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Teacher Interpretation and Enactment of Writing Instruction: A Case Study set within Two Elementary Classrooms

By

Audrey Sanders

An Undergraduate Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Midway Honors Scholars Program  
Honors College  
and the  
Honors-in Education Program  
Clemmer College  
East Tennessee State University

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### **Abstract**

From the minute a student walks into her first day of kindergarten, she is learning to read and write. Reading and writing are reciprocal in nature, using the same composing processes (Roe, Smith, & Kolodziej, 2019). Interchangeable thinking skills are essential for both reading and writing, such as analyzing, identifying, inferencing, evaluating, and comparing (Roe, Smith, & Koldziej, 2019). Published research over time suggested that instruction focused on teaching students the craft and mechanics of writing significantly contributed to the overall improvement across the spectrum of literacy development (Cutler, 2015;Raphael, 2019; Wright, 2016).

However, studies also suggested that teachers of all grade levels tend to vary in their approach to teaching writing (Newmark, B., Speck, D., Amesbury, E., Lough, C., Belgutay, J., Lowe, J., ... Hepburn, H, 2018). This study was focused on understanding how two elementary level teachers interpreted writing curriculum and carried out instruction in their respective classrooms.

Qualitative methodological procedures were employed through interviewing both educators and observing their writing instruction. The collected data was analyzed through inductive thematic analysis and findings included: 1) both teachers believed that writing instruction matters; 2) both teachers followed the curriculum as they learned in teacher professional development; 3) writing instruction varied according to primary versus elementary contexts.

## Introduction

In every classroom, students across the nation are learning how to write, in some form or fashion. The importance of writing instruction was even further exemplified with the onset of national standards with the Common Core State Standards, CCSS (McCallum 2010). The CCSS placed a “tremendous emphasis on writing” (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012, p.102). According to these standards, students should be learning what it means to become a writer, whether that be through taking notes during content area classes or creative writing in a writer’s notebook. Both of these practices (writing across the content areas and creative writing) are necessary skills of an emerging writer and should be fostered through instruction. It is necessary for classroom teachers to act as mentors during writing instruction so that students can adopt the processes of writing in fundamental ways. For instance, Ryan Colwell (2018) stated that young writers lean on their teacher for mentorship in writing in order to apply skills such as notetaking or writing to record. Therefore, educators must know how to assist them in the writing process. Grisham (2011) writes that research has shown that writing instruction is needed at every level, so the education programs are partially responsible for training their teachers in this crucial discipline of literary education. The role of a teacher in writing instruction becomes very important. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to believe in the curriculum in which they are being instructed to implement during their writing period. Today, a major format for teaching writing is through Writing Workshops in the classroom throughout our school systems. Within this time of writing, it is recommended that students are to participate and learn essential parts of the writing process in order to build an early foundation. For instance, students should be given time to write every single day (Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Olson, C. B., DAoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N, 2012). They are to be taught the various components of

the writing process, as well as teaching them to write for various reasons (Graham, et al., 2012). For our young writers, it is important that they are taught how to correctly use their motor skills and use a pencil. In addition, it is essential that our students learn how to form letters and sentences fluently and effectively (Graham, et al., 2012). Lastly, if not the most important, as teachers, we need to create an engaged community of writers (Graham, et al., 2012, p.1). All of these recommendations are given to ensure that our students gain a valuable tool for learning at an early age (Graham, et al., 2012).

### **Definitions of Important Terms**

**Writing Process:** “The writing process is the approach a writer uses to compose text. Components of the writing process include planning, drafting, sharing, revising, editing, and evaluating. These components are recursive. They can occur at any point during the writing process, and students should learn to skillfully and flexibly move back and forth between the components while composing text. On occasion, an additional component, publishing, is added to the process as a final product to conclude the writing process” (Graham, et al., 2012, p.42).

**Writer’s Workshop:** “Writing workshop is a student-centered framework for teaching writing that is based on the idea that students learn to write best when they write frequently, for extended periods of time, on topics of their own choosing” (Mulvahill, 2018, p.2).

**Prompt Writing:** “A writing prompt is a brief passage of text (or sometimes an image) that provides a potential topic idea or starting point for an original essay, report, journal entry, story, poem, or other forms of writing. Writing prompts are commonly used in the essay portions of standardized tests, but they may also be devised by the writers themselves” (Nordquist, 2020, p.1).



**Content Area Writing:** “At one time, writing instruction was only completed in a language arts classroom. These days, teachers of all subjects are required to weave concepts of reading and writing into the content areas - social studies, science, and even math. Content area writing, then, is writing that is completed in these and other subjects” (Linde, 2015, p.2).

**Creative Writing:** “Creative writing is any form of writing which is written with the creativity of mind: fiction writing, poetry writing, creative nonfiction writing and more. The purpose is to express something, whether it be feelings, thoughts, or emotions” (Writers’ Treasure, 2017, p.1).

### **Literature Review**

A plethora of research has been published about how K-5 educators teach writing (Munger, n.d.; Laud, 2019; Swerling; 2006). Popular curriculum and pedagogy for teaching writing in the elementary grades range from workshop format that emphasizes the writing process to the other end of the spectrum, where writing is governed tightly by the teacher, and all students write to a single prompt (Murphy, 2015). One could not possibly begin to name all of the different types of writing instructions that appear in our classrooms, but a few are well identified in people’s research. Despite the research that indicates there are disparities in how writing is taught, guidelines for what types of writing should be taught is organized in the national standards. The standards are a guiding document in the teaching of writing for all K-12 teachers because it is specified what type of writing (narrative, informational, opinion/argumentative) should be taught across the grades. The Common Core State Standards places writing as one of the foundations of education. According to Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman (2012), writing is treated equally as reading in the Common Core. In addition, “writing is assumed to be the vehicle through which a great deal of the reading work and reading assessments will occur” (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012, p. 102).

## Major Types of Writing Identified in the Standards

In the following standards, there are three different types of writing, each demanding different things from each student (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012). The standards state: *5.W.T TP.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information; 5.W.T P.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information; 5.W.T TP.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using an effective technique, such as descriptive details and clear event sequences.* The main types of writing identified in the standards are: argumentative, informational, and narrative style (cite common core standards, 2010). According to Calkins, Ehrenworth & Lehman (2012), the standards assigned more value to writing instruction as its own subject area which was not the case in previous standards. Additionally, the standards placed an emphasis on opinion writing in elementary grades to progress to argumentative writing standards in middle grades.

Argumentative writing has been found most recently inside the classroom. It allows students to dive deeper into their writing. Research shows that by giving students an opportunity to share their opinion through writing, students' writing performance, as a whole, increased significantly (Campbell, Y. C., & Filimon, C., 2017).

## The Writing Process

The writing process, which includes the steps of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing constitutes a large portion of the CCSS. Writing plays a crucial role in a student's foundational learning.

“The panel acknowledges that instructional practices in kindergarten and 1st grade, when students are just beginning to learn letters and to write, can and will differ from practices

in later grades. Writing, like reading, is defined from a developmental standpoint, which begins with the acquisition of foundational skills and then leads to the application of more sophisticated techniques” (Graham, et al., 2012, p.12).

In order for a student to grow in their ability to write, it is recommended that at an early age, a student is given at least 30 minutes a day to write independently (Graham, et al., 2012). It is then also highly encouraged that the teacher instructs their students strategies in which they can use to complete the writing process (Graham, et al., 2012). The goal being to slowly transition the writing from the teacher to the student (Graham, et al., 2012). In addition, students are to be taught to be flexible with their writing and the use of the writing components (Graham, et al., 2012). At a later stage, students are then ready to learn about the various purposes for writing, such as opinion/argumentative, narrative, and informative. Thirdly, it is vital for students to learn how to fluently compose a letter, eventually a sentence. It is crucial for students to learn how to be fluent in all areas of their writing: handwriting, spelling, and sentence structure (Graham, et al., 2012). Overall, teachers are to provide a well-balanced, positive community for writing (Graham, et al., 2012). This includes teachers taking part in their students writing, as well as sharing their writing as a model (Graham, et al., 2012). Students should be encouraged by their teacher to collaborate amongst their peers during this time, giving feedback (Graham, et al., 2012).

There are many teaching strategies identified to address the writing process in the literature, for example collaborative writing is found in the classroom. “This type of instruction has children working together to edit their individual pieces in a group setting. This technique has many of the same elements as writing strategies, but it involves students working with each

other to develop their writing” (Hundley, 2013, p.33.) By working as a collective team, they learn two major skills: how to work together and how to improve their independent writing.

A recommended instructional strategy for teachers is the Specific Product Goal strategy (Hundley, 2013). This allows the students to make goals for their writing that are reasonable, allowing them to accomplish these goals. “Identifying the purpose of the assignment and the characteristics of the final product are important elements of this strategy” (Hundley, 2013, p.33). Teachers can aide in this type of instruction, allowing to fully explain all the elements for the student.

Standing on the shoulders of Sheri Hundley (2013), an example of a strategy that mainly focuses on the students planning, revising, and editing their written work is the Self- Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD).

Teaching strategies are usually addressed by the state, instructing teachers of how they will implement each subject area. Each state also provides their educators with standards in which they expect them to cover within the scheduled academic year. Standards are composed to ensure that their students are being prepared for the upcoming grade level.

“Standards ensure better accountability – holding teachers and schools responsible for what goes on in the classrooms. The practice of aligning learning to standards also helps ensure that a higher level of learning is attained, guides teachers in the process of assessment and helps keep them on track” (Professional Learning Board, 2020, para 2).

Standards are also composed and implemented is to set students up for further success in their careers in the future. Writing happens to be one of the most viable tools in this process. “Because writing is a valuable tool for communication, learning, and self-expression,8 people who do not

have adequate writing skills may be at a disadvantage and may face restricted opportunities for education and employment” (Graham, et al., 2012, p.12).

### **The Purpose of Writing for Life Skills**

In the state of Tennessee, the site for the current study, state standards address writing as a necessary life skill that will be used in their post-secondary education, workforce, and in their creative pursuits.

“To this end, the Writing standards support a progression of skills from Kindergarten through 12th grade that help all young people develop into the writers they need to be in the 21st century. These skills are founded upon the belief that students must “have words in order to use words.” Thus, the K-5 Writing standards work in conjunction with the K-5 Foundational Literacy standards to help students build their skills in understanding print concepts, spoken words and sounds, and writing words and sentences” (Tennessee Board of Education, 2017, p.51).

According to the Tennessee Board of Education (2012), writing is important due to the fact that the students in our society need to be able to write in an effective way, obtaining and successfully preserving employment. It is viewed as a necessity instead of an option (Tennessee Board of Education, 2017). Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007) stated the importance of writing in schools as, “writing skills is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and the global economy.”

The state is also in support of better preparing their students for their journey into college. In order to accomplish this goal, the state has aligned their standards with “College and Career

Ready” program. This program encourages for students to have attainable goals set for them, ensuring that the state can monitor their learning.

“As states are taking the lead in developing college- and career-ready standards and assessments, federal policy also has encouraged states to use measurable indicators of student learning and growth to inform educator professional development and evaluation. For example, under ESEA flexibility, states are developing systems that will evaluate principals and teachers based in part on student growth on test scores, along with measures that may include observation, peer review, feedback from parents and students, and classroom work” (College and Career Ready Standards, n.d.).

Not only can the state witness each student’s success in the classroom, College and Career Ready Standards give parents access to this transformation as well (College and Career Ready, n.d.).

In addition to student’s future success, the Tennessee Board of Education has specified that writing is also an important tool that can be used to influence others. “In addition, technologies and social media become more integral to and ubiquitous in daily life, we communicate with others and represent ourselves through writing more than ever” (Tennessee Board of Education, 2017, p.51).

Writing will flood all areas of students’ lives in their future careers and endeavors. Therefore, it is vital that they “develop that early foundation in writing” (Graham, et al., 2012, p.12).

“Writing is a fundamental part of engaging in professional, social, community, and civic activities. Nearly 70 percent of salaried employees have at least some responsibility for

writing, and the ability to write well is a critical component of being able to communicate effectively to a variety of audiences” (Graham, et al., 2012, p.12).

Hence why it is so crucial for students to gain this ability and skill at an early age.

### **The Purpose of Writing for Entertainment**

Research conducted by Kelly Gallagher (2015) shows us another reason why writing is such an essential part to our education system, to simply tell stories. He comes to the conclusion that narrative writing can be beneficial to the social development of the K-12 environment.

“When students write their way into imaginary worlds...they benefit from giving careful consideration to the decisions, the relationships, and the actions of others. When students are...writing narratives, they are in the process of re-creating themselves” (p. 106).

Another strategy found in Hundley’s writing (2013) would be students learning and writing about various genres, such as narrative. Writing tasks are a way that a teacher can instruct their students in literacy; for example, writing their own stories (Hundley, 2013).

### **The Purpose of Writing for Creating Better Readers**

Lastly, writing can create better readers in students. A study conducted by Graham and Herbert (2010) connected writing to a student’s ability to comprehend while reading. Essentially, students are able to better understand what they are reading if they are able to write about it after. “First, writing provides students with a tool for visibly and permanently recording their thoughts and ideas about a text and analyzing, connecting, personalizing, and manipulating key ideas from text. This has a strong impact on making text more memorable and understandable for students. Second, knowledge about text structure and organization is improved by having students engage

in the process of composing text (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991)” (Tennessee Board of Education, 2017, p. 52).

Because teachers can teach writing in many different directions, the standards refer to these as “types of writing,” instead of genres. Times have changed, and where these state standards used to focus on the structure and clarity of student’s writing, they now look at more of what the student is trying to say, their voice (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012). Common Core State standards provide an approach of less teacher control, more student control. A teacher’s role now falls on how they wish to instruct writing in their classroom. Do they want to have full control of their student’s writing, or are they going to let their students take control of their learning? The various instructional strategies mentioned in their paper describe the ways in which a teacher can be in control, moving down the line to a student control approach.

Educators tend to provide summary models in their instruction, also known as summarization. “Different strategies were examined such as explicitly teaching summarization strategies to providing models of summaries and then gradually reducing the amount of information provided” (Hundley, 2013, p.32). By scaffolding, teachers can moderately scale down their involvement, allowing the emergent writers to evolve into independent writers.

### **Strategies for Teaching Writing:**

Students come into the classroom in need of instruction, particularly when it comes to writing. They simply cannot write daily without any guidance and be expected to grow their abilities and skills. “Children need explicit scaffolding, constructed within expertly delivered instructional conversations that address the language, knowledge, and strategies required for problem solving in writing” (Walsh, 2013, para 1).



**small group instruction.** When writing instruction is conducted within a small group, the teacher is able to provide instant, targeted support to each writer. Writers are then able to receive this support while experiencing independent writing. Although these are not recommended to occur daily, teachers are able to focus primarily on those that are in need of this one-on-one support.

“Instead, teachers should make intentional, thoughtful decisions about which students are in need of a "shot in the arm" regarding writing at any point in time. A series of guided writing lessons might be presented to students who are not producing much text during classroom writing time, for example, or to students who write a sufficient quantity of text but lack a sense of ownership for their writing. Alternatively, the teacher may work with students who are not appropriating the elements of good writing described in whole-class lessons” (Walsh, 2013, para 8).

During this small group instruction, students are engaged in shared experience. This is then followed by a think-aloud discussion of the writing steps that need to be taken, allowing them to integrate the discussed components into their personal writings (Walsh, 2013, para 7). Time is then given to each student work independently, while having the guided support of their teacher. This type of instruction is then ended with a sharing activity, allowing students receive immediate satisfaction of their work.

**guided writing.** Another found type of writing instruction is known as when a teacher loosely scaffolds their students by providing their students with the language that they need to compose a piece of writing. The writing activity is completed with the support of the teacher. Therefore, this type of instruction is introduced when students are unable to complete the writing on their own. “For example, this may include making suggestions (“Why don't we start by

saying...?'), agreeing and disagreeing ('That's a good idea - let's put that'), and asking for help ('Is it right to say...?')" (BBC, n.d.).

**writing workshop.** Writing Workshop in the classroom differs from these traditional strategies of writing instruction, such as using prompts and correcting sentences (Puente, K., & Wilson, J. C., 2019). "Thus it creates a need to reimagine your teaching and your classroom" (Puente, K., & Wilson, J. C., 2019, p. x). Instruction during writing instruction includes collecting topics, organizing, drafting, revising, editing, conferences, sharing, and publishing. All of these components are a part of what makes Writing Workshop different from previous writing instruction strategies in the classroom.

One main contributor to Writing Workshop is the researcher and author Lucy Calkins. Many schools are adopting Lucy Calkins writing curriculum into their schools, in hopes to better their writers, preparing them for their future endeavors. Calkins focuses on first grade when referencing Writer's Workshop, and how they grow mentally during this time.

"Your first graders will come to you as budding young writers ready to grow in leaps and bounds. Right away you will help them remember the confident writers they became last year in kindergarten and continue to build on this energy during the year ahead. This means, of course, that as teachers of first graders, you need to be sure your teaching does not repeat but instead stands on the shoulders of the previous year, and that it takes children as far as they can go" (Calkins, 2011, p.2).

While in correlation with the Common Core State Standards, Calkins provides curriculum for various grades in writing instruction. In all publications that Lucy Calkins composes, she

promotes that students continue their excitement for writing. Therefore, teachers are responsible for making writing a time of exploration and eagerness.

When writing workshops are studied, they have been found to be effective in aiding students in mastering the process of writing (Mester, 2011). They “improve the feelings and attitudes” of new writers, while increasing their self-confidence (Mester, 2011). In the end, students feel as if their voice has truly been heard by their peers and teacher. The flexibility in an educator’s schedule that the writer’s workshop presents is a strength to be considered (Mester, 2011). Along with a convenient schedule, writer’s workshop provides a “differentiation of instruction” to the students. Each student learns in a different way, so by having writer’s workshop integrated into your writing instruction, you are able to cater to every individual student’s individual needs. In your everyday classroom, a teacher has a diverse set of students. Their needs can range from having a diverse background to disabilities (Mester, 2011). The students can then obtain the information that they need during the presentation of the model. It can be collected through their classmates, various texts, or during conferences with the teacher (Mester, 2011). Overall, writing workshops have shown through research that it presents the largest range of benefits in the classroom.

Writing Workshop has shown to be beneficial to all areas in the classroom, but little has been conducted to show how all components of this instruction strategy fits into a school day. If it is possible to fit Writing Workshop into a daily schedule, what tole does this strategy have on elementary teachers? Therefore, it is important for the research to show how teachers perceive the practice of teaching this strategy, and not only this strategy, but all curriculum that teachers are required to implement. Given all of these instructional strategies, how do teachers feel about teaching writing? In addition, research shows that elementary grades are now no longer being

self-contained but departmentalized (Parker, 2017), but not all are making this change.

Therefore, how do self-contained, elementary grade teachers feel towards writing instruction in addition to their other responsibilities?

According to the Common Core Standards, kindergartners can write, despite their young age. This stand has caused a disruption amongst kindergarten teachers. “‘All children should be able to accomplish this,’ many teachers question whether it is realistic to expect that within the one fleeting year of kindergarten, all children will be able to write like this” (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012). Teachers then suggest that the CCSS is an example of a spiral curriculum (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012). “A child who has been learning narrative craft for thirteen years should, by the end of twelfth grade, be extraordinarily skilled, ready to spin in anecdote from his or her own story into an engaging college essay or scholarship application” (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012).” From this statement, teachers are showing how they feel towards the requirements that are set for them and their students to accomplish in a given year. The evidence presented shares that writing has several components that go into making a successful writer. Therefore, teachers need to have available an instructional strategy that best fits their classroom, that they feel confident in teaching. When a teacher is required to abide by the school’s curriculum, their teacher load is sometimes extended past their abilities, causing them anxiety and resentment towards the program.

Students’ recent assessment scores have shown not to be improving. After the third grade, students’ scores stop growing as they should. Research states that this is because What is tested, some educators say, gets taught—and what isn’t doesn’t. Since 2001, the curriculum in many elementary schools has narrowed to little more than a steady diet of reading and math” (Wexler, 2018). That being said, teachers are solely depending on what is being tested as a

curriculum to teach. Therefore, students are falling through the cracks because they are not receiving all the parts to the puzzle. For instance, teachers are focusing on skills such as finding the main idea. Students in their classroom may be able to master this skill, but if they are not comprehending the text, they are not going to be able to build on their reading skills.

If this problem arises across the curriculum, specifically into our writing instruction, this generation of students are not going to be able to succeed in the future. If we understand teacher's dilemmas and perceived hurdles in carrying out writing instruction, then we can develop school-wide plans that incorporate schedules conducive to a focus on writing. This being a defining factor of this qualitative case study.

### **The Current Trends for Teaching Writing**

Millions of various strategies are being used throughout our classrooms, but many are also not yielding the most effective results. When students were being instructed to edit, revise, and plan out their writing pieces, an effect size of 0.82 was found (Hundley, 2013.) A group of students that were examined when being taught about different genres had a higher effect of 1.02 (Hundley, 2013). Teachers that used the process of summarizing in their classroom, were discovered to have an effect size of 0.70. This being compared to the total average of 0.55 (Hundley, 2013.) Research has been conducted on many writing instruction strategies, whether they are effective or not. Benefits were found when studying the effects of argumentative writing across a school's curriculum. It was agreed that student's writing was made stronger when writing was implemented in all subjects. It was also found that students absorbed "the same key language in all disciplines" (Searchwell, 2008, p. 63). Those students showed confidence in their abilities to write in all subjects because they were experiencing practice in all subject areas (Searchwell, 2008).

## **Methodology**

In this qualitative, comparative case study, the following research question guided the methodological procedures:

- 1) How are teachers in one elementary school teaching writing?
- 2) What influences impact how teachers in one elementary school teach writing?
- 3) How do teachers in one elementary school feel about their writing instruction?

This question was chosen for the reason there is little research done on how teachers are feeling when following their mandated curriculum. Studies have been conducted on the various strategies of writing instruction and the effect they have on classrooms, but there is a lack of how they are affecting those teachers that do implement these strategies into their instruction. Therefore, I chose to compose a qualitative research study to contribute information based on one case to address the gap in the literature.

### **Qualitative Case Study Research Design**

This study was a qualitative design, aimed at understanding both teachers' perspectives about teaching writing in their respective classrooms. This description of qualitative research was derived from (Austin, 2014) definition of qualitative research in that the work is devoted to understanding the research context as it is experienced through the eyes of the research participants. Because the research did not aspire to make generalizations about a broad population of people, but clearly define the case of a few who shared common attributes, qualitative case study design was employed. A case study is defined by Yin (2014, p.16) as:

“A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. In other words, you would want to do case study research because you want to understand a real world case and assume that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to your case.”

Yin’s description is applicable to the study because both teacher participants shared certain characteristics, such as teaching in the same school building. According to Merriam (1998), case studies are rather popular in the field of education, particularly education literature. “For Merriam, cases are particularistic and descriptive; they focus on particular situations, events, or phenomena, and they yield a ‘thick’ description” (Bartlett, Lesley, & Frances, 2017). In addition, a case study is composed of a term that Stake (1995) refers to as “bounded system.” “For Stake (1995, p. 2), researchers should view a case as ‘a bounded system’ and inquire into it ‘as an object rather than a process’. A case should be considered as ‘an integrated system’ which ‘has a boundary and working parts’ (p. 2)” (Bartlett, Lesley, & Frances, 2017). In this particular study, the bounded features include: both participants are female, they are located at the same school, and they both have more than 10 years of experience in the classroom. “Qualitative research contributes to an understanding of the human condition in different contexts and of a perceived situation” (Bengtsson, 2016). This study is also identified as being a comparative case study. This being because one participant is a primary educator, whereas, the other participant is an elementary educator. Teaching in the primary grades is rather different than teaching in the elementary grades. When teaching the grades kindergarten through first grade, students are taught from the framework “learn to read”. However, teachers began to teach their students from

the framework of “read to learn” when in second. The state of Tennessee’s approach to reading proficiency includes a framework that “emphasizes the importance of students listening to, reading, thinking, talking, and writing about texts” (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). Therefore, student in primary grades are learning from an entirely different framework than elementary grades, making this qualitative comparative case study.

## **Background**

The way in which I came into this research was very natural. I am a white middle class female that was born in Johnson City, Tennessee. I am also a fourth-year student at East Tennessee State University, about to graduate with my undergraduate degree in elementary education, licensed K-5. As a requirement to my program, I was placed in a school in order to fulfill my residency hours for the fall and spring term. Prior to attending East Tennessee State University, I attended Northeast State Community College in Blountville, Tennessee. When obtaining my Associates degree from this institution, I started to apply for scholarships from East Tennessee State University, with the plan to transfer there in the Fall. I was fortunate enough to be chosen for the Midway Honors Scholarship, in which my tuition was paid for. I was though required to complete a research thesis in return. In light of this, I naturally chose my topic around education.

My honors program advised us to find a mentor on campus to help us in the composure of this thesis. I chose LaShay Jennings, Ph.D, a past professor, knowing that she had just recently submitted her doctorate. With this knowledge, I knew she would be the most appropriate to help me with this project. Prior to my senior year at East Tennessee State University, Dr. Jennings and I had decided upon doing a case study on writing instruction in elementary classrooms. This being because many schools in this area had begun implementation of Writing Workshop in their



classrooms. We were both curious on how teachers were choosing to include this in their schedules, if at all.

### **Biases**

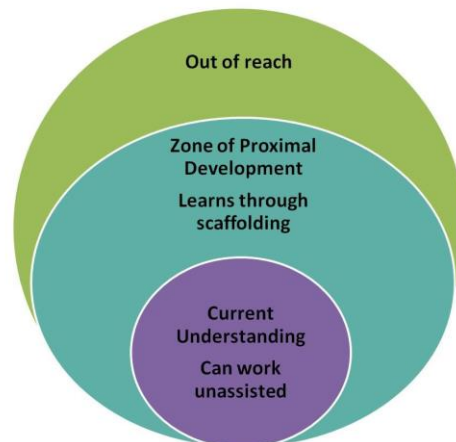
In addition to the participants, my mentor teacher in my residency placement used Writers Workshop to instruct her students during her writing block. Because I had observed the way in which she used Writers Workshop, I had to go into my research with no preconceptions of writing instruction and how I had seen it implemented. In addition to my open mindset, I was able to remain neutral because of the research that was conducted that went into the composition of my Literature Review. Prior to collecting data from observations of the participants' writing instruction and interviews, I openly confronted the possibility of having biases towards the research conducted in an effort to make the research trustworthy.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

As the researcher, I am focused on writing instruction in an elementary classroom in East Tennessee. Therefore, I view my work through a sociocultural lens. The theory of sociocultural learning comes from Lev Vygotsky. This type of learning is described to be a social process. According to Vygotsky, the development of cognition rides on the essential role of social interaction. "Vygotsky states cognitive development stems from social interactions from guided learning within the zone of proximal development as children and their partner's co-construct knowledge" (McLeod, 2018). Within this theory, it is said that children will learn from what is surrounding them in their environment. This is what will influence the way in which they think, as well as what their thoughts are about (McLeod, 2018). Therefore, the type of instruction in which students are given within a classroom affects the way that they will learn. Because of this,

I see it vital for students to share interaction with their peers, sharing their thoughts and work with one another. In this, students will learn from each other, as well as develop their sense of belonging and comfort. In addition, students will development cognitively from their teacher. During instruction, it is vital for the teacher to take on that fundamental role, modeling what is expected of the students. Vygotsky addresses all of these components and needs in his theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) “This is an important concept that relates to the difference between what a child can achieve independently and what a child can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner” (Mcleod, 2018).

### Zone of Proximal Development



*Figure 1: Illustration of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development*

In Figure 1, an illustration of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development is displayed. In the middle of the diagram, a student's ZPD is shown. Within this area of ability, a student is most perceptive to instruction. A teacher should guidance should be given, “allowing the child to develop skills they will then use on their own - developing higher mental functions” (Mcleod, 2018). In addition to a teacher's guidance and instruction, Vygotsky states that interaction

amongst peers is another way of developing cognitively (McLeod, 2018). “He suggests that teachers use cooperative learning exercises where less competent children develop with help from more skillful peers - within the zone of proximal development” (McLeod, 2018). All of this is presented within the classrooms in which Writers Workshop is implemented.

## **Participants**

Within this study, two elementary teachers aided as the primary research participants, Stephanie and Pamela (pseudonyms). They were chosen via a purposive sampling technique. In order to qualify for this study, the participants had to meet certain requirements. The teachers in which I were chosen for this case study had to be from the same school in which I was placed at for my senior residency, Greenland Elementary (pseudonym). One teacher would be chosen from primary grades, and the other would be chosen from the elementary grades.

**teacher 1 from greenland elementary.** Stephanie was the chosen participant for primary grade levels. She teaches first grade at Greenland Elementary. Stephanie has taught first grade at Greenland Elementary for nine years. In addition to first grade, Stephanie has taught kindergarten for two years at Greenland Elementary. Prior to being placed at Greenland Elementary, Stephanie taught 7 years in kindergarten at Sunny Hills Elementary (pseudonym).

**teacher 2 from greenland elementary.** Pamela was the chosen participant for elementary grade levels. She teaches third grade at Greenland Elementary. This is her first year at Greenland Elementary. In the past, she has taught third grade at another school, Vista Carter Elementary (pseudonym), for twelve years. In addition, she taught kindergarten at Elk Valley Elementary School (pseudonym) for her first year of teaching.

## **Research Context**

Greenland Elementary is a Title One school located in a rural area, in Vida County (pseudonym). Vida county is comprised of 16 schools, with a total of 9,055 students and 580 teachers. The schools in Vida county serve the ages of pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Greenland Elementary serves the ages of pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. With a large white student population, there is very little diversity, as well as English Language Learners. The Tennessee state assessment is Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). The state has participated in this program since 1988. This program also includes TNReady testing in all subjects. Students are assessed by the TCAP at the end of each academic year to assess the content knowledge that they obtained in each subject area within the previous months.

### **Qualitative Research Tools**

The methods of research were conducted through interviews and observations of both participants on their instruction of writing and their feelings towards writing. All of these characteristics identify this study as a qualitative case study. When interviewing the participants, each were asked a series of questions pertaining to their writing instruction: when they chose to instruct writing, how their writing block had changed in the past, what training they had attended, but the questions began to shift into how they felt about writing. After reviewing their answers to the questions, I began to find unexpected evidence that even though Writing Workshop has shown to be beneficial in the classroom, the participants do not feel as I had expected, hence the further investigation of the topic. According to Becker (2009), these are the great strengths of a qualitative research study.

“[...] don't fully specify methods, theory, or data when they begin their research. They start out with ideas, orienting perspectives, or even specific hypotheses, but once they begin, they investigate new leads; apply useful theoretical ideas to the (sometimes

unexpected) evidence they gather; and, in other ways, conduct a systematic and rigorous scientific investigation. Each interview and each day's observations produce ideas tested against relevant data. Not fully pre-specifying these ideas and procedures, as well as being ready to change them when their findings require it, are not flaws, but rather two of the great strengths of qualitative research [...] (p.548).

All of these characteristics identify this study as a qualitative case study.

### **Procedures**

By using qualitative research procedures, I observed both teachers' classrooms during their writing block, both being held at separate times of the day. Prior to both participants observations, a time was established of when this observation would take place. On their set date, I simply arrived at the beginning of their writing block, and I floated around the classroom, while administering notes on how writing was implemented in their classrooms. In addition to these observations, an interview was conducted by myself with both teacher participants. As the observations, a time was established prior to the interview of when was the most convenient time the interview could take place. Both interviews occurred during their planning periods. In this interview, research was collected about their writing block. Questions such as how their teaching has changed throughout the years, and what they thought to be the most important aspect of their writing period were asked. Both interviews were audio recorded from start to finish. After interviewing, both interviews were transcribed.

Another observation and interview were to be scheduled for the spring term, whereas the first observations and interviews took place in the fall semester. Unfortunately, due to the

COVID-19 pandemic, all schools in the state of Tennessee were closed, effective March 18<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, the limitations that were forced upon me, the data set is smaller than anticipated.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to analyze the data collected during the interview of each participant, audio recording was conducted. A transcript of each interview was then composed. For each observation, field notes were taken for the entirety of the scheduled observation. From the completed interview set, I completed three types of coding: in vivo, process, and structural coding. Specifically, inductive thinking occurred during this qualitative case study. When thinking inductively, specific words and phrases are collected, and then general statements are gathered from those phrases and words. "...they start with a set of observations and then they move from those particular experiences to a more general set of propositions about those experiences" (Saylor Academy, 2012). A researcher starts with a specific level of focus to theory, also known as specific to general (Saylor Academy, 2012). After a thematic analysis of all the data, I was able to pull out codes, which turned into categories, and overall themes were conferred from the categories found.

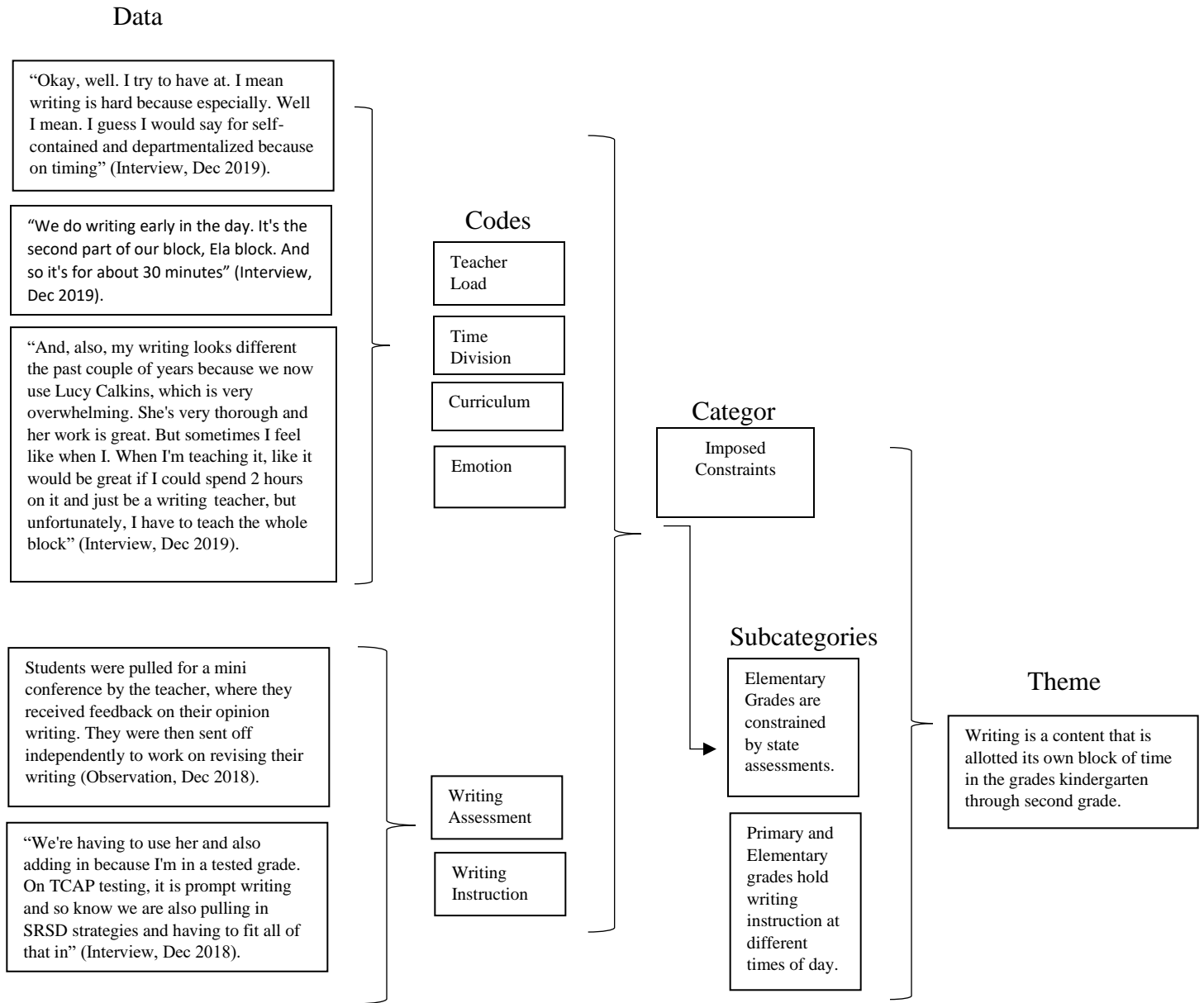


Figure 1. A sample graphic to represent the process of coding.

**in vivo coding.** Saldana (2016) states that in vivo codes “derive from the actual language of the participant” (p.77). In addition, these codes are more “action-oriented” than other methods of coding (Saldana, J, 2016, p.77). With this particular method of coding, I highlighted any phrases in which represented or stood out to be how the teacher participants felt. I also pulled out

from the interview transcripts any phrases that showed how they perceived writing instruction, as well as how writing instruction made them feel. Here are a few excerpts from Stephanie's interview: "But again, it's a lot of some of that decided for us and it it's just making sure that even though we're told 30 minutes were also told so many other things and just trying to squeeze it in"; "Knowing where your kids are by and I'm not talking about all this assessments that were doing. But when you're talking with your kids and your conferencing with your kids, you know where they're at. And so to know where they're at that drives your instruction." From these excerpts, I used codes such as teacher load and time division to represent Stephanie's thoughts and understandings about writing instruction. The in vivo excerpt was taken from Pamela:

"You know, when you know when you are expected to do readers, interactive read aloud, shared reading, a word study, a reader's workshop, a writing, and a writing workshop in the time you're given in two hours it's. I mean it can get a little hectic. I try to carve out 30 minutes. Sometimes, I do feel like where it is at the end of the day. it is what suffers when something else runs over" (Interview, Dec 2019).

**process coding.** According to Saldana (2016), process coding uses gerunds, such as "ing," and labeling "actual or conceptual actions relayed by participants" (p.78). When using this method of coding in the analysis, I highlighted any words that were used by the participants ending in the gerund "ing." This ensured that I was collecting any data that showed their conceptual actions during writing instruction. One example of process coding that embodied Stephanie's interaction with writing instruction is "Teachers getting in the way. Just trying to micromanage the kids and well, they didn't do an introduction. Well, he didn't do this and just helping them realize to pull the kids thinking and what they want out." From this excerpt, the process code was "writing limitations." In this statement, Stephanie is sharing her viewpoint on



the limitations of writing instruction. She points out that often times the teacher is holding back the student from reaching their full potential in their writing. The process code “thinking” was pulled from Pamela’s interview transcript, given the category “teacher load”:

“I also try to carve out a little bit of time that we can have a little bit of movement before we start the you know between each thing. So, I mean you're thinking about how many times how long the kids are seated and you're thinking about how much movement they can get in, how much think time there is. And like I said, unfortunately with my schedule this year, writing had to come at the end and that's not the best way to do it, but that’s what it had to be” (Interview, Dec 2019).

Within this statement, Pamela is stating that there is a lot on elementary grade teachers because they are being tested at the end of the semester year. Therefore, they are having to fit as much as they can into what time is left at the end of the day. By using the method of process coding, I was able to pinpoint very specific teaching actions involved in teaching writing.

**structural coding.** Lastly, structural coding is described as a method that “applies a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question used to frame the interview” (Saldana, 2016, p.98). By using this method of coding, I am able to gather a list of major components of writing instruction. After applying this method to all forms of data collection, I found this excerpt from Pamela’s interview to be a vital discovery: “You know, when you know when you are expected to do readers, interactive read aloud, shared reading, a word study, a reader's workshop, a writing, and a writing workshop in the time you’re given in two hours it’s. I mean it can get a little hectic.” From this excerpt, I wrote structural code “writing workshop components.”

An excerpt from Stephine's interview reads:

“So, at the end of our time to write, we go to the carpet. And sometimes depending on the time of day, how much time we've spent on other things, sometimes were able to let a lot of kids share, but then other times it's the kids that I conference with. And so we use what they the hot moments that they had in their writing to hit what we've been talking about” (Interview, Dec 2018).

Through these excerpts, it was found that both teachers not only understand the components of Writers Workshop, but they implement it into their writing instruction.

**analytic memo.** Saldana (2020) states that “reflection and experimental learnings” are “documented through analytic memo writing...” By recording all of the collected data into a analytic memo, I was able to reflect on my thoughts. “Rather than keeping analytic processes exclusively in the mind or on a monitor screen, the researcher's body and voice are used as instruments for exploring the states and processes of human experience” (Saldana, 2020). The analytic memo composed during this process was simply made on a piece of notebook paper in my researcher's journal. Thoughts and reflections were written in a bulleted list form. This analytic memo was used to build a bridge from my codes to my overarching theme of how the teacher participants felt about writing instruction in their elementary classroom.

### **Quality Assurance**

In order to make the research trustworthy, I openly confronted the possibility of having biases towards the research conducted. This mindset was involved during all interviews and observations conducted for this qualitative comparative case study. In order to assure the research is neutral as possible, I was not the only one to look at research for this study.

### **Findings and Analysis**

A common theme arose from the data, inductive analysis, and analytic memo conducted throughout this case study. This theme being that although writing instruction was implemented by both teachers, the primary grade teacher gave the content of writing its own block of time during the school day. Findings included: 1) both teachers believed that writing instruction matters; 2) both teachers followed the curriculum as they learned in teacher professional development; 3) writing instruction varied according to primary versus elementary contexts. As found in the interview and observation data, the primary teacher was able to hold their writing instruction at the start of their day, whereas, the elementary teacher was pushed for time to even hold a 30-minute writing block. It was then found that the elementary grade teacher was limited by the constraints of the state mandated assessments. Despite their scheduling differences, it was found that both teacher participants, both K-2 and 3-5, understand the writing components, such as think alouds, conferencing, and sharing. Lastly, it is said that both teacher participants have had the same professional development, the same training known as Lucy Calkins. This curriculum is where Writing Workshop is introduced. The overarching theme is used to support the answer of the research question: how do teachers feel about Writing Workshop when using this type of instruction in their personal classrooms?

### **Conclusion**

After the study had concluded, the research cited that informed this study, correlated with the findings in the following ways. Both teacher participants showed Writing Workshop as their choice of pedagogy. For instance, Stephanie mentions in her interview that mentor texts were provided for her by the Lucy Calkins curriculum that she is currently using in her classroom. It was also mentioned that apart of this curriculum is that students have time to share their writing.

Both teachers were following the framework for Writer's Workshop detailed from Calkins (2012) to include the connections, mini-lesson, link, independent writing and conferring. My finding of K-2 being stronger in Writing Workshop than 3-5 is also concurrent with the research presented in the Literature Review that states that elementary grades are becoming departmentalized. For this reason, I found that the elementary teacher participant is struggling to uphold the daily writing instruction that her state curriculum is asking of her. This obstacle has shown to be because of the assessment of elementary grades.

### **Implications**

These two examples from the study implicate that future studies are necessary to see if this situation appears in other classrooms across the United States. In addition, as teachers, we need to see what can be done to help these tested grades in order to lighten the load of educators and learners. Further, more research and studies need to be conducted in order to close the gap between the curriculum and assessments given to our elementary grades. Our state has taken the initiative to align their standards with College and Career Ready, as cited in the Literature Review, but we are still seeing this gap appear in elementary tested scores.

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## Appendix

### Consent/ Permission Forms

#### Consent Form for Teachers

Informed Consent Letter for Research Study Participation

Teacher Interpretation and Enactment: A Case Study of Writing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms

In this informed consent form, an explanation of what a participant in this research study entails is included. Before making the decision to engage in this study, it is essential that you attentively read the material provided. The purpose behind this research is to discover the type of writing instruction that you prefer and administer in your particular classroom.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research study titled, “Teacher Interpretation and Enactment: A Case Study of Writing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms,” being conducted by Audrey Walker, under the direction of Dr. LaShay Jennings. The reasoning for this case study is to aid Audrey Walker in fulfilling the Midway Honor’s Research Thesis requirement at East Tennessee State University.

I am under the impression that my participation in this case study is solely voluntary. Therefore, I have the right to pull out of this project without a reason, and without consequences as a result. If I do decide to withdraw from the program, the information that was collected from me by the

participant will continue to be studied and apart of this case study, unless a written statement asking for it to be removed has been submitted.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze literacy instruction strategies that are being used in an elementary classroom setting by interviewing two teachers of an elementary school. The researcher will neither be working with or studying the students of these elementary teachers. Her reasoning behind this decision is to avoid the challenge of going through the IRB process. In this case study, she will focus on the reasoning behind why each educator is choosing a certain writing instruction to implement in their classroom. By conducting this experiment, Audrey hopes to find a correlation between the strategies of literacy instruction and students' success in the writing process.

### **Research Procedures**

When consenting to volunteer in this case study, you will be asked to engage in an interview, held by Audrey Walker. Please note that this interview will be audio-recorded, and the data that is collected during this interview may be used in the completion of this Research Thesis. The questions that will be asked during this interview will be based on your teaching strategies for literacy and writing, your reasoning behind your particular writing instruction, and if you are opposed to new and upcoming research-based writing strategies. Each interview will last the duration of 30-35 minutes. In addition to the one-on-one interviews, the researcher, Audrey Walker, will hold an observation of you during your time of literacy instruction. The time of this observation will be discussed prior to the time it takes place, being scheduled at a time of convenience for the researcher and participant. As well as the information found during the

interview, the participant will be asked to provide documents that are composed prior/during the time of instruction. These documents could include lesson plans, portfolio entries, writing pieces, etc. Also, notes will be taken by the researcher during the field observation. After the notes have been collected, the participant may be asked questions about the observation for clarification of the writing instruction. These notes will be available for the participant to review, confirming legitimacy of the observation. All data collected during this process will be secured,onyms being used for all names.

### **Possible Risks**

As a result of this case study, there are no predicted risks or harms, but the questions that are asked during the interview process may make the participant feel uncomfortable. If this feeling occurs, the researcher can skip any questions upon request.

### **Possible Benefits**

The possible benefits that could result from this research could be that I will be advancing any information found through this process with many others in the education field. When completed, Audrey Walker will be defending this Research Thesis to the ETSU community. her findings could inform many others about what is being taught in our surrounding schools, and how it is benefitting their students' writing abilities. From this, teachers may be informed of a more beneficial writing strategy that they can implement in their own classrooms.

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**Contact Information**

The researcher will be available to answer any questions that the participant may have about/during the process. The participant can reach the researcher at the email [walkerab@etsu.edu](mailto:walkerab@etsu.edu) or at the phone number (423)915-6641. If needed, the university supervisor can be contacted at [jenningsjl@etsu.edu](mailto:jenningsjl@etsu.edu). By signing this consent form, I am interested in being a participant in this research study, as well as have my interviews audio recorded and transcribed. I understand all of the procedures that will take place that were described above. My questions have been fulfilled; therefore, I agree to be a participant in this study.

I have received a copy of this form. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

## **Consent Form for the Principal**

Informed Consent Letter for Research Study Participation

Teacher Interpretation and Enactment: A Case Study of Writing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms

In this informed consent form, an explanation of what a participant in this research study entails is included. Before making the decision to engage in this study, it is essential that you attentively read the material provided. The purpose behind this research is to discover the type of writing instruction that elementary K-5 teachers prefer and administer in their particular classroom.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to allow the research study titled, “Teacher Interpretation and Enactment: A Case Study of Writing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms,” being conducted by Audrey Walker, under the direction of Dr. LaShay Jennings, to take place in Grandview Elementary School. The reasoning for this case study is to aid Audrey Walker in fulfilling the Midway Honor’s Research Thesis requirement at East Tennessee State University.

I am under the impression that this case study is solely voluntary. Therefore, educators have the right to pull out of this project without a reason, and without consequences as a result. If they do decide to withdraw from the program, the information that was collected from me by the participant will continue to be studied and apart of this case study, unless a written statement asking for it to be removed has been submitted.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze literacy instruction strategies that are being used in an elementary classroom setting by interviewing two teachers of an elementary school. The researcher will neither be working with or studying the students of these elementary teachers. Her reasoning behind this decision is to avoid the challenge of going through the IRB process. In this case study, she will focus on the reasoning behind why each educator is choosing a certain writing instruction to implement in their classroom. By conducting this experiment, Audrey hopes to find a correlation between the strategies of literacy instruction and students' success in the writing process.

### **Research Procedures**

When consenting to volunteer in this case study, elementary school teachers will be asked to engage in an interview, held by Audrey Walker. Please note that this interview will be audio-recorded, and the data that is collected during this interview may be used in the completion of this Research Thesis. The questions that will be asked during this interview will be based on the teacher's teaching strategies for literacy and writing, their reasoning behind their particular writing instruction, and if they are opposed to new and upcoming research-based writing strategies. Each interview will last the duration of 30-35 minutes. In addition to the one-on-one interviews, the researcher, Audrey Walker, will hold an observation of you during your time of literacy instruction. The time of this observation will be discussed prior to the time it takes place, being scheduled at a time of convenience for the researcher and participant. As well as the information found during the interview, the participant will be asked to provide documents that are composed prior/during the time of instruction. These documents could include lesson plans, portfolio entries, writing pieces, etc. Also, notes will be taken by the researcher during the field observation. After the notes have been collected, the participant may be asked questions about



the observation for clarification of the writing instruction. These notes will be available for the participant to review, confirming legitimacy of the observation. All data collected during this process will be secured, anonyms being used for all names.

### **Possible Risks**

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Signature Date

## **Consent Form for Washington County School Board**

Informed Consent Letter for Research Study Participation

Teacher Interpretation and Enactment: A Case Study of Writing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms

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Observation Guide

Teacher's Name: Heather Dennis

Writing Block Time: 9:15 - 9:55

Grade Level: 1st

Skill Addressed	Activity Used	Student Instruction
Opinion ~ Judge Fairly	- Line up from best to least (whole class instruction)	- Judge on same characteristic "I think..." - Write your opinion
Opinion Writing	- Student example ↓ opinion checklist back to writing	- Give lots of reasons - add details - disagreements (talk back)
	My Opinion Checklist	- what readers need to see in your writing ↳ referred to past writing
	- student collection demonstration - fair reference - olympics "blue ribbon winner"	- "I like this one bc..." - judging the best - "best"
	- collection, writing	- students return to writing to add details & reread writing
Opinion Writing Review	- mini student conferences (feedback)	

Teacher's Name: Kristen Hensley

Writing Block Time: 2:00 - 2:30

Grade Level: 3rd

Skill Addressed	Activity Used	Student Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informational Writing</li> <li>(not much research, information already known)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write about what you know the most about</li> <li>~to inform (chip books, picture)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anchor chart (made by class)</li> <li>~ genres</li> <li>~ feelings</li> <li>~ where can you read?</li> <li>~ all ages</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table of Contents</li> <li>~ text feature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>used examples of table of contents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>grouped similar content</li> <li>~ gave interesting titles</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach topic (summarize)</li> <li>multiple times (switch)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pair up (stand up, hand up, pair up)</li> <li>(longest hair to begin first)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anchor chart "Teaching Moves for Informational Writers"</li> <li>Use hand to share about topic</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go to Desks to begin writing (5mins)</li> <li>Silent Thinking/Writing Time</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examples of titles for T.O.C. → Anchor Chart</li> <li>put things together &amp; make one title</li> </ul>



## Interview Guide

### Current Integration Practices:

1. How does the time of day devoted to writing instruction look in your classroom?
2. How has this writing block looked in the past in your classroom?
3. In what ways has writing instruction changed in your classroom?
4. What trainings have you had in regard to writing instruction?
5. How has the professional development influenced how the writing block looks in your classroom?

### Teacher Beliefs

6. What are your beliefs about writing instruction?
7. What do you believe are the limitations of writing instruction?
8. What do you believe is the most positive aspect of the writing block?
9. What challenges do you facing incorporating writing instruction into your classroom?
10. What do you think students who live in Appalachia experience in terms of writing outside of school?
11. How do you talk with your students about writing?

### Decision Making

12. How do you make decisions about allocating time and resources to writing integration?
13. Describe for me your decision making involved in planning for writing?

### Perceptions of Impact on Student Learning

14. In what ways has the writing block affected your students?
15. What aspects of the writing block do your students enjoy most? How do you know?
16. What aspects of the writing block do your students enjoy the least? How do you know?
17. In what ways does writing instruction impact students' academic success?

### Perception of Pedagogy and Curriculum

18. What are some strategies that work for you in balance writing and other literacy block requirements?
19. What do you believe is the most positive aspect of your writing block?
20. What are the most important instructional actions that a teacher must make during writing instruction?