reflexive journal, data were coded and analyzed through domain analysis. The meta-themes emerging from the journal were (a) speculations, (b) challenges and concerns, and (c) ideas for future research. These meta-themes are represented in Table 3.

Table 10

Themes Emerging from Reflexive Journal

Themes	**Examples**	**Excerpts from Reflexive Journal**
Speculations	I wonder why she says she was not transformed by the NWP? Does she not understand what I mean by that word in this specific context? Should I use another word, or would that be leading her thinking towards my own bias or desired result? Is prompting the same as leading?	The idea of phenomenology is making more sense to me now that I see if unfold in actual research practice. Francie claims that she was not transformed during the writing project, because she already felt that she was a writer; however, she was born again as a writer, as evidenced by the way she talks about her rejuvenated feelings about writing for herself, her passion about getting teachers to write by creating an after school group, and her desire to replicate the environment she experienced in the NWP for her colleagues and herself. She doesn't see the transformation, but it is there.

Themes	Examples	Excerpts from Reflexive Journal
Concerns & Challenges	I wish I would have asked a question about the specific ways in which they felt transformed in this process. . .	Edith says she was not transformed into a scholar, but then she goes on to give examples of the thinkers who enlightened her and the books and articles she read and the way they added layers to her perspective on how she teaches writing. She even said they "opened her mind". Isn't that an example of developing as a scholar? Can I say that she did even though she said she did not?! I exclaim in the interview, "See, you are a scholar!" and she just smiled and winked. I wonder if this is an example of imposter syndrome. . .
New Ideas	I would love to interview NWP fellows before participating in the Summer Institute and directly after,	This could be my life's work. There is so much to explore here. I am so passionate about this

Themes	Examples	Excerpts from Reflexive Journal
	then a year later and see how and in what specific ways they have changed as teachers and as writers.	topic and the initial desire to learn more about it has never left me. I should bring this up in my final chapter.

Step 12: Writing of the Research Report

Addressing Step 12 of Leech and Onwuegbuzie's (2010) 13-step methodological framework for qualitative research, the most important part of research with respect to practitioners is the writing of the qualitative research report. When writing the report, I hoped to honor and to represent the legacy of the National Writing Project, and the Sam Houston Writing Project for which I was a part of in the summer of 2013. With this in mind, the data were interpreted, legitimized, and carefully prepared in report form for implications. Step 12 of the QLM (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010) is the composition of the final report after pondering the significance of the study, investigating the literature, considering the methodologies needed for the study, and the collection, analysis, interpretation and findings of the data corpus. Based on the study, I offer the following implications:

Implications:

Founded in 1974, The National Writing Project has a 44 year-old legacy in the United States as being the best professional development model for K-12 teachers because of its effective timeless practices, sound philosophy and theoretical

underpinnings, and the valuable people at the core of its mission who pledge to uphold the integrity of the legacy. The notion of teachers teaching teachers, cemented in a collaborative learning environment that is rich with academic scholarship, grounded in research, and yet encourages personal reflection while upholding a commitment to best practices teaching writing, is what ensures its success. In an era where standardized testing and teacher and school accountability rein, where STEM is revered and literacy often forgotten, and where students are navigating a digital age with less and less focus on writing, thinking, reading, interpreting, and analyzing texts, students need NWP trained teachers who are passionate about writing, who are adept at teaching it, and who are writers themselves. Furthermore, teachers need the space and solace that the NWP Summer Institute provides for rejuvenation, reflection, introspection, and collaboration. Good writing teachers will nurture and create students who write well and who enjoy writing as well as reading, and quite frankly, our students deserve it. The National Writing Project Program is an exemplar for models of professional development in any content area and grade level, and teachers who are trained in the practices of the NWP are better teachers of all disciplines across the curriculum. District leaders, school administrators, teachers, literacy coaches, and university professors and deans need to work together to support and utilize the 180 local NWP sites throughout the country. The NWP is encroaching upon its 50th birthday, and new generations of teacher consultants and directors are working hard all year long to ensure the continuation of a legacy of excellence in writing education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Of interest to me upon doing this study is the transforming nature of the NWP Summer Institute on teachers, and its ultimate ongoing and far reaching effects on K-12 students in our nation's schools, as well as the teacher writer/writer teacher dichotomy and how teachers transform into their new personas. I am especially interested in the environment that seems to nurture the emerging and developing writer, inspire the seasoned writer, and give teachers the motivation to publish their writing, as well as their student's writing. Published teachers nudge and encourage students to publish as well. Also, researchers interested in exploring the therapeutic element of the NWP and the affective domain that draws out the feelings of warmth, encouragement, comradery, freedom, introspection, and personal and spiritual development would uncover many layers of psychosocial context in the inner workings of the NWP as far as human development and self-discovery is concerned. Additionally, there are also so many opportunities to investigate the aftermath of the NWP Summer Institute: the immediate transferability of strategies, techniques, and skills into classrooms, the enthusiasm of teacher consultants towards presenting at their school sites or offering district professional development, the networking that abounds long after the final class has met and which continues on for years, and the groups that form and develop, pushing the legacy of the NWP into the future classrooms and ushering in new generations of NWP fellows. Finally, issues of self-efficacy, agency, empowerment, confidence, and inspiration among NWP fellows would be an interesting avenue to explore in regards to the growth of the professional educator.

Furthermore, the National Writing Project website, NWP.org, offers this advice to educators who are interested in researching its legacy: “Unique in breadth and scale, the National Writing Project is a network of sites anchored at colleges and universities and serving teachers across disciplines and at all levels, early childhood through university. We provide professional development, develop resources, generate research, and act on knowledge to improve the teaching of writing and learning in schools and communities. The National Writing Project (NWP) and its research partners conduct research to examine the impact and reach of the work of the NWP network. In addition, we conduct research that investigates the ideas and topics of importance to the field of education that NWP Is uniquely positioned to explore.” (nwp.org). Resource topics include professional development, teaching writing, teaching reading, research, teacher research/inquiry, standards and assessment, policy and reform, and being a writer**.**

In addition, there are many interesting and vital possibilities of research and inquiry with the National Writing Project, for instance, investigating the national programs such as the NWP College, Career, and Community Writer’s Program, Building New pathways to Leadership, and Assignments Matter. Also, researchers interested in assessment may be interested in The NWP Analytic Writing Continuum (AWC) Assessment System is a well-tested system that has been used at nine national events to score more than 40,000 student writing samples. For more information about the National Writing Project's results and ongoing research, interested researchers can contact the Research and Evaluation Unit at the University of California at Berkeley or e-mail the NWP Research team at research@nwp.org.

Step 13: Reformulating the Research Questions

As I engaged in analyzing data with the various methods of thematic analysis and cross case analysis, themes emerged that did not always coincide with the research questions for this study. Further, implications from the study brought about further reflection. The original questions are as follows:

a) ***Research Question #1: What are the perceptions of National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers?***

b) ***Research Question #2: What are the perceptions of the National Writing Project Fellows on the impact the National Writing project has had on the way they teach writing?***

After much thought and reflection, the research questions for a future study might be revised to include questions 1 and 2 above, but adding the following questions below:

a) ***Research Question #3: How were teachers transformed in their experience in the NWP Summer Institute?***

b) Research Question #4: What specific pedagogical ideologies regarding the teaching of writing immediately transfer from the NWP Summer Institute to the K-12 classroom setting?

In adding research questions three and four, the qualitative researcher is invited to focus on the transformative nature of the National Writing Project Summer Institute, not only for teachers, but indirectly, and by proxy, for students. There has been so much echoing of the transformational nature of the NWP over four decades that the investigation into this notion is worth time and effort. It is the extra special something that gives the NWP its enduring quality, and although it may be difficult to

measure, it is certainly worth a try. What is it that makes this work so professionally and personally transforming for teachers?

The second question illustrates the entire purpose for the organization of the NWP, and that is to affect the ways that teachers teach and students learn. A study on the transference of pedagogical ideologies would be an effective and purposeful way to take the results of this study one step further, investigating the myriad of ways that teachers use what they have learned in their own classrooms. In my interviews with participants, every single one of them spoke at length about ways that they utilized the strategies, skills, and techniques they learned and practiced in the NWP Summer Institute, and many of them confided in me that it changed the way they teach for the better, and forever.

Conclusion

This study explored the perspectives of six former Writing Project Fellows of the National Writing Project Summer Institute. In my attempt to glean the perceptions of the participants as to how they viewed themselves as writers and teachers of writing, I uncovered much more: the impressive legacy of the 44 year-old project, the mystique of the local sites and their ability to make writers out of non-writers and scholars out of school teachers, and the notion of writing as a way of life. Adrienne Rich once said that we must read and write as if our lives depend upon it, and that is generally not taught in school. I ask why not? As a former Writing Project Fellow myself, I too was transformed as a writer, teacher, scholar, and person after one month in the Summer Institute. In fact, almost everything I do in the classroom has its roots in the pedagogical philosophy and theoretically underpinnings of the National Writing Project. After 22 years of teaching

high school and college level English, I am now an associate professor of teacher education at a private Christian university, and I approach every class that I teach as if I am directing a writing project. Why? Because the strategies of collaboration, constructivist teaching, having students write and read and write again, creating a community of writers, nudging students to ask questions and explore ideas with each other, providing them with a nurturing and safe environment to do so, encouraging my teachers to teach other teachers, approaching my classes both as a writer who teaches and a teacher who writes, providing my students with the freedom, space, and time to write and reflect, and instilling in them as often as I can that writing is a way of life, encouraging them to publish their work as well as my own, exposing them to mentor texts and good models, writing alongside them, and making it my goal each semester to foster a sense of confidence, self-efficacy, and empowerment in my students and encourage them to discover their voice, are not only the marks of good teaching, but the tenets, best practices, and magic of a national organization that tries daily just to do the same.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented Steps 10-13 of the QLM (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). Those steps included: (a) Step 10: interpret data; (b) Step 11: legitimation of the data; (c) Step 12: write the qualitative research report; and (d) Step 13: reformulate the research question(s) (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). In this process, I have provided findings, implications, recommendations for future research, and information concerning the credibility of the study.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

- Background and demographics
    - Please briefly describe for me your journey in the field of education. What grade levels or courses have you taught? What is your current position?
    - Please briefly describe your journey in academia. Which degrees and certifications do you hold and from what institutions?
    - Did you ever take a college level course (either undergraduate or graduate) on the teaching of writing? If so, have you used what you learned in that/those classes in your own classroom?
    - Do you consider yourself a writer? A teacher of writing?
    - How comfortable are you teaching writing?
    - How prepared do you feel you were in your teacher education courses to teach writing?

- Participation in Sam Houston Writing Project
    - Tell me a little about your participation in the Sam Houston Writing Project.
    - What led you to participate in it? Were you invited? Did you seek it out on your own? How did you hear about it?
    - Was your experience in the summer institute online, face to face, or a hybrid format of the two? What did you like or dislike about the format? Do you think it was effective in the way it was run? Why or why not?
    - Do you recall how many weeks you participated in the institute, and the hours you attended each day? (prompt with four or five? 8 -3?)
    - Describe for me what a typical day in the summer institute looked like for you.
    - What specific ideas or insights did you enjoy or find particularly useful to you? (prompt with writing process, found poetry, author's chair, etc. if needed)
    - Are there any activities that you participated in that you have taken back to your own classroom and implemented? In what you find them to be effective?
    - In relation to your grade level/content area, did you feel as if your particular needs were met? Was there enough balance between elementary and secondary education in the K-12 environment of the Summer Institute? If so, give a specific example of how there seemed to be careful

consideration and attention to the wide spread backgrounds of participants, if not please elaborate as to why you feel that is so.

- Perceptions after completion of the summer institute.
    - How did the NWP Summer Institute contribute to *your perception of yourself as a scholar*?
    - In what ways did the NWP Summer Institute contribute to *your perception of yourself as a writer?*
    - How did the *collaborative classroom format and group dynamic* contribute to your learning and understanding in the Summer Institute?
    - For some teachers the institute has been described as a *transformative experience.* Was it transformative for you? If so, in what way specifically? How did it change your perception towards teaching, learning, or yourself as a writer or teacher of writing?
    - Have you ever published any of your writing? Did your experience in the Summer Institute motivate you to do so? Did it inspire you to write for others? Please share specific examples if so.
    - What were your "take-aways" or "aha moments" from your experience in the summer institute?
    - Did you find the lesson sharing by you and your colleagues to be effective? Why or why not? If so, in what ways did you specifically find that piece to be effective?

- Teacher consultant and professional development
    - In your role as a Teacher Consultant, have you ever presented to other teachers in your school or district on the information you have learned or things you have experienced in the NWP Summer Institute, and if so, what have you shared specifically?
    - Would you recommend the Sam Houston Writing Project to other teachers? Why or why not?
    - As a professional development tool, do you feel that it is more effective or less effective than other trainings and staff developments that you have participated in? In what ways specifically?
    - What would you change about the Summer Institute if you were in charge of it?

APPENDIX B

Teacher Journal Reflection Questions

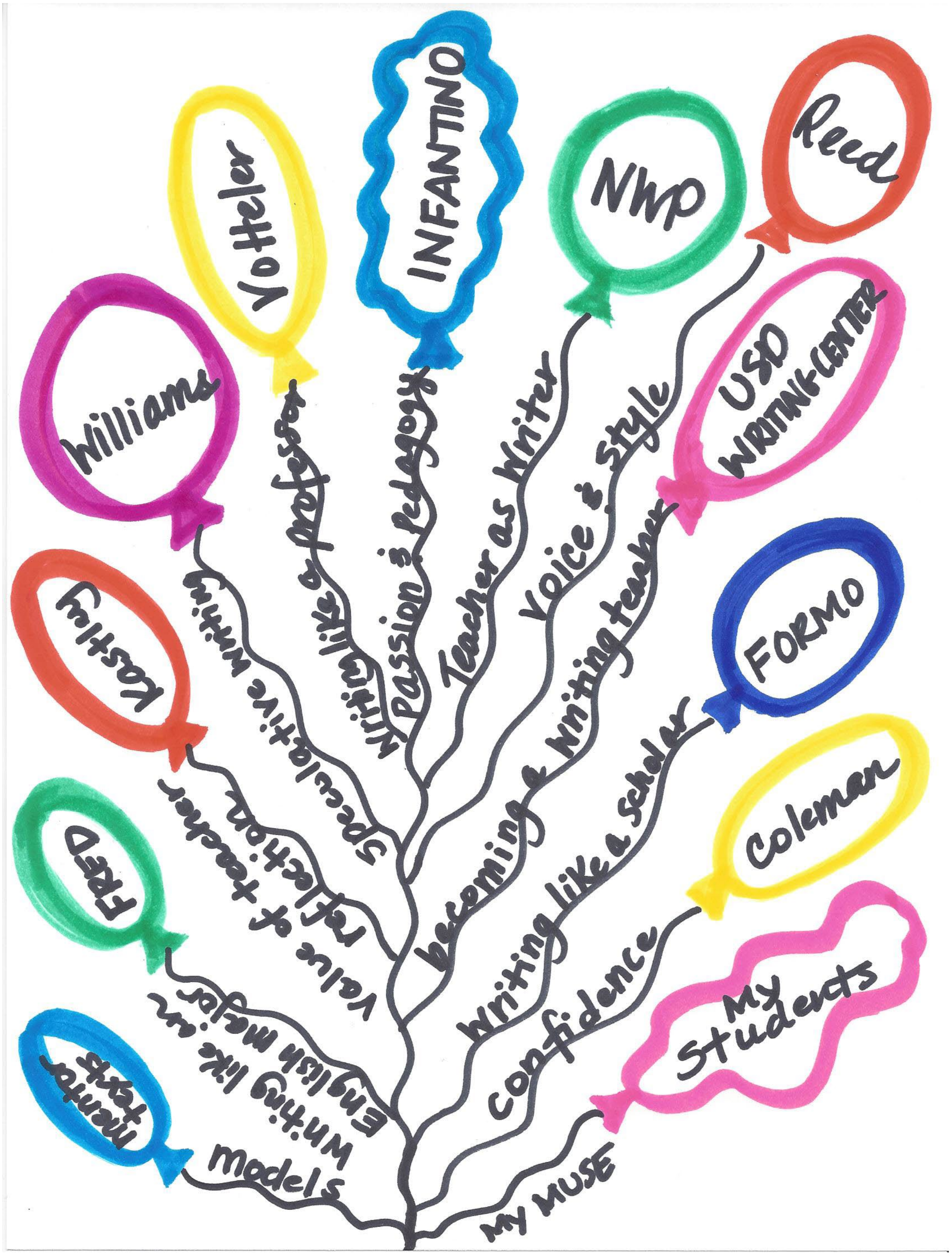
Directions: In a minimum of three and no more than five pages (typed, double spaced) please reflect upon your experience in the Sam Houston Writing Project (SHWP). In doing so, consider the following guiding questions:

1. What role did the SHWP play in your *development as an educator*?
2. How did the SHWP develop your notions of *how to teach and assess writing*?
3. How did the SHWP develop your notions of *scholarship and research in the field of literacy*?
4. In what ways were you *transformed* specifically by the SHWP, if at all? If "transformed" is too strong a word, you may comment on how it changed or affected your perceptions of teaching and assessing writing, reading, or your views of course design and instructional practices. You may also comment on personal things as well, such as your ability to be reflective or introspective, your own self-efficacy, your self-esteem or sense of empowerment as a teacher or person, your teacher identity, your writing baggage, etc.). If you feel there was no change at all, please comment on why specifically you feel that is so.
5. How did the SHWP affect the way you *perceive yourself as a writer and teacher of writing?*
6. In what ways did the SHWP encourage you to be a *more reflective educator?*
7. Have you shared your experiences with your colleagues in the SHWP? Why or why not? If so, what specifically have you shared?
8. Have you experienced another writing project in another state or university? If so, what similarities/differences exist in the way it was run?
9. One of the greatest tenets of the NWP is "teachers teaching teachers". Do you feel that that notion was pronounced in your experience in the SHWP? If so, in what way? If not, please explain why.
10. Please reflect upon the *self-efficacy or empowerment* you felt or experienced as a result of the SHWP. Tie that feeling to specific things that elicited that in you.

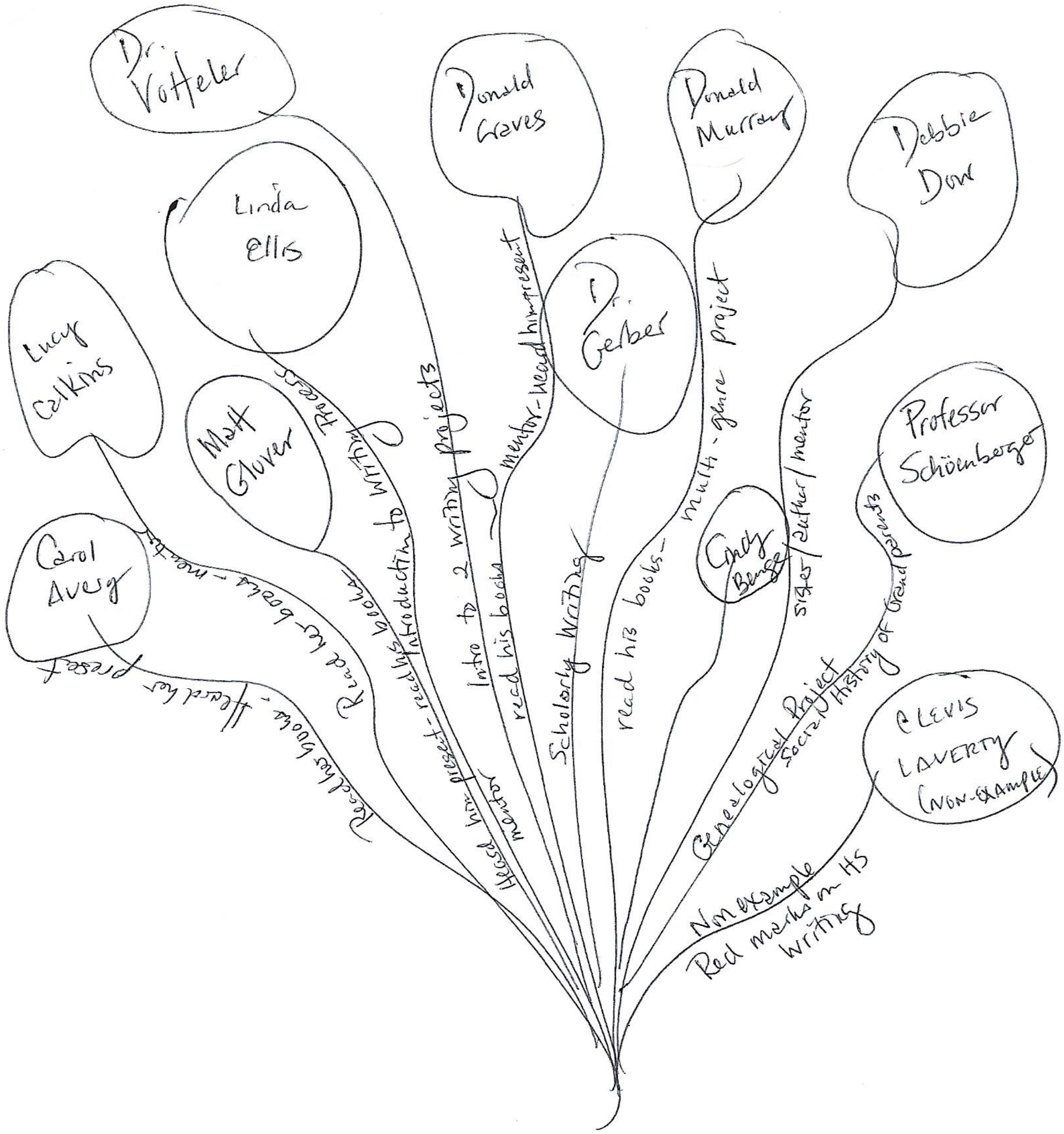
Balloon Metaphor

I have shown you my balloon metaphor and explained the notion of it to you and how it fits into the scholarship of this study. On an 8 ½ by 11 blank sheet of paper, please create your own balloon metaphor using mine as a model or guide, and attach an explanation of what each teacher contributed to you as a writer and teacher of writing.

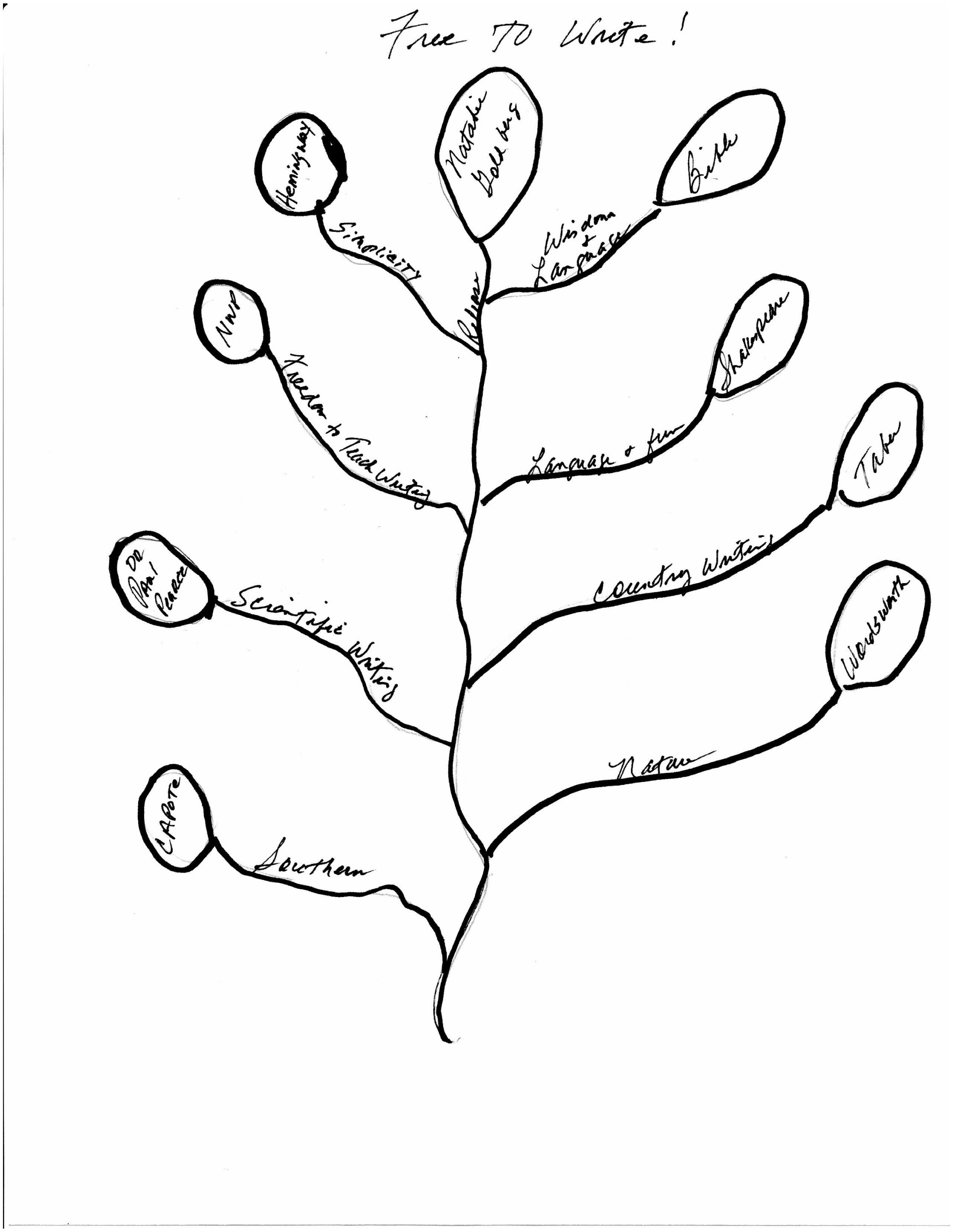
APPENDIX C


INFANTINO
Votteler
NWP
Reed
Williams
USD WRITING CENTER
Kastly
FORMO
Freed
Coleman
mentor texts
My Students
Writing like a professor
Passion & Pedagogy
Teacher as Writer
Voice & style
Speculative writing
becoming a writing teacher
value of teacher reflection
Writing like a scholar
Writing like an English major
confidence
models
MY MUSE

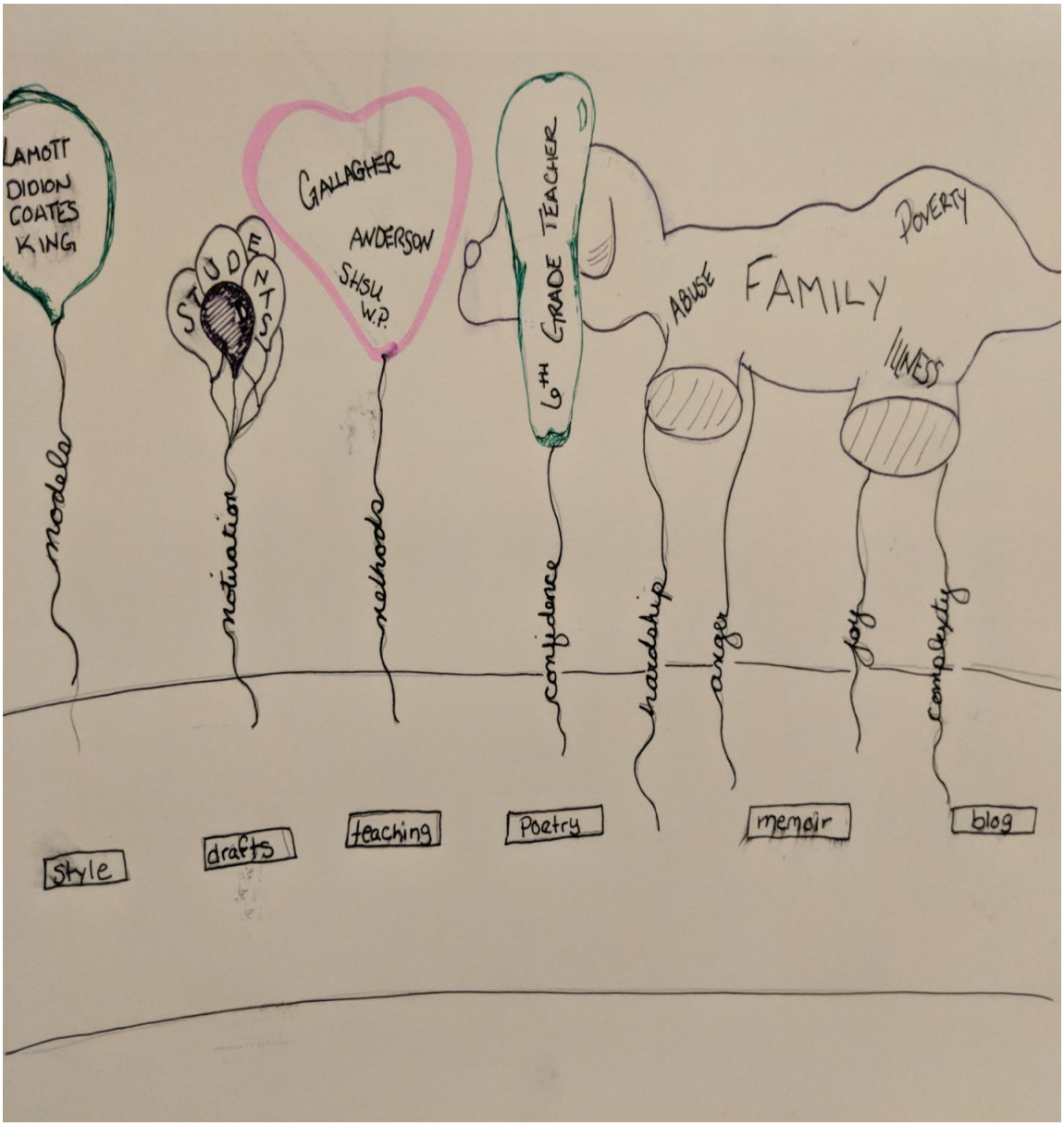
APPENDIX D


Dr. Votteler
Donald Graves
Donald Murray
Debbie Dow
Linda Ellis
Lucy Calkins
Matt Glover
Dr. Gerber
Professor Schöenberger
Carol Avery
Cindy Benge
CLEVIS LAVERTY (NON-EXAMPLE)

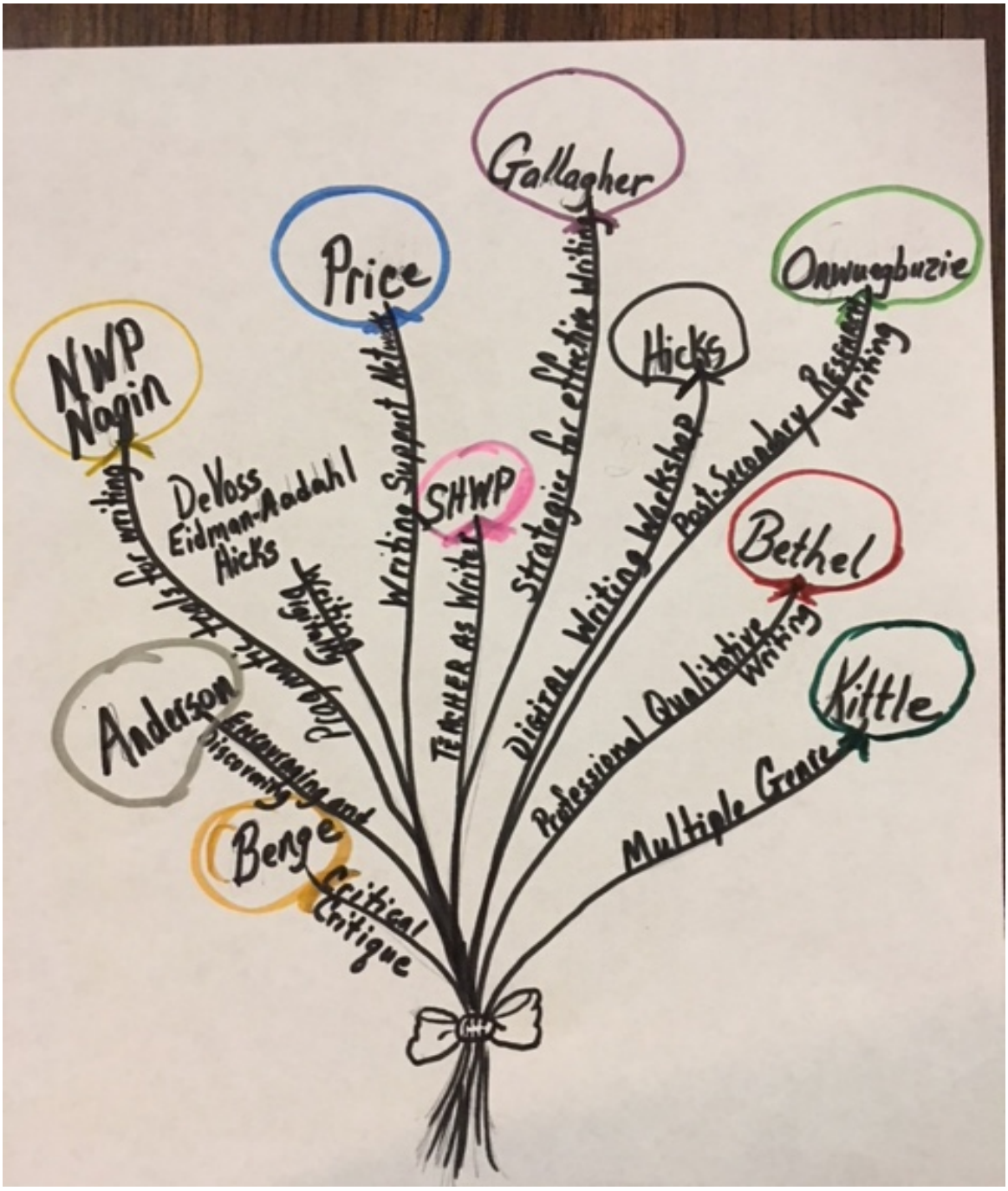
APPENDIX E


Free TO Write!
Hemingway
Natalie Goldberg
Bible
Simplicity
Wisdom & Language
NWP
Shakespeare
Freedom to Teach Writing
Language & fun
Dr Paul Pearce
Country Writing
Scientific Writing
Wordsworth
Nature
CAPOTE
Southern

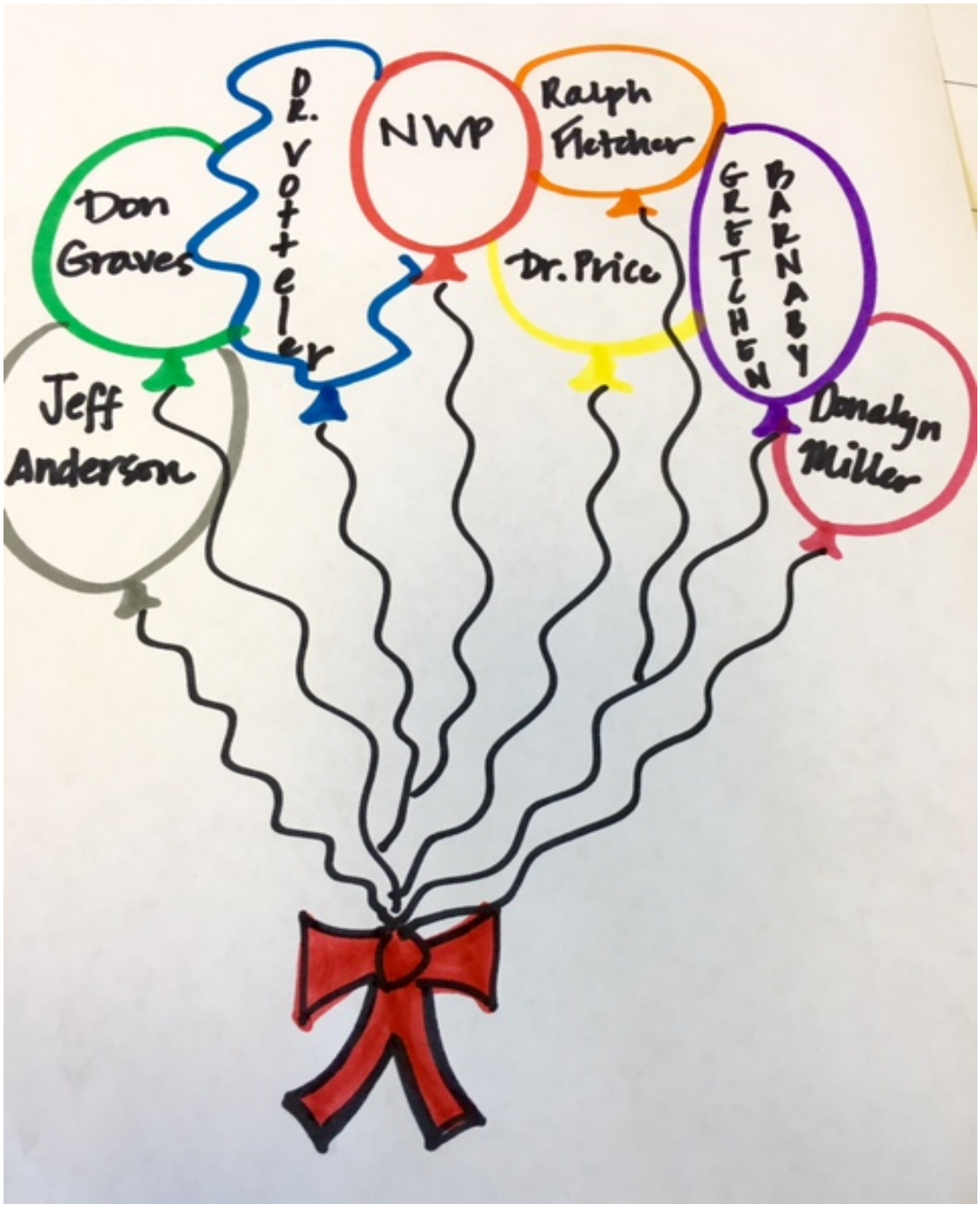
APPENDIX F


LAMOTT
DIDION
COATES
KING
STUDENTS
GALLAGHER
ANDERSON
SHSU
W.P.
6TH GRADE TEACHER
POVERTY
ABUSE
FAMILY
ILLNESS
models
motivation
role models
confidence
hardship
anger
joy
complexity
style
drafts
teaching
Poetry
memoir
blog

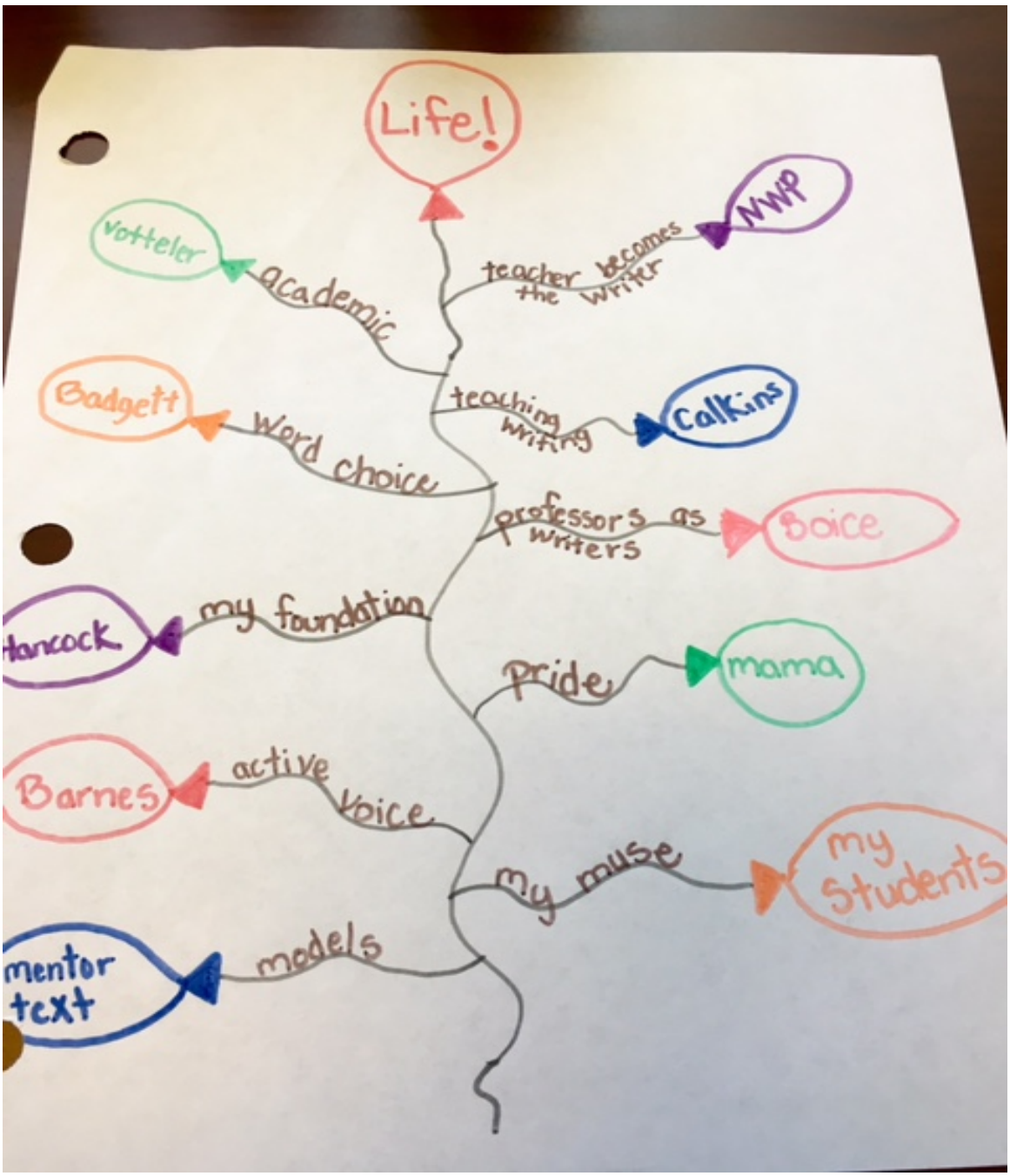
APPENDIX G


Gallagher
Price
Onwuegbuzie
NWP
Nagin
Hicks
DeVoss
Eidman-Aadahl
Hicks
SHWP
Bethel
Anderson
Kittle
Berge

APPENDIX H


Dr. Vottelier
NWP
Ralph Fletcher
Don Graves
Dr. Price
GRETCHEN BARNABY
Jeff Anderson
Donalyn Miller

APPENDIX I


Life!
NWP
teacher becomes the writer
Vottelor
academic
Badgett
word choice
teaching writing
Calkins
professors as writers
Boice
my foundation
Hancock
pride
mama
Barnes
active voice
my muse
my students
mentor text
models

VITA

KIMBERLY ATHANS, Ed. D.

EDUCATION

Ed. D. Literacy; Sam Houston State University; December 2018

Dissertation: *National Writing Project Fellows' Perceptions of Themselves as Writers and Teachers of Writing;* Defense October 2018; expected graduation: December 2018

National Writing Project Fellow, Sam Houston Writing Project; 2013

Research interests: legacy & transformative nature of the National Writing Project, teaching college composition and rhetoric, secondary teachers literacy practices, teacher candidate preparation for teaching writing, writing centers in the high school and college, and increasing reading interest in secondary (grades 6-12) students

M.A. English, University of Houston; December 2004

M. Ed. Curriculum & Instruction, *literacy emphasis,*
University of San Diego; August 2000

B.A. English, University of San Diego; May 1995

TEACHING CREDENTIALS

Texas Standard Teaching Certificate, English (8-12) with ESL Authorization, 2008

California Professional Clear Single Subject Teaching Credential, English (6-12); University of San Diego, May 1996, with CTEL Certification (California Teachers of English Learners), August 2010

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

8/17-present **Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA**
Teaching graduate level classes in the MAT program & serving as the program lead of secondary education and clinical practice

- University supervisor
- Serving on the enrollment management committee
- Student behavioral committee (ombudsman)
- Served on faculty hiring committee
- Served on scholarship committee

8/03-6/17 **Lone Star College-Montgomery, The Woodlands, Texas**
Taught Composition & Rhetoric I & II and World Lit I & II as an adjunct and dual credit English instructor

8/08-6/17 **The Woodlands High School**, The Woodlands, TX
Dual Credit English & English II, III, & IV

- Dual Credit Team Leader
- District CADRE representative for grade 12
- Assessment Committee
- Site-based Advisory Committee
- Professional Learning Communities Committee
- Academic Committee

8/13-5/14 **Lone Star College-University Park**
Associate Professor of English
Taught Composition & Rhetoric I & II

- Honors Director
- Faculty Book Club facilitator
- Early Alert Committee/Dev Ed Committee
- Sociology/English Hiring Committees
- Black History Month Committee

8/05-12/05 **Lone Star College-Cy-Fair**
Temporary Full Time Assistant Professor of English
Taught Composition & Rhetoric I & II

1/05-5/05 **Lone Star College-Tomball**
Temporary Full Time Assistant Professor of English
Taught Developmental Reading and Developmental Writing

8/06-7/07 **Mission Hills High School**, San Marcos, CA
Taught literacy academy, English 9, & journalism

- *Silvertip* Advisor (school newspaper)
- District Benchmark Exam Committee

8/02-12/03 **University of Houston**, Houston, TX
Graduate Teaching Assistant, taught Composition & Rhetoric I

8/98-6/01 **Vista High School**, Vista, CA
Taught English 11 A.P. /I.B. & English 9

- Master Teacher
- District Literacy Academy Presenter
- District Language Arts Committee

- Curriculum Writing/Textbook Committee
- C.A.P.I. Writing Grant Committee

8/96-8/97 **Robison Junior High School**, Las Vegas, NV
Taught English 7

***New Teacher of the Year-1997**

- Literary Magazine Advisor
- Employee Recognition Committee
- Multicultural Committee

1/96-6/96 **Torrey Pines High School**, San Diego, CA
Student Teacher, English 9 & English 11

8/93-12/95 **University of San Diego Writing Center**
Selected by faculty to serve as a mentor tutor

1994-95 **Southeast San Diego Tutoring Project;** Holy Family School

PRESENTATIONS

Close Reading Using Cornell Notes, Conroe ISD*,* August 2016

"Using Academic Notebooks in Doctoral Writing: An Investigation of Doctoral Students' and Instructors' Perceptions", Presented at AERA, Washington D.C., April 2016

State of our Schools Superintendent's Address, The Woodlands High School, September 2015

Painless Poetry: Exciting Ways to Engage Students in their Understanding and Appreciation of Poetry, Conroe ISD, August 2015

Professional Learning Communities, The Woodlands High School, August 2015

TCTELA Tidbits, The Woodlands High School, February 2015

Commonplace Books in the Literature Classroom, Conroe ISD, August 2014

The Pleasures of Reading in a Digital Age, Lone Star College UP*,* January 2014

Poetry Circles in the Secondary Classroom, Reading & Writing Conference, Sam Houston State University, September 2013

Read Around Groups, Sam Houston Writing Project, June 2013

Inquiry Circles, CISD District Cadre, February 2013

Poetry Circles in the Secondary Classroom, Conroe ISD, August 2012

Literature Circles in the Secondary Classroom, Conroe ISD, August 2011

Visual Rhetoric & Media Literacy, Lone Star College, June 2010

Using E-Portfolios in the College Classroom, Lone Star College, November 2007

Teaching Grammar to Developmental Writing Students, Lone Star College, Feb 2005

Teaching Grammar Effectively, Vista Unified School District, October 1999

PUBLICATIONS

Book Review on *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* by Alan Jacobs, *English in Texas*-Fall/Winter 2016

"Using Academic Notebooks in Doctoral Writing: An Investigation of Doctoral Students' and Instructors' Perceptions" (under review)

Introductions to student writing submissions: *Writing across the Curriculum Journal* for Lone Star College Montgomery; 2011-2015

College Level Courses Taught in English

Composition & Rhetoric I & II
American Literature I & II
World Literature I & II
British Literature I & II
Developmental Writing I & II
Developmental Reading I

College Level Courses Taught in Education

General Methods for Secondary Teachers
Methods of Teaching Reading & Writing Secondary
Methods of Teaching Reading & Writing Elementary
Clinical Practice Seminar
Advanced Literacy Assessment, Instruction, & Intervention
Curriculum Development, Innovation, and Evaluation
Intern Support Seminar
Secondary Methods Across the Curriculum

Professional Certifications

- National Writing Project Teacher Consultant, August 2013
- PLC (Professional Learning Community); San Antonio, Texas, June 2015
- ESL Certification, Conroe ISD, Texas, March 2012
- CLAD Certification, U.C.S.D., August 2011
- AP English Literature, Rice University, July 2011
- AP English Language, Rice University, July 2009
- LSC Adjunct Instructor Certification Program, November 2007
- AVID Summer Institute, July 2007
- International Baccalaureate Language A Training, 1998-1999

Professional Memberships

- American Educational Research Association
- California Association of Teachers of English
- Literacy Research Association
- National Council of Teachers of English
- Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts
- Textbook and Academic Authors Association