

WRITING, ELEMENTARY TEACHERS, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHER REPORTED PEDAGOGICAL
KNOWLEDGE AND COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY IN A TITLE 1 SCHOOL

by

Jill A. East

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Florida Atlantic University

Boca Raton, Florida

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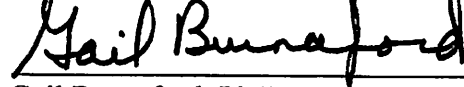
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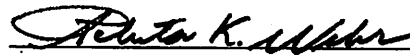
Jill A. East

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Gail Burnaford, Department of Curriculum, Culture, and Educational Inquiry, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

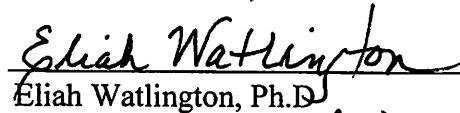
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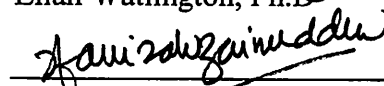
Gail Burnaford, Ph.D.
Dissertation Advisor



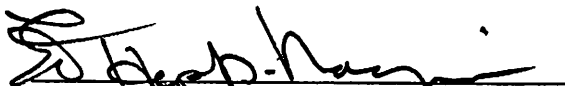
Roberta K. Weber, Ed.D



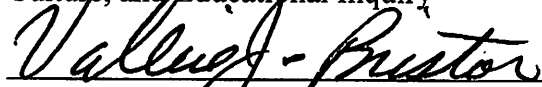
Eliah Watlington, Ph.D



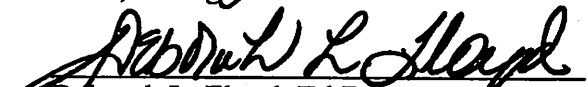
Hanzah Zainuddin, Ph.D



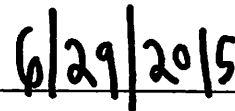
Emery Hyslop-Margison, Ph.D
Chair, Department of Curriculum,
Culture, and Educational Inquiry



Valerie J. Bristol, Ph.D
Dean, College of Education



Deborah L. Floyd, Ed.D
Dean, Graduate College



Date

ABSTRACT

Author: Jill A. East

Title: Writing, Elementary Teachers, and English Language Learners: A Case Study of Teacher Reported Pedagogical Knowledge and Collaborative Inquiry in a Title 1 School

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This qualitative case study was conducted to investigate whether selected 3rd-5th teachers in a Title 1 school increased their understanding as they described and used their pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) in writing aligned with the Common Core Anchor Standards 1-6. It also examined how the teachers collaborated to advance their knowledge in the area of ELs in the classroom. Qualitative data were collected in the form of 15 participant interviews and 15 Learning Team Meeting (LTM) observations. The data from the interviews and observations were used to investigate how participants implemented the Common Core Anchor Standards (CCAS) 1-6 in their classrooms. The data also sought to examine how the participants' collaboration in LTMs contributed to the selected 3rd-5th grade teachers' PCK with respect to CCAS 1-6 and support for their English language learners (EL). The findings indicated that participants recognized various EL instructional strategies embedded in the subject matter of writing. Further, the

data indicated that the dual language participants collaborated as an effective means for delivering various EL instructional strategies.

The qualitative data analysis revealed that the participating teachers in the site school incorporated various EL instructional strategies that are recognized as effective for teaching ELs. In addition, the teachers reported their intentions to infuse writing instruction into their content areas in the classroom. Implications and suggestions for future research are offered for the biliteracy instruction of ELs, including the impact of oral language activity integration on the teaching of writing, school-based professional development that provides collaborative activities, and the infusion of EL instructional strategies used by the dual language teachers.

WRITING, ELEMENTARY TEACHERS, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:
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List of Tables.....	x
List of Figures.....	xi
Chapter One.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Research Questions.....	7
Theoretical Framework.....	8
Definition of Terms.....	10
Significance of the Study.....	11
Researcher Role.....	12
Organization of the Study.....	13
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	14
Overview of the Writing Process.....	14
Incorporating Life Experiences.....	17
Pedagogical Content Knowledge.....	18
Teacher Collaboration.....	21

Common Core State Standards in Writing.....	25
Researched-Based Organizations.....	27
English Language Learners and the Writing Process.....	29
Summary.....	36
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	38
Participants.....	39
Plans for Sampling.....	40
Research Setting.....	40
Data Collection.....	41
Instruments.....	41
Interviews.....	41
Observations.....	42
Data Analysis.....	43
Reliability & Validity.....	45
Limitations.....	47
Delimitations.....	47
Summary.....	48
Chapter Four: Findings.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Interviewed Participants.....	50
Qualitative Findings.....	52
Research Question 1a.....	54
Speaking the Language of the Common Core.....	54

Fighting for the Right to Teach Writing.....	61
Research Question 1b.....	64
Social Studies as a Viable Content Area to Embed Writing.....	64
Intentions but not yet Practiced.....	67
Research Question 1c.....	68
The Art of Employing Oral Language Strategies.....	68
Biliteracy Learning.....	71
Visuals as a Scaffolding Writing Strategy with ELs.....	74
Research Question 2a and 2b.....	77
Dual Language Partnerships.....	77
Extending Collaboration Beyond the Grade Level Team.....	83
Summary.....	88
Chapter Five: Discussions, Recommendations, and Implications.....	90
Introduction.....	90
Discussion.....	90
Internalizing their PCK in Writing with CCSS 1-6.....	90
Intentions versus Performance.....	94
Evidences of EL Learning at SAS.....	96
A Deeper Analysis of Research Questions 1a, 1b, and 1c.....	99
Collaboration throughout SAS.....	102
Lessons Learned through the Implementation of Biliteracy Learning.....	105
Drawing on the Expertise of the Spanish Teacher.....	106

Implications.....	109
Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research.....	112
Conclusions.....	114
Appendices.....	117
Appendix A. Institutional Research Board Approval Letter.....	118
Appendix B. Teacher Consent Form.....	119
Appendix C. Interview Protocol.....	120
Appendix D. Observation Template.....	122
Appendix E. Data Collection Summary.....	126
Appendix F. Sample Open Coding.....	128
Appendix G. Categories and Themes from Open Coding.....	129
Appendix H. Sample Analytic Memoranda.....	138
Appendix I. Emergent Themes and Corresponding Codes	
From Data Analysis.....	140
References.....	141

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participant Demographic Information.....	51
Table 2. Interviewees’ Self-Reported Formal/Informal Training.....	53
Table 3. Interview Excerpts Pertaining to Research Question 1a: Speaking the Language of the Common Core Anchor Standards 1-6.....	55
Table 4. Embedding Writing in Social Studies and Other Content Areas.....	65
Table 5. Interviewees’ Self-Reported EL Training and Employed Oral Language Strategies.....	69
Table 6. A List of the Codes for Captured Collaborative Language and Actions of the Dual Language Teachers during Observations for the Current Study.....	78
Table 7. Dual Language Collaboration during Learning Team Meetings.....	79
Table 8. Sample of Captured Collaboration Codes for DL Teachers and Non DL Teachers.....	80
Table 9. Distinctions Between 1a, 1b, 1c.....	100

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The Relationship of the Theoretical Framework to the Study of PCK, Collaboration, and ELs.....	9
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Literacy education and writing practices are in the midst of a profound change. Given the country's technological advances, changing workplace demands, and the expanding landscape of multicultural diversity throughout the world, effective writers are more important than ever. Classroom teachers must create collaborative writing experiences that prepare students for upcoming educational demands. Yet, studies indicate that time devoted to writing instruction and research focused on writing evaluation have both decreased in the last ten years (The National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003; Harris, Graham, and Mason, 2006; Marchant, Paulson, and Shunk, 2006).

The key elements of an educative writing experience can be characterized by the experiential philosophy of John Dewey (1938). The writing experience must achieve continuity, where the past and present transact to create the future. The transaction of experience is made in the process of writing. This "continuous reconstruction of experience" (Dewey, 1938, p. 80) represents what is essential in the educational endeavor of exemplary writing instruction.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2002) established the need for an effective writing curriculum. Student performance on writing assessments indicated that writing well and teaching children to write were challenging tasks. In 2002 only 28%, 31%, and 24% of students in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades, respectively, demonstrated writing proficiency on the NAEP [National Center for Educational

Statistics, 2011]. “Three out of every four students in 4th, 8th, and 12th grade demonstrated only partial mastery of the writing skills and knowledge needed at their respective grade levels” (Harris et al., 2006, p. 295). Currently, NAEP scores for 4th and 8th graders have essentially remained flat since 1992; the first year the test was given (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011).

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (2012) is a state-led effort intended to provide more clarity about and consistency in what is expected of student learning across the country. The standards, developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, were released in June 2010 and as of December 2014, have been adopted by 43 states (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). However, Lafond (2012) claimed, “While the authors of the Common Core State Standards offer suggestions for applying the standards with English language learners and students with disabilities, they have left the specifics of that implementation to districts and states.” (p. 2). The reality is that teachers will see an increase in English language learners (ELs) students in the classroom and therefore must be prepared to best support these children. In many cases, a general education teacher who knows the content and pedagogy to teach to the grade level standards will also need specific knowledge and skills to help ELs access the curricula (Lafond, 2012; Samson & Collins, 2012; Sleeter, 2005).

Lee Shulman (1986) contends that there is a direct link between student learning and the role of subject matter knowledge in curriculum and teaching. Shulman (1987) introduced the concept that both pedagogy and content knowledge, or pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), should be taught together in teacher education programs in order to make connections with what teachers should know and be able to do in the

classroom (Shulman, 1987). He explicitly argued the importance of teaching with the application of PCK whereby teachers should understand the applications to further support the role of learning. Shulman (1987) reiterated the importance of teacher PCK playing a vital role in student learning (p. 77). The purpose of this study is to investigate if elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborate in order to gain pedagogical content knowledge in writing and examine how the teachers report how they collaborate to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms.

Research from Banks and Banks (1995) suggested that teachers' PCK is imperative but should be considered as equity pedagogy. Banks and Banks (1995) also expressed concerns that modifying teaching styles and approaches in writing should have the goal of facilitating academic achievement for all students. They discussed the importance of empowering school culture and providing instructional practices that created a successful learning environment for all students (Banks & Banks, 1995).

Sleeter and Grant (1987) urged politicians, faculty members in teacher education programs, as well as school district staff to consider incorporating critical pedagogy into the curriculum development for prospective educators. This type of pedagogy draws upon experiences of students through their cultural, linguistic, familial, academic, artistic and other forms of knowledge. It also takes students beyond their own experiences and enables them to understand perspectives with which they disagree, as well as to think critically about multiple viewpoints, or reflection combined with action (Banks & Banks, 1995; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). It is imperative that all teachers understand and are able to reflect on their pedagogical content knowledge and at the same time educate all diverse students as they teach writing.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers in today's public elementary school classrooms are caught in the confluence of two particularly strong forces at work in the contemporary social, cultural, and political landscape. The first is the intense pressure of the high stakes accountability era engendered by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (NCLB, 2002). Despite some significant changes allowing states the flexibility to develop their own teacher effectiveness system by the Obama Administration (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) and the adoption of the Common Core Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012) in 43 states. With the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) and the NAEP (2011) report, high stakes testing in writing has become a staple for reporting student achievement. Marchant, Paulson, and Shunk, (2006) reported:

One of the largest bandwagons that has been building speed for more than a decade, and received a giant push with the passing of the No Child Left Behind federal legislation, is the use of standardized achievement tests as accountability measures for states, districts, schools, teachers, and most importantly, students (p. 1).

Concerns about the NCLB grew in the educational community, particularly concerning its rules surrounding adequate yearly progress and the goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2013-2014 (NCLB, 2002). Since then, nearly all states have adopted the Common Core Standards as the benchmark for what students nationwide should know and be able to do at each grade level in the area of writing. Additionally, in an effort to become eligible for federal funds under Race to the Top, many states have altered their educational policies to match the priorities of the U.S. Department of Education. With

these extensive changes in the initiative of teaching and learning through Common Core Writing Standards, English language learners are one subgroup of students that require special attention, particularly because of their growing numbers and low-performance relative to their non-EL peers (Samson & Collins, 2012).

Throughout the United States, schools were failing due to the rising demands of high stakes testing. With this educational crisis, 43 states in this nation have now adopted a new Common Core Standards reform in the K-12 public school system. Describing the Common Core Standards, Calkins, Ehrenwerth, and Lehman (2012) claimed, “No single document will have played a more influential role in shaping what happens in schools” (p. 1). Hence, the revolution of the new Common Core State Standards will now place emphasis on students learning to read and write complex texts independently at high levels of proficiency and at a rapid enough rate to be effective.

Furthermore, the Obama administration advocated for education standards to make all high school graduates be “College and Career ready” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). Any state not adopting these national standards will lose part of their Title 1 funding (Mathis, 2010). United State Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, issued a statement in June 2010 (U.S. Department of Education), to release the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and specify their importance. This document was written with the intent for states to follow the internationally benchmarked standards and included the knowledge and skills that students must learn to succeed in college and career. However, very little research exists involving the Common Core State Standards and the teaching of writing to ELs. The purpose of this study was to investigate if elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborate in order to gain pedagogical content

knowledge in writing and examine how the teachers reported possible collaboration to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms.

Darling-Hammond (1996) negatively contrasts the state of public education in the U.S. to educational systems in countries like Finland, France, West Germany, and Japan where the focus in schools is to ensure every child has access to high-caliber teaching and inquiry based teacher collaboration. Darling-Hammond (1996) claimed that teachers, like their students, “learn by doing” (p. 5). With the sweeping departure from NCLB standards and the new demand of the Common Core State Standards, teachers must understand all diverse learners as deeply as they comprehend their own subject matter knowledge. Educators must collectively work together to increase their knowledge in order to ensure that all learners are attaining the challenging learning goals. “Staff development in the United States is still characterized by one-shot workshops rather than more effective, problem-based approaches that are built into teachers' ongoing work with colleagues”(p. 6). Because educators lack collaborative learning opportunities in the United States, most teachers have few opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in writing over the course of their careers.

This study explored teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge in the subject area of writing and examined how elementary teachers collaborated to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate if elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborated in order to gain pedagogical content knowledge in writing and examined how the teachers reported possible collaboration to attain and enhance their

writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms. Pedagogical content knowledge in writing will be defined as how the teachers view and understand the process of writing (Shulman, 1986).

Research Questions

The research questions for the study were as follows:

- 1a. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?
- 1b. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school report using PCK in teaching writing?
- 1c. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 teachers in one South Florida elementary school use PCK in order to teach writing to ELs?
- 2a. Based on self-reported and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do 3rd-5th teachers in one South Florida elementary school collaborate to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6?
- 2b. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, in what ways does collaboration in LTMs contribute to selected 3rd -5th grade teachers' PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?

Theoretical Framework

Four theorists have contributed to the theoretical framework that guided this research. First, the work of John Dewey (1938) framed this study, specifically through, the notion that the writing curriculum must lead to future experiences/future learning (continuum) and be relevant to the individual (prior experiences and past history). Second, Shulman's work (1986, 2002) revealed an instructional framework for student learning at the elementary level that allows for a balance between teacher pedagogy that focuses on strategies to address student learning and pedagogy that is subject matter focused. Shulman (1986) asserts that that teaching should include the following three components: (a) a learning community in which all learners feel accepted and supported; (b) student engagement in learning; and (c) high expectations for students. These writing components are especially important at the elementary levels, where metacognitive skills are being developed and a foundation for a higher level of learning is being established.

The research in English language learners (ELs) literacy learning informed this study with respect to language acquisition and writing is based on Christine Sleeter's (2005) research in *Un-Standardizing the Curriculum*. Sleeter (2005) argues that optimal learning conditions for English language learners that foster active learning engages all students in the classroom. In Sleeter's (2005) case study research, she claims that teachers must engage students academically by building on their background knowledge and interests, relate it to their families and communities, and at the same time, understand the students in culturally accurate ways. Finally, collaborative experiences among educators must exist in school settings to enhance the pedagogical writing knowledge of our teachers. This collaborative experience not only helps teachers improve what they do

in their individual classroom but may also enhance the PCK of other teachers.

Figure 1. *The Relationship of the Theoretical Framework to the Study of PCK, Collaboration, and ELs*

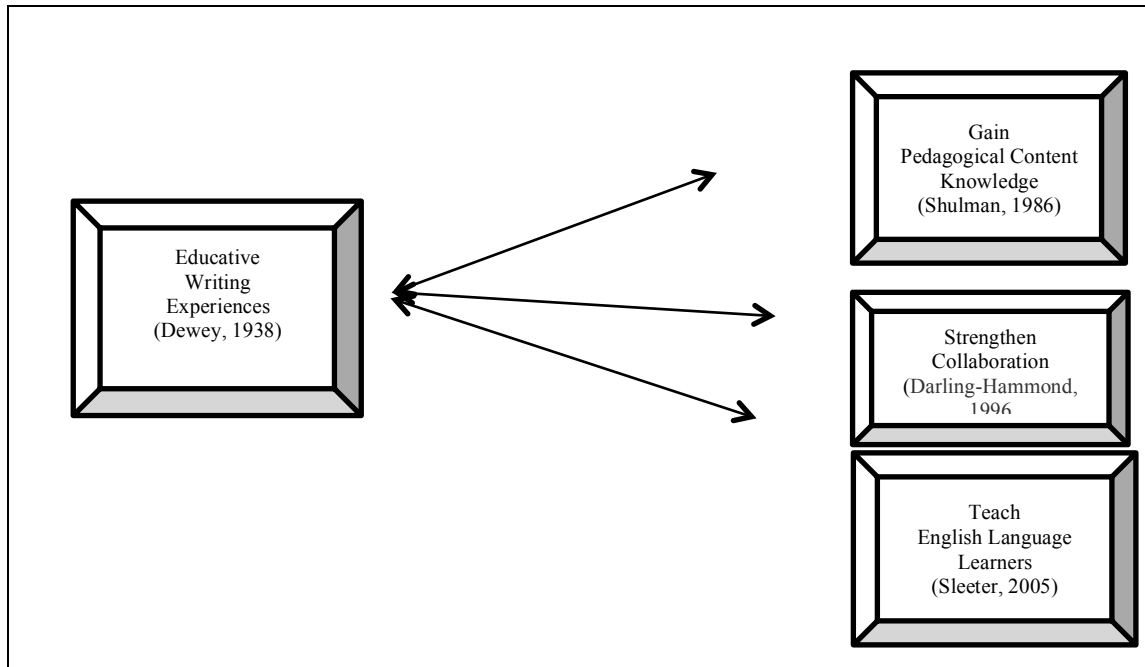


Figure 1 represents the connection of the theoretical framework and with its four components or elements. It suggests that experience is at the center of the educative instructional framework. This experiential (Dewey, 1938) learning is connected to teachers possessing pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Ideally, a teacher is capable of taking the content knowledge that he or she possesses and presenting it to all diverse students in meaningful and productive ways. This type of knowledge includes pedagogical representations as well as instructional strategies that are appropriate for the all diverse students' learning level. Dewey (1938) wrote that teachers must transform knowledge of discipline into a pedagogical form that caters to the varied interests, cultural backgrounds, and capacities of all students. This would allow teachers to use

their pedagogical content knowledge to make learning and subject matter relevant to students (Sleeter, 2005). Further, teacher reformers realize that educators, like students, learn by doing (Darling-Hammond, 1998). As teacher educators, beginning teachers, and experienced teachers work together on real problems of practice in learner-centered settings, they can begin to develop a collective knowledge base (Darling-Hammond, 1996).

Lucy Calkins (2010), the director of the Reading and Writing Project, provides professional development that involves long-lasting collaborations with teachers across the world. Her project has had a lasting and deep affiliation with over 600 schools, and develops ideas that are foundational to literacy instruction across the globe. "We've written these teaching resources because writing matters." Calkins (2010) wrote on her website to the writing educators in the world. Similar to Calkins' collaborations, educational policy should provide day-to-day collaborative experiences for teachers in order for them to enhance their experiences as they advance their PCK and implement innovative subject matter knowledge in writing to diverse learners.

Definition of Terms

Collaboration: Two or more teachers working together using resources, and planning for instruction that help develop communities of learners to promote change (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

Common Core Anchor Standards for writing: This is a skill that high school graduates should have in order to be ready for entry into the world of work or postsecondary education. Whether you teach kindergarten or 12th grade, an anchor standard is the target. Then the CCSS offers more specific explanations of the anchor

standards by grade level (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012).

Educative Experience: Educative experiences are experiences that connect the past to promote future growth which lead to richer experiences (Dewey, 1938).

English Language Learners: English language learners are an active learner of the English language who may benefit from various types of language support programs. This term is used mainly in the U.S. to describe K–12 students (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction (Shulman 1987, p. 8).

Writing Process: This is an interactive approach to teaching writing as students learn and practice the importance of rehearsal, drafting/revising, and editing their pieces of writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983)

Significance of the Study

Prior to this study, research students in 4th, 8th, and 10th grade respectively did not demonstrate writing ability on international tests reported from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2002). With the mandate of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002) and the NAEP (2002) report, high stakes testing in writing has become a staple for reporting student achievement. The qualitative case study was designed to provide educational leaders and policymakers with a more comprehensive look into the pedagogical content knowledge of teachers in writing. This study was designed to uncover strategies for accommodating our English language learners as they

as they are immersed in a writing curriculum.

Furthermore, the purpose of this study was to determine if elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborated in order to gain pedagogical content knowledge in writing and examined how the teachers report how teachers collaborated to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms. This case study will report how third through fifth grade teachers approach the teaching of writing in their classrooms, describe perceptions of their pedagogical content knowledge, and examine how they collaborate and integrate second language learners in their writing classroom community.

This study sought to put writing in the forefront by determining if teachers collaborate to enhance their PCK. Further investigation will provide educational leaders with a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective on how teachers gain and report their pedagogical content knowledge and suggest innovative strategies for implementing the Common Core Standards for accommodating all diverse learners in the classroom.

Researcher Role

The researcher selected the topic and case study due to a strong interest in the influence that teacher collaboration has on the creative writing process. There was a lack of teacher preparation to be fully prepared to teach students the process of writing. Further, the researcher's focus on teacher's PCK for this study was a purposeful initiative to try to understand how educators gain their writing knowledge.

The researcher is a Literacy Specialist committed to ongoing professional development that enables teachers to meet their ELs' academic and writing needs. She is consistently searching for information regarding best practices for ELs and teacher

collaboration to support their implementation of writing activities in the classroom.

To offset the risk of bias, the researcher transcribed all interviews and emailed them to the participants for member checking to add to the validity and reliability of this study (Merriam 1998; Creswell 2014). Several strategies to offset bias were used to check the accuracy of the findings, including, member checking and the use of rich description (Creswell, 2014). Throughout this study, the researcher maintained an audit trail of the data collection and analysis process by recording research activities in analytic memos.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation was structured into five chapters. Chapter one included the introduction, statement of problem, purpose, research questions, significance of the study, role of the researcher, definitions, conceptual framework, delimitations and limitations. Chapter two provided a comprehensive review of the literature related to pedagogical content knowledge, how teachers attain PCK, exemplary components to writing, and how they used their knowledge to educate the English language learners in the classroom. Chapter three outlined the design of the study, research site, participant population, interview and observation formats, and specific methods used for data collection and analysis. Chapter four presented the findings in response to the research questions, incorporating thick, rich data obtained through data collection. Chapter five summarized the study, extracts conclusions, implications, suggested strategies from the research findings, and provided recommendations for future study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the Writing Process

More than 30 years ago, Donald Graves (1983) published a book analyzing teachers and children as writers. Graves (1983, 1994, 1995) has spent decades describing the writing process as a ‘Rehearsal’ for writing. In his 1983 book, he writes about the importance of structuring the classroom for process writing. Graves (1983) suggests that process writing incorporates, “daydreaming, sketching, doodling, making lists, outlining, reading, conversing, thinking about the product and ego boosting (i.e. thinking about the effect the writing would have on the readers, as well as the writer” (p. 221).

According to John Dewey (1938), a democratic classroom community must emphasize children not only going through the writing process with prewriting, drafting, revising/editing, and publishing but also guiding students through this process, the teacher uses peer reviewing, conferring, and mentor texts to ensure that the students are able to be successful at their own level of writing. Lucy Calkins and Mermelstein (2003), authors of the “Writer’s Workshop Units of Study” shared “One of the special advantages of a writer’s workshop program is that in it, as in an art studio, children with very different levels of proficiency can work side by side” (p. 1). According to Nancy Atwell (2002), Lucy Calkins and Mermelstein (2003), and Donald Graves (1994, 1995), teachers must convey the message to the classroom community that their students are authors, readers, writers, and artists.

Regie Routman (2005) defined writing workshop as daily writing across the curriculum of mostly self-selected topics. She also shared that playing around with language and learning how to craft writing, conferring with students to respond to their writing, and celebrating what they have done well are also imperative steps in the writing process. Similar to Atwell (2002), Calkins and Mermelstein (2003), and Graves (1994), Routman (2005) explained that

Writing workshop is not about focusing on individual writing traits, following a program or template, writing to prompt after prompt to prepare for a high-stakes test, practicing skills in isolation, writing topic sentences with supporting details, assigning a topic without teaching, writing for purposes students don't value or understand (p. 174).

However, educators must also deepen the students' writing knowledge by utilizing inquiry strategies through inferring, gathering evidences, and explaining how those evidences support or not support a claim. According to the National Writing Project (NWP) and Carl Nagin (2003), there is not enough research supporting the concept of educators utilizing writing curriculums that focus on skill and drill rules in isolation. Therefore, it is imperative that we diminish these superficial writing experiences for our children. This type of learning environment will not have a powerful impact on student writing performance.

Further, the educator in the classroom must model high-quality writing daily and metacognitive thinking as they explicitly teach the process of writing. According to Vygotsky (1978), much important learning by the child occurs through social interaction with a skillful tutor. The tutor may model behaviors and/or provide verbal instructions for

the child. Vygotsky (1978) refers to this as co-operative or collaborative dialogue. The child seeks to understand the actions or an instruction provided by the tutor (often the teacher) then internalizes the information, using it to guide or regulate their own writing performance.

Researchers Jasmine and Weiner (2007) document a study of following the writing process that incorporated a skillful tutor in a first grade classroom for over the course of three months. In the study, the classroom teacher implemented a writing workshop structure three times per week for 35-40 minutes. The teacher began each lesson with a mini-lesson which included explicit teacher modeling followed by daily conferences with the students. The study collected data through a mixed method approach. Pre and post surveys were given to 19 students at the beginning and the end of the three-month study. The study also included a collection of two writing samples from each participant, which were scored based upon variables of revision and editing. Jasmine and Weiner (2007) reported that there was a significant increase in student enthusiasm for writing and peer conferencing. Moreover, the survey indicated those students' attitude and confidence in writing significantly increased. The students commented that the questioning by the teacher during conferencing allowed them to become better writers. The researcher noted that the classroom teacher designed the mini-lessons based on teacher observation to explicitly teach the steps in the writing process. Through this study, it was discovered that when educators explicitly model the writing process on a daily basis along with metacognitive thinking, it effectively and efficiently guides children's growth in writing.

Incorporating Life Experiences

According to Dewey (1938), the classroom should give students opportunities to have freedom with a purpose. That purpose should consist of students being active, involved, and interested, not passive. The purposes should be meaningful and intrinsically worthwhile.

Dewey (1938) also argued that all subject matter must incorporate life experiences. Therefore, students can make a connection to their own lives as they develop critical writing skills. Further, Atwell (2002), Calkins and Mermelstein (2003), Christensen, (2009), and Graves (1994) wrote that in order to create successful writers, teachers must encourage students to write about their own lives as opposed to, made up stories. According to Linda Christenson (2009), it is imperative that we use students' lives as critical texts. When students make a strong connection to the writing curriculum, their final writing product is organized, focused, and supported through their own voice. When students write about what is personally familiar, they become empowered to feel like successful published authors. Atwell (2002), Calkins and Mermelstein (2003), and Graves (1994), want children to experience what it is to find meaning in the moments of their lives, and to help them write about moments that do not come already packaged with ready-made significance. Through student-centered writing experiences, students develop into writers. The teacher's goal is to offer children the opportunity to bring their life to school, and to put their life on the page (Calkins & Mermelstein, 2003; Christenson, 2009). A true exemplary writing program established in the classroom, enables students to transform their life experiences in written form.

Standardized tests are a way to measure the effectiveness of the teaching of

writing in the classroom setting. With the pressures of high stakes testing in writing, elementary teachers must reflect on the writing approaches they employ as they deliver writing lessons to their students. This literature review will describe PCK, teacher collaboration, and ELs in their writing classroom community.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

A powerful instructional framework for student learning in writing at the elementary level should allow for a balance between pedagogy that focuses on strategies to address student learning and pedagogy that is subject-matter focused (Shulman, 1987, 2002). Shulman (1987) contends that educators must have a strong pedagogical subject matter foundation to successfully employ appropriate instructional strategies in the classroom. It should include the following three components: a learning community in which all learners feel accepted and supported student engagement in learning, and high expectations of students (Dewey, 1938). These writing components are especially important at the elementary levels, where developing metacognitive skills facilitates a foundation for higher learning.

Instances of PCK use and teacher inquiry were documented in a study by Limbrick, Buchanan, Goodwin, and Schwarcz (2010). The results of this study indicated that when teachers' PCK is enhanced the students' achievement in writing increased. Beginning with the goal of enhancing PCK through collaborative inquiry, this two-year research study and collaboration between researchers and literacy leaders examined 20 classroom teachers who taught in low socioeconomic schools. The classroom teachers were given research-based resources and professional readings to support and enhance their writing knowledge. During the inquiry collaborative meetings, the teachers held

discussions based on their professional readings and then together developed instructional writing goals. From this study, goal reported templates, field notes, literacy meeting reports, and discussion transcripts were collected as data.

The data were analyzed using a comparative analysis. The results of this study revealed an increase in teachers' confidence and knowledge developed after the professional readings and collaborative discussions of the writing process. Further, teachers reported that they had an awareness of the professional development resources available to enhance their PCK and ability to effectively teach writing. Limbrick et al. (2010) reported, "Rather than viewing students as having deficits, they acknowledged that if a student was not learning, the reason may lie in their teaching" (p. 918). This study claims that a teacher's practice and PCK growth is integral to the role of student learning.

Once educators transfer subject matter knowledge, the direct implications for instructional approaches in classroom teaching should employ specific methods. First, the classification of knowledge will directly influence student learning as they proceed to understand the concepts. Dewey's (1938) work discussed the importance of educators not only comprehending the subject matter themselves but also then adapting it to the interests of children, thus making learning more relevant and meaningful. Second, Dewey's (1938) instructional approach suggests the value of guiding each student to reach an optimum degree of understanding that is appropriate to each individual child within the structure of the subject matter. According to Donald Graves (1994), "The heart of helping children learn to write is in finding out about the child's own vision for writing," (p. 44).

A research project was employed in seven primary schools in England. Lambirth and Goouch (2006) established a 'project focus group' (PFG). This research project involved 14 teachers. The primary source of data collection was field notes of the focus group sessions. The researchers discovered the importance of teacher pedagogy based on observations made from the field notes.

Based on the observations from the field notes of these meetings, it was clear to the researchers that lacking from the discussions was a deeper understanding of how to implement an effective writing curriculum into the classroom. It is imperative that administrators of our future classroom leaders allow time to deepen teacher pedagogy and provide time for them to see themselves as writers. The 14 teachers in this school engaged their students in brief 30-45 minute writing sessions weekly. During these writing sessions, students spent their time writing in a journal. Some of the teachers utilized writing journals during reading time and others utilized them as a reward on Fridays. Lambirth and Goouch (2006) claimed that writing pedagogy is necessary for educators "to take the roles of co-player, skills-supporter, model, co-planner, observer, listener, assessor and instructor, enhancing the child's experience" (p. 151).

The data collected by Lambirth and Goouch (2006) identified key features of effective teachers. Several themes emerged from the project. Writing teachers should be writers themselves and be aware of the meaning and purposes for writing. They must also be knowledgeable risk takers that understand the students' interests and can develop engaging writing situations for the children in the classroom. "The role of teachers is paramount to successful engagement in writing. They need to know about the process of writing," (Lambirth & Goouch, 2006, p. 148). Specifically, teachers have a huge

undertaking when learning how to teach the curriculum. Utilizing a writing journal to be compliant in a classroom is an insufficient pedagogical practice and from this study has no support as an effective instructional practice.

Gilbert and Graham (2010) completed a national study where they used a random sampling of 300 elementary teachers in grades 4–6. From the random sampling 195 teachers fully completed the survey. The participants were surveyed about their writing practices. The teachers were asked seven specific questions about their preparedness to teaching writing in the classroom. The responses were based on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Almost two-thirds of the 195 teachers reported that the teacher education courses they took in college provided them with little preparation for teaching writing. “Almost two out of every three teachers reported they received minimal to no preparation to teach writing from the education courses they took during college” (Gilbert & Graham, 2010, p. 503). It was also reported that the average time students actually spent writing in the classroom was two hours per week. It is vital that we support our classroom teachers that include professional development in writing. “They need to develop guidelines and procedures for ensuring that all teachers, new and existing ones, are well prepared to teach writing” (Gilbert & Graham, 2010, p. 516). The Gilbert and Graham (2010) study supports changes in teacher requirements to build their subject matter knowledge and participate in professional in-service writing instruction.

Teacher Collaboration

Researchers have acknowledged that benefits may accrue when teachers participate in collaborative practices. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) stated that in order for teachers to learn to instruct in innovative ways, they must participate in collaborative

opportunities for collective and shared knowledge. Through this collaborative inquiry, teachers can reflect on teaching and learn to teach writing in new ways through research-based materials, professional readings, and collective discourse. Learning from others, fostering future leaders, and applying new ideas and best practices lead to continual development.

Collaborative inquiry is among the most promising strategies for strengthening teaching and learning. Fullan (1993) described inquiry as “internalizing norms, habits, and techniques for continuous learning” (p. 4). Yet, this type of collective learning may be one of the most difficult to implement. The biggest risk in moving to establish collaborative inquiry is to do so without providing the necessary leadership and support. To start, schools and districts need to create a shared understanding of the purpose and value of collaborative inquiry among teachers and administrators. Other essential conditions included time for teachers to meet regularly and adequate investment in training and facilitation (Fullan, 1993). Fullan (1993) claimed that meaningful and effective inquiry teams take patience and persistence.

Wolsey (2010) documented a study that questions whether the act of collaboration among teachers with an emphasis on writing across the curriculum also promotes learning among students. The purpose of this study was to assign written tasks that would increase tenth grade students’ use of academic vocabulary in their written work. The participants in this study were a group of tenth grade students and their teachers. Each marking period, the science, social studies, and language arts teacher constructed an essential question that linked to all of the disciplines. The essential question was a way to promote a deeper comprehension of the critical concepts. Even though the focus of this study was on student learning, teacher collaboration inadvertently became a recurrent

theme in the analysis. “Student work artifacts clearly demonstrated that their teachers collaborated in planning instruction and aligning curriculum and that such collaboration was also valued as a characteristic of student learning” (Wolsey, 2010, p. 198).

The participants of this study uploaded their writing onto a Blackboard site. The teachers then downloaded the academic writing. A software program entitled Wordsmith 5.0 word list tool was used to create an academic word list that the students incorporated into their writing tasks in all three subjects.

Interviews were conducted with the teachers and students. During the interviews, the participants indicated that they could confer individually with the language arts teacher on any essential question-writing task. The language arts teacher offered guidance and descriptive feedback to the students. From the data, the researchers found that students engaged in highly literate environments were likely to increase their academic language through the act of writing. According to Wolsey (2010), “Such writing is a likely result of engagement where students take risks with vocabulary and sentence structures, become deeply involved with the discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary topics, and think of learning as inquiry” (p. 204). When teachers collaborated by assigning writing tasks that asked students to cross disciplines, they required students to synthesize from multiple sources of materials. This helped provide opportunities for students to increase their academic vocabulary in writing.

Educators’ sustained engagement with an idea is critical for deep conceptual change among teachers and it takes years rather than months to occur (Spillane, 2004). Therefore, professional development activities that educate teachers to teach writing should be ongoing.

One collaborative type of professional development endeavor that is considered effective is lesson study (Hurd & Licciardo-Musso, 2005). This type of collaborative learning should span over the course of a year (or more if the data dictated time is needed). Literature on collaborative learning revealed that sustained engagement with an idea is critical for deep conceptual change and that such understanding takes years rather than months to acquire. (He, Phillion, Chan, & Xu, 2008) Throughout the school year, teachers meet in study groups with the aim of creating and carrying out writing lessons that infuse synthesis then performing these lessons with precision.

Patsy Wang-Iverson (2002) published study in *Research for Better Schools Journal* found that lesson studies help teachers make the transition from being objects of research to actual researchers in the classroom. Once these groups are established, the lesson study will commence by setting clear learning goals, reading professional journals, and researching what others have done. This is followed by researching ideas, which are recommended by other researchers, reformers, and what has been reported on students' learning in the subject of writing and ELs.

The professional collaborative development process among teachers must be research-based. This base will serve as the foundation for the lesson study, short and long-term goals, the development of activities and, most importantly, teachers' best practices in writing. One such process cited by Darling-Hammond (2003), is the Japanese lesson study that is widely used throughout Asia. A group of teachers come together and work on a concept for a given lesson by creating it together and working as a team to refine it. One presents it while the others observe, either in person or through video conferencing. The group looks at the resulting work and debrief on the lesson while

examining its effectiveness. The lesson gets revisions; other instructors use it, and another debriefing follows. The creation of effective teaching practices incorporates sound pedagogy through this collaborative experience. This educator-as-researcher concept, according to Darling-Hammond (2003), should be practiced daily, not merely on designated to a few sporadic days a year.

In addition, Darling-Hammond (2010) described how teachers in Finnish schools collaboratively meet weekly to plan and develop curriculum, and schools in the same municipality are encouraged to work together to share materials. The educational system provided time for professional development within the teachers' workweek. This school time is used to refine school-based curriculum work, collective planning, and cooperation with parents, which allowed schools and families to work more closely together on behalf of students (Darling-Hammond, 2010). This continuous progression of teacher's pedagogical professionalism has become a staple in the Finnish school system that has empowered the educators to innovatively change a mediocre school system to a top international ranking (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Common Core State Standards in Writing

According to Calkins, et al. (2012), Children who leave school today without strong literacy skills will not find jobs waiting for them. Fullan, Hill, and Carmel (2006) claimed the new mission in education is to get all students to meet high standards in writing and provide them with instruction that equips them to become lifelong learners. While the teaching of writing had no place in NCLB standards of the past, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) place a tremendous emphasis on writing and regards writing as an equal partner to reading (Calkins, et al., 2012).

The nation's governors and education commissioners, through their representative organizations the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) led the development of the Common Core State Standards. Teachers, parents, school administrators and experts from across the country provided input into the development of the writing standards. The creation of this document was to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. "The standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach" (Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2010, p. 6).

The backward designs of these standards are relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that students need for success in college and careers (CCSSO, 2010). The goal of the CCSS is that students will be successful in today's global economy. However, it does not dictate to teachers how to instruct. Calkins, et al. (2012) discussed the interpretation and expectations of the CCSS falls on the hands of the teacher and or principal to decide how to deliver the writing lessons to the students.

The motivation behind the development of the CCSS was to provide clear expectations aligned to the expectations of college and careers. These written standards promote consistency by ensuring all students, no matter where they live, are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad careers (CCSSO, 2010). The intent was to enable collaboration between states on a range of tools and policies, including: the development of textbooks, digital media, and other teaching materials. This included the development and implementation of common comprehensive assessment systems to measure student performance annually that will replace existing state testing systems. According to

Calkins, et al. (2012), “The standards are already affecting what is published, mandated, and tested in schools” (p. 1).

The authors of the Common Core wrote ten standards in writing. However, standards numbered one through six will be the focus of this study. The standards were organized in a way that highlights grade-specific expectations for three broad types of writing. The first standard delineates expectations for opinion, the second for information, and the third for narrative. The latter standards four, five, and six clarify how students should do the work of the first three standards. The process of writing is detailed in standard five as the students write in the three text types (CCSSO, 2010).

The writers of the CCSS have referred to the writing standards as a shared responsibility within the school that all subjects support. Writing is an integral piece to the CCSS and must be practiced in all content areas. According to the CCSSO (2010), “Writing [is] a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subject communicate clearly then adapting the form and content in order to accomplish a particular task and purpose (p. 18).

Research-Based Organizations

There are research-based organizations that facilitate collaboration and resources to meet the needs of writing educators. The National Writing Project (National Writing Project, n.d.) and the Teachers College of Reading and Writing have the ability to collaborate worldwide with educators. Calkins, the leader of the Reading and Writing project, provides writing experts that are involved in long-lasting collaborations with teachers across the world. Her project has a lasting and deep affiliation with over 600 schools, and develops ideas that are foundational to literacy instruction across the globe.

Demand for professional development in writing has far outstripped the Reading and Writing Project's abilities to provide this support. The writing resources provided reflect their efforts to hand over what they have learned so that more children can be given opportunities to grow strong as writers and more teachers can experience the extraordinary benefits that come from participating in a community of practice that evolves alongside a shared inquiry into the teaching of writing.

In addition to Calkins' (2010) Reading and Writing Project, the National Writing Project (NWP)(National Writing Project, n.d.) focuses the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of our nation's educators on sustained efforts to improve writing and learning for all learners. Writing in its many forms is the signature means of communication in the 21st century. As stated on their website, "The NWP envisions a future where every person is an accomplished writer, engaged learner, and active participant in a digital, interconnected world." Together, these international writing organizations allow educators to collaborate, communicate, and evolve into high-quality classroom writing educators.

A large-scale study by researchers Hawkins and Marshall (1981) was conducted to discover the influences of the National Writing Project teacher training. These researchers studied over a dozen essays from 500 secondary students and found that students of NWP-trained teachers wrote better than the students working with untrained teachers. Writing teachers have to see what effective instruction looks like. It is not sufficient to simply tell our preservice students and practicing teachers what to do, but we must offer them professional development that would enhance the writing instruction in their classrooms.

Evaluation and research is a clear necessity in the area of teacher development with respect to a high-quality writing program. Teacher education programs do not always prepare teachers for collaborative planning or working with district writing specialists in schools. The emergence of prompt writing in schools as well as the lack of teacher preparation in writing curriculum has significantly changed the way children write. Creating an authentic community of writers should be the desired effect of teaching writing.

Writing is essential to communication, learning, and citizenship. It is the currency of the new workplace and global economy. Our goal as educators should be to inspire students to write, to teach them the skills they need to write well, and to offer them experiential (Dewey, 1938) and effective ways to see their writing come to life. Writing helps us convey ideas, solve problems, and understand our changing world. Atwell (2002), Calkins and Mermelstein (2003), Graves (1994), share that immersing students into successful writing experiences will better equip them to successfully write and will continue to fortify their writing through time. According to NWP and Nagin (2003), learning to write requires frequent, supportive practice. Evidence shows that writing performance improves when a student writes often. According to Dewey (1938), it is not the type of experience, but the quality. Educators must convey their subject matter knowledge in writing in such a way that engages students in writing activities that lead to future experiences.

English Language Learners and the Writing Process

August and Shanahan (2006), in their Executive Summary in developing literacy to Second language learners, discuss teaching language-minority students to read and

write well in English is an urgent challenge in the nation's K–12 schools. Literacy in English is essential to achievement in every academic subject and to educational and economic opportunities beyond schooling.

Currently, students from diverse language backgrounds tend to lag behind on indices of literacy achievement (Nieto, 2002). Many of these students receive instruction emphasizing drill and practice, activities with few opportunities to be involved in their own learning, speak their native languages, read challenging texts, or write about their personal experiences (Moll, 1990). Several researchers (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll, 1990) have argued that when students' backgrounds are valued and when they are offered rich academic opportunities, diverse students can reach high levels of literacy. Consequently, educators should explicitly teach in a way that fosters transfer of concepts and skills from the student's home language to English. Research clearly shows the potential for this kind of cross-language transfer in school contexts that support biliteracy development (Cummins, 2001; Reyes, 2001).

It is imperative that educators bridge the learning gap for our English language learners in the academic classroom. As teachers, we must promote and encourage confidence in our students' literacy abilities, and at the same time, be active participants in their learning progress. Writing and reading are intricately interwoven, one aspect building and relying upon the other (Clay, 1975). Therefore, a well-orchestrated writing system can influence children's reading development because of its ability to link symbols to sounds, an essential skill to the decoding process (Clarke, 1988; Eitelgeorge & Barrett, 2004). The teacher of readers and writers must provide opportunities and purposes that engage children's interests as active participants (Clay, 2002; Graves,

1994). Educators must inspire, motivate, and empower children to explore and immerse themselves in the process of reading and writing.

According to August and Shanahan's (2006) Report on ELs, The reading-writing connection and how teaching reading and writing to native speakers differ from teaching reading and writing to ELs. Instructional approaches found to be successful with native English speakers do not necessarily have a positive learning impact on language-minority students. Further, August and Shanahan (2006) argue that it is not enough to teach language-minority students reading skills alone. Successful literacy instruction must incorporate extensive oral English development. August and Shanahan (2006) argue that successful literacy programs must provide instructional support of oral language fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading and writing development in English. Then align it with high-quality literacy instruction.

In addition to August and Shanahan (2006), Sleeter's (2005) research, in EL literacy learning informs this qualitative case study with respect to language acquisition and writing. Sleeter (2005) argues that optimal learning conditions for ELs that foster active learning engages all students in the classroom. Sleeter (2005) makes a strong case for what teachers can do to "un-standardize" knowledge in their own classrooms, while working toward high standards of academic achievement for all diverse students.

According to Sleeter (2005), the classroom instruction must emphasize the following three conditions for effective learning: engaging prior understandings and background knowledge, integrating factual knowledge with conceptual frameworks by encouraging deep understanding, and supporting students in taking active control over the learning process. Any credible classroom curriculum must reflect these principles when teaching

reading and writing to native English speakers but especially to our English language learners.

Sleeter (2005) found that many ELs come to the classroom unmotivated, without interest in reading or writing, and frequently without the ability to participate in either process on grade level. Christine Sleeter (2005) claims that it makes the most sense to build curriculum around a pre-selected idea or concept. By beginning with a big idea and then working backwards, to build curriculum teachers can support and engage students in learning. The selections for these big ideas are based on teacher and/or student interests. By building the curriculum around big ideas, teachers are able to make connections between subjects and state content standards that otherwise may not occur. Sleeter (2005) in her book believes that centering curriculum on big ideas is central to student's academic engagement in the classroom.

Furthermore, Sleeter's (2005) "big idea" approach has students looking deeply into a topic from many perspectives, asking questions to understand, and uncovering a topic using reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This is more beneficial than quickly skimming over content in a textbook. The "big idea" strategy connects all the subjects to one main idea. For the ELL student, utilizing the "big idea" approach reinforces the development of the four language skills that connects the curriculum to the student's lives.

It is crucial for K-12 teachers to know their ELs' language and literacy backgrounds in order to develop appropriate lessons and assessments for each student. Cummins (1981) concluded that prior knowledge refers to not only information or skills previously acquired in formal instruction but also to the totality of the

experiences that have shaped the learner's identity and cognitive functioning. Therefore, in classrooms with students from linguistically diverse backgrounds, instruction should explicitly activate this knowledge. Knowledge is more than just the ability to remember. Deeper levels of understanding enable students to transfer knowledge from one context to another. When students take ownership of their learning — when they invest their identities in learning outcomes — active learning takes place.

According to Cummins (1981), it is hard to argue that we are teaching the whole child when school policy dictates that students leave their language and culture at the schoolhouse door. Cummins (1981) explains that although English language learners may be able to use English for basic interpersonal communication skills such as casual conversations, they may not have developed sufficient cognitive academic language proficiency to fully participate in a rigorous academic all English curricula without ongoing language support. Teachers may also want to assess students' ability to use academic language. Academic language is cognitively demanding and contextually reduced language of content area instruction and is critical for success in mainstream classrooms (Cummins, 1981). Academic language functions are the essential communication tasks that students must be able to perform in different content areas; they determine whether the learning task will be simple or complex.

Furthermore, a major aspect of language and literacy instructions for ELs is the use of scaffolding their English abilities. Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1978), claims that the scaffolding theory describes social and instructional support for students learning new concepts in literacy. The scaffolding supports the construction (the introduction of new material) and is removed upon completion or once the lesson is

understood. In order for our EL students to acquire language acquisition and writing, teachers must provide a framework

Clearly, language acquisition is not a linear process. Pauline Gibbons (2009) recognized the struggle of learners and the challenges that teachers face to cater to their needs. In her book *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning*, she suggests how to integrate English teaching through literacy and other parts of the curriculum. Students need a range of strategies and skills to fully develop their second language. Gibbons (2009) asserted that language development occurs because of interactions with others and in social context where learning takes place.

In addition, the research report by August and Shanahan (2006) claimed that ELs could learn their first language (L1) and their second language (L2) simultaneously. Students acquiring the academic literacy skills in one language support the transfer of that same academic skill from the first language to the second language. Teaching children to read and write in L1 promotes achievement in L2.

A five-year longitudinal study completed by Soltero-Gonza'lez, Escamilla and Hopewell (2012) explored the biliteracy development in Spanish speaking children. The purpose of this study was to investigate the observable bilingual strategies used by students that teachers noted in their writing in both languages. It also investigated the bilingual writing behaviors that the teachers may not have noticed when evaluating the students' writing.

This study involved 36 bilingual teachers who were a part of the Literacy Squared Project and were currently teaching in the project schools. The teachers were randomly selected from 102 bilingual evaluators from the Project schools who scored student

writing. All selected participants were fully trained by the project specialists on evaluating student writing using a “holistic bilingual lens” (Soltero-Gonzalez et al., 2012, p. 75). The purpose of this project was for educators to teach the students to write in Spanish and in English. This study collected two writing samples from 108 students in first through fifth grade who participated in the project. Each student was given prompts and then spent 60 minutes writing. The students were given sixty minutes to write in Spanish. Then two weeks later, the students were given a comparable writing prompt and they wrote for 60 minutes in English. Because this is a longitudinal study, the researchers were able to look at the writing growth over time by collecting students’ writing samples one time per year for five years.

The teachers evaluated their English and Spanish work side-by-side to view their biliteracy development. All teachers were trained by the Literacy Squared Project to use the writing rubric. According to Soltero-Gonzalez et al. (2012), “Training consisted of a general overview of the rubric with emphasis on the importance of scoring a student’s Spanish language writing sample and English language writing sample in a manner that allowed for cross-language comparison and analysis” (p. 76).

From the study, the researchers learned that emerging bilinguals are ingenious learners who draw on all their linguistic resources when they learn to write simultaneously in both languages. The participants of this study employed a variety of bilingual strategies when mastering oral language development, words, and sentence structure. This justifies the need to teach with integration rather than fractured segments. Further, this study suggested the need to provide professional development to teachers so they can evaluate the writing of emerging bilingual children in ways that both challenge

and expand on their current frames of reference.

Consequently, rapidly changing demographics in the United States have brought and are continuing to bring EL issues to the forefront in schools. This trend is likely to continue as EL enrollment is on the rise across the country. The achievement gap between ELs and native English speakers in combination with state and federal accountability requirements for EL achievement makes it imperative for educators to understand and apply effective techniques to support EL literacy learning.

According to August and Shanahan (2006), literacy instruction is at the core of the EL issue because it encompasses the basic language competencies (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Reading and writing are often considered the fundamental skills to one's school success. Furthermore, English language development will flourish when their backgrounds are valued and the students are offered rich academic opportunities. It is imperative that classroom teachers have the knowledge to effectively select and apply appropriate instructional techniques intertwined with the "big idea." Above all, teachers must know how to scaffold and support our ELs by integrating language learning and literacy instruction across the curriculum, which enables the children to successfully participate in their own learning.

Summary

Writing is essential to communication, learning, and citizenship. It is the currency of the new workplace and global economy. The goal as educators should be to enhance our pedagogical content knowledge in writing so that the transference of subject matter knowledge can inspire students to write, to teach them the skills they need to write well, and to offer them experiential (Dewey, 1938) and effective ways to see their writing

come to life. Writing helps us convey ideas, solve problems, and understand our changing world. Several researchers, (Atwell, 2002; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Routman, 2005), shared that immersing students into successful writing experiences will better equip them to successfully write and will continue to fortify their writing through time. According to NWP and Nagin (2003), learning to write required frequent, supportive practice of the teachers and students. Evidence shows that writing performance improved when students and teachers write often. Further, educators must practice collaborative inquiry through professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2010) in order to enhance their own subject matter knowledge (Shulman, 1987).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study design was appropriate for this study because it involved an investigation of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986), which was explored through one case within a bounded elementary school system (Creswell, 2014, p. 73). Creswell (2014) claimed that, "A qualitative case study researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (p. 241). This researcher investigated how educators gained their PCK in writing and in turn how they collaborated with other educators to attain and deepen their knowledge. According to Merriam (2009), "Case studies should be anchored in real-world situations" (p. 51). This study described how Title 1 elementary teachers understand the subject matter in writing and how they collaborated with others in order to gain a deeper PCK in teaching writing to ELs. Further, the case study approach for this study allowed the investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1994).

Further, there was a clear rationale for the use of a qualitative case study approach. The purpose of this study was to investigate if elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborated in order to gain PCK in writing and examined how the teachers report how they collaborated to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms.

The case study approach is particularly useful in studying loosely coupled systems such as educational institutions. As noted by Merriam (1998), "An assumption

underlying qualitative research is that reality is holistic, multidimensional and ever-changing; it is not a single fixed objective” (p. 202). The researcher investigated the following questions:

- 1a. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 teachers in one South Florida elementary school demonstrate PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?
- 1b. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 teachers in one South Florida elementary school report using their PCK in teaching writing?
- 1c. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 teachers in one South Florida elementary school use their gained PCK in order to teach writing to ELs?
- 2a. Based on self-reported and Learning Team Minute observation data, how do the 3rd-5th grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school collaborate to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6?
- 2b. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, in what ways does collaboration in LTMs contribute to selected 3rd-5th grade teachers’ PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?

Participants

To qualify for participation in this study, teachers needed to meet four selection criteria. The first qualification was that the participants needed to be currently teaching in a Title 1 elementary school in the Southeastern Florida School District. The teachers who participated in this study must also have an undergraduate degree in elementary

education. The next criterion was each Title 1 elementary teacher needed to be teaching writing for the 2013-2014 school year. Finally, the teacher needed to be a part of learning team meetings (LTMs) conducted during the contractual school day.

Plans for Sampling

The researcher gained permission from the school district as well as the building principal after obtaining an Institutional Review Board approval through Florida Atlantic University (Appendix A). The researcher selected 15 teachers of the 60 classroom teachers for interviews. Once the criterion was established for the 60 classroom teachers, twelve teachers were eliminated from the pool. The researcher invited 48 teachers to participate as volunteers based on the following criteria: participating teachers had college degrees in education, taught writing this school year, and attended weekly Learning Team Meetings regularly. The researcher selected 15 participants from the 48 classroom teachers on a “first come, first served” basis.

Research Setting

The site selected as the focus for this case study was referenced throughout this study by the pseudonym of “South Area School” (SAS). SAS is a medium-sized comprehensive Title 1 elementary school that served approximately 750 full-time students. This school was located in a rapidly growing southeastern coastal region. SAS offered a comprehensive array of two instructional programs to meet the needs of its students. One program was a dual language program, which provided an opportunity for students to acquire a second language in Spanish or English while maintaining their home language and culture. Some of the invited participants were teachers in this program. The

second program was a gifted program, which accelerated the material for high achieving students. Some of the invited participants were teachers in this program.

This Title 1 school was selected as the subject for this study based on the fact that 50 percent of students were designated, as English language learners during the year of this study. Also during the 2013-2014 school year, all educators in the site school were teaching writing for 60 minutes a day.

Secondary factors in the selection of SAS as the research site included the schools willingness to participate in the study, accessibility to the researcher, and the researcher's background knowledge of the school's demographics and history. This school has been in existence for more than 70 years.

The research study was extended across three grade levels and included teachers from the Dual language Program, gifted classrooms, and regular education classrooms. Due to the exploratory nature of this case study, the decision was made to restrict this case study to one Title 1 elementary school that can be examined in-depth by a single researcher rather than dilute the focus among several elementary school sites. The findings derived from this study suggested topics for further research and consideration in the design of implementing a writing curriculum or educating teachers regarding the teaching of writing.

Data Collection

Instruments

Interviews. One method of data collection was standardized open-ended interviews with 15 participants. Each interview lasted for 30 minutes. Confidentiality was ensured by first obtaining consent (Appendix B) with each participant. To further ensure

confidentiality pseudonyms for all participants, random names were assigned. The participants selected the location and time for the interviews. This ensured participants' comfort and convenience.

During the 30-minute interviews, an interview protocol (Appendix C) was followed. This protocol provided space to record interviewees' responses and additional notes as needed (Creswell, 2007) (Appendix C). Participation in the interview was voluntary, voice recorded, with no penalty for nonparticipation. The participants were given transcripts of the interview to review and provide feedback for member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher developed a structured interview protocol because there was a clear topical focus and well-developed understanding of the topic at hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The interview protocol was developed by drawing on guidelines provided by a variety of qualitative research guides (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), which led to constructing prompts that addressed the specific research questions that focused on how teachers gained and used their PCK in writing. It also addressed how the elementary teachers use their gained PCK in order to teach writing to English language learners (1a, 1b, and 1c). The interview questions established (Appendix C) were open-ended to allow participants latitude to supply the depth and breadth of information about how they reported their PCK in writing

Observations. To address the research questions that investigated how teachers collaborated (2a and 2b), the researcher conducted 15 transient observations (Appendix D) in Learning Team Meetings. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), researchers who study how people communicated often wanted to examine the details of how people

talk and behave together. These observations offered a firsthand account of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis allowed for a holistic interpretation of the case study being investigated (Merriam, 1998, p. 111)

For the purpose of this study, observations were conducted to note the teachers' collaborative participation in Learning Team Meetings. These non-participant observations occurred during principal-scheduled meetings with the teachers in the school conference room during a three-month period. The researcher conducted five observations per grade level during this study (Appendix E). In each observation, an observation protocol was followed (Appendix D). The left side contained descriptive notes while the right column contained reflective memos. (Creswell, 2007).

The purpose for conducting these observations was to gather data on how the elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborated in order to gain pedagogical content knowledge in writing. Further, the researcher gathered data on teachers' ability to actively discuss how they engaged their ELs in a writing curriculum. To ensure consistency, the observations lasted 60 minutes every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoon. The researcher sat without participating in the back of the room and took notes with permission of participating teachers.

Data Analysis

The researcher engaged in a process of open coding of interview transcripts (Appendix F) and observation data collected from participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The researcher searched for units of data (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994), including specific words, phrases, and sentences that were relevant to the study. These codes were analyzed to discover similar patterns across the data, which served as a

foundation for clustering. Merriam (2009) states that categories constructed should meet several criteria: be responsive to the purpose of the research; be exhaustive; be mutually exclusive; be sensitizing; and be conceptually congruent (p. 185-186).

The purpose of this study was to investigate if elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborated in order to gain pedagogical content knowledge in writing and examined how the teachers reported how they collaborated to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms. The first phase of data analysis began early in the data collection process. The constant comparative method (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used throughout the data collection as perceptions, beliefs and assumptions of participants as preliminary patterns and themes began to emerge. The researcher frequently reviewed the data to identify, highlight, and notate codes that were consistent or inconsistent with identified themes, suggested commonalities and differences among the data in the dialogue, actions and responses regarding the PCK of teachers in the content area of writing.

To facilitate the data analysis process, interview data were transcribed as soon as possible following each session. Pseudonyms rather than actual names of participants were used in transcripts to assure confidentiality. Notations of non-verbal responses were made during the observations such as body language, voice inflections, unusual intensity, or other expressions.

The transcripts and observation field notes represented a significant body of raw data that were analyzed to detect important patterns, themes, similarities and differences regarding teachers PCK, collaborative dialogue, and their writing instruction with all diverse students in the classroom. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that data analysis is,

in part, a process of “data reduction” (p. 10) in order to identify and focus on information that sheds light on the research questions. Therefore, only data, which reflected or provided insights into PCK, ELs, and collaboration were highlighted and coded.

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, the researcher continuously reviewed and compared the data in order to detect preliminary patterns and themes. Miles and Huberman (1994) defined themes as, "recurring patterns are something that jumps out at you, suddenly makes sense" (p. 246). The data were coded by major categories (Appendix G), and analyzed to identify similarities and differences.

Reliability and Validity

In designing this study, factors such as reliability and validity were carefully considered. Patton (2002) stated that validity and reliability are two factors, which any qualitative researcher should be concerned with when designing a study. Regarding reliability, Miles and Huberman (1994) claimed, “The underlying issue is whether the process of the study is consistent, reasonable, and stable over time and across researchers (p. 278). Bogdan and Biklen (2006) discussed reliability as a fit between what a researcher records as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study. Thus, this dissertation utilized triangulation of several different research methods, specifically individual interviews and transient observations, in order to ensure validity and reliability. According to Merriam, (2009), using multiple sources of data by cross-checking the collected data at different time and places as well as interviewing people with different perspectives will enhance the reliability and validity of a qualitative case study. Merriam (2009) claimed that using multiple sources of data would increase the validity and reliability of the study.

To add to the reliability and validity of this study, the researcher addressed validity through member checks. The participants reviewed all transcribed interviews. According to Merriam (2009), member checking solicits feedback, rules out possible misinterpretations, and allows the researcher to better capture the participants' perspectives.

As recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (2006), the researcher kept analytic memoranda (Appendix H). These were maintained to provide a systematic account of the research process. Each of these efforts were implemented as an attempt to assure a solid fit between data and actuality.

In addition, the following measures were included in the research design for this study to minimize and offset the risk of bias:

1. At the outset of the interviews, participants were explicitly assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Interview questions were carefully phrased and participants were advised that they could freely decline to address any question that made them feel uncomfortable.
2. All transcribed interviews were emailed to the participants for member checking to add to the validity and reliability to the study.
3. Specific criteria established for interviews and observations including the teacher must teach writing, must be a graduate from a four-year teacher preparation program, and must be willing to voluntarily participate.
4. The researcher maintained an audit trail of the data collection and analysis process by recording research activities in analytic memos (Creswell, 2007).

In considering internal validity, several of the strategies outlined by Lincoln and Guba, (1985), Merriam (1998), and Bogdan and Biklen (2006), to assure internal, reliability and dependable validity, were incorporated in this study. Observations were conducted in different grade level Learning Team Meetings, member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of transcripts were also conducted with the selected participants in individual interviews to ensure that the researcher's interpretation of the data accurately reflected the participants' meaning and intent.

Limitations

One limitation of this research study was that it relied on teachers' self-reported data through interviews, which depended upon teachers' recollections and explanations of how they gained their PCK in writing. Also, the researcher did not conduct observations in teachers' classrooms. An additional limitation is that only teachers working in one Title 1 elementary school in the Southeastern Florida school district were a part of this study. Finally, the data for this study was collected within an eight-week period.

Delimitations

This study delimited in its scope because it focused on only one medium-sized comprehensive elementary school in one school district in the Southeastern United States. Another, delimitation is the fact that the elementary school is a Title 1 school. The purpose of a school labeled Title 1 was to guarantee that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on the state academic assessments (U.S. Department of Education Title 1, 2010). In addition, this case study focused on only one elementary school, as befitting an

in-depth exploratory study conducted by a single researcher. The researcher was also delimited by capturing self-reported data through interviews. Because of these boundaries, generalizations were not drawn based on the research results.

Summary

A qualitative case study design was used to explore and increase understanding of the ways in which teachers described their own PCK in writing and how they collaborated to advance their knowledge in the area of ELs in the classroom. As appropriate for this purpose, qualitative research methods included individual in-depth interviews, participant observations, and field notes were employed. Data coding analysis was based on Miles and Huberman's (2004) thematic analysis. Measures were built into the study's design to address issues such as reliability and validity of the research findings. Each of the research questions of this study were tested and examined through the analysis of transcripts of interviews, observations, and field notes. The aim of this qualitative case study was to provide a better understanding of the role of PCK and collaborative professional development practices that enhanced teachers' subject matter knowledge in writing in order to effectively and innovatively meet the writing needs of all diverse learners in the classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

This study investigated how elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborated in order to gain pedagogical content knowledge in writing. In addition, the study, examined the way the teachers reported their collaboration to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate English learners (ELs) in their classrooms during the 2013-2014 school year. Specifically, the researcher investigated the following research questions:

- 1a. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?
- 1b. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school report using PCK in teaching writing?
- 1c. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 teachers in one South Florida elementary school use PCK in order to teach writing to ELs?
- 2a. Based on self-reported and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do 3rd-5th teachers in one South Florida elementary school collaborate to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6?

- 2b. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, in what ways does collaboration in LTMs contribute to selected 3rd-5th grade teachers' PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?

This chapter describes the findings, addressing each of these research questions (Appendix I). Discussion and conclusions resulting from the analysis of the qualitative data are included in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

Interviewed Participants

All 48 third through fifth grade teachers at SAS Elementary School were invited to participate in interviews for this study. This sample also included elementary teachers who taught in gifted classrooms and the Dual Language Programs. All participants were invited to contribute during their Learning Team Meetings and the researcher informed prospective participants that the interviews would be filled on a “first come, first serve” basis. Of the 48 teachers who met the criteria for the study and were invited to participate in the study, 15 consented to be interviewed.

As depicted in Table 1, eight teachers taught in the Dual Language Program, five taught in regular education classrooms at SAS and two taught in gifted classrooms. At the time of this study, the dual language students receive daily instruction using a 50/50 model. Specifically, the students receive a half-day instruction in Spanish and a half-day in English.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic information provided by participants using pseudonyms.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

	Teacher	Teacher Experience	Grade Level Taught	Position	Number of ELs (LY)
1	Hope	5	3	DL	2
2	Nancy	6	3	DL	8
3	Sofia	25	3	DL	6
4	Sara	22	3	R	6
5.	Rachael	2	3	R	6
6	Danielle	8	4	G	3
7	Bobbie	2	4	DL	4
8	Mia	6	4	DL	2
9	Maria	20	4	R	3
10	April	13	4	R	7
11	Laura	18	5	G	0
12	Julia	25	5	R	4
13	Ana	17	5	DL	9
14	Alexa	17	5	DL	5
15.	Michelle	15	5	DL	10

Note: DL = Dual Language Teacher; G = Gifted Teacher; R = Regular Classroom Teacher

Qualitative Findings

For this qualitative case study, data were collected from two sources: interview transcripts from 15 participants and observations from 15 Learning Team Meetings (LTMs). The collected data provided a more detailed account of how elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborated in order to gain pedagogical content knowledge in writing and examined how the teachers reported how they collaborated to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms.

In order to learn more about how teachers collaborated, demonstrated and reported using their PCK in writing with the ELs in their classroom, 15 interviews and 15 Learning Team Meeting observations were analyzed to use and address the research questions. Additionally, data from the interviews and LTM observations were used to explore teachers' PCK in the subject area of writing and examined how elementary teachers collaborated to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms.

In order to obtain some background knowledge of the participants' formal and informal training they attended since they began teaching, the researcher asked two specific questions during the 30-minute face-to-face interview. Table 2 summarizes the participant responses from interview protocol questions one and two. Out of the 15 participants, eight attended district literacy training, six attended the Lucy Calkins' Writer's Workshop training in New York, and three attended the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) conference. In addition, twelve out of the 15 participants noted that they used the Lucy Calkins' Writer's Workshop Units of Study to advance their pedagogy around teaching writing. The following questions were then analyzed and

synthesized to determine the background knowledge of the teachers' formal and informal training at SAS elementary school.

Table 2

Interviewees' Self-Reported Formal/Informal Training

	Teacher	Grade Level	Trainings	Resource Materials
1	Hope	3 rd	LCWW NABE	LC Units of Study
2	Nancy	3 rd	LCWW	LC Units of Study
3	Sofia	3 rd	LCWW	LC Units of Study
4	Sara	3 rd	DLT	LC Units of Study
5	Rachael	3 rd	DLT	LC Units of Study
6	Danielle	4 th	DLT	LC Units of Study
7	Bobbie	4 th	DLT	LC Units of Study
8	Mia	4 th	DLT	
9	Maria	4 th	DLT	
10	April	4 th	DLT NABE	
11	Laura	5 th	LCWW	LC Units of Study
12	Julia	5 th	DLT	LC Units of Study
13	Ana	5 th	NABE	LC Units of Study
14	Alexa	5 th	LCWW	LC Units of Study
15	Michelle	5 th	LCWW	LC Units of Study

Note: LCWW = Lucy Calkins' Writer's Workshop Training; DLT = District Literacy Training; LC = Lucy Calkins; NABE = National Association of Bilingual Education

Research Question 1a

To address the question “How do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?”, interview transcripts were the main data source. Following analysis of all interview transcripts, observational notes were analyzed. According to the data, teachers who were interviewed demonstrated pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with respect to the Common Core Anchor Standards in two ways, which constituted the emergent themes to address research question 1a: 1) They utilized the language of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) when discussing writing and the teaching of writing; 2) They discussed the need for students to consistently write in order to justify their fight for the right to teaching writing.

Speaking the Language of the Common Core. It was evident that the participants at SAS were beginning to speak the language of the CCSS. Thirteen out of the fifteen participants used the language of CCSS during their interviews. Table 3 summarizes these findings based on the participants’ interview responses and LTM observations.

Table 3

Interview Excerpts Pertaining to Research Question 1a: Speaking the Language of the Common Core Anchor Standards 1-6

Standard	Evidence of Teacher PCK in Both Interviews and LTM Observations
Standard 1	“Opinion Writing”
Standard 1	“Support their point of view”
Standard 2	“Write informational
Standard 2	“Developed a topic that includes facts and details”
Standard 2	“Informational Writing”
Standard 2	“Informational writing”
Standard 2	“Develop a topic”
Standard 2	“Use illustrations to Support the information”
Standard 2	“Gather information related to the topic”
Standard 2	“Informational Writing”
Standards 2	“Informational Writing”
Standards 3	“Narrative writing”
Standard 3	“Narrative writing”
Standard 3	“Narrative writing”
Standard 3	“Narrative Writing”
Standard 4	
Standards 5	“Planning, revising, and editing”
Standard 5	“Planning, revising, and editing”
Standard 5	“Editing for conventions and language”
Standards 5	“Revise and publish work”
Standard 5	“Planning, revising, and editing”
Standard 5	“Planning, revising, and editing”
Standard 5	“Planning, revising, and editing”

Standard 5	“Using the writing process to plan, revise, and edit”
Standard 6	“Use technology”
Standard 6	“Type up the pages”
Standard 6	“Informational book”
Standard 6	“Collaborate with others”
Standard 6	“Published a brochure”
Standard 6	“Using the computer”

Note: CCSS = Common Core State Standards

One out of the fifteen teachers discussed Standard 1 during interviews and one fourth grade LTM also used the language. The purpose of this standard is for students to write an opinion on topics or texts, while supporting their point of view with reasons (CCSS, 2012). Hope, a third grade dual language teacher, shared the importance of teaching her students to form opinions as they write. She asked her students what they feel strongly about. “I wanted them to see things in their own perspectives and then ‘voice their opinions in their writing’ and have valid ‘reasons to support their point of view’.” The educators at SAS elementary school were beginning to use CCSS language in their interviews as they described their knowledge of writing.

The participants also used Standard 1 language during the verbal discussions that took place in their Learning Team Meetings. During a fourth grade LTM, the teachers were discussing the importance of teaching the students ‘opinion writing’. “Let’s have the students write an opinion letter ‘with support’ to the principal about having recess every day,” one of the fourth grade teacher said to her grade level team. Another teacher responded, “I may have my students ‘form an opinion’ about wearing school uniforms

along with solid ‘reasons to support their opinion’.” A few weeks later, the same group of fourth grade teachers were discussing having students ‘form opinion writing’ during social studies. Another teacher during that same meeting explained, “I am now using ‘opinion writing’ in my content area because I am hoping it will help the students understand the subject matter better.”

Five out of the 15 participants addressed the language of Standard 2 during interviews. The purpose of this standard is for students to write informational texts that convey ideas and information accurately. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). During an interview, Alexa, a fifth grade dual language teacher, used the language of Standard 2 as she explained writing in her classroom,

My students were working on an ‘informational writing’ piece in my classroom. I gave them time to talk with others in the classroom to share their ‘facts and details’ that they wanted to incorporate into their piece. They were really talking and writing as they put together their ‘informational piece to teach others about their topic’.

Laura, a fifth grade gifted teacher, also discussed using informational writing in her classroom. “I wanted my students to research a ‘topic and write an informational piece’ that they could ‘teach others about their topic’. The students were able to research their topics on iPads and with books.”

Mia, a fourth grade dual language teacher, described how she used informational writing in her classroom to create a book that would teach others about the state of Florida. “They had to research and ‘develop a topic’ of interest.” She continued to explain, “They had to gather ‘information related to the topic’.” She also noted, “The students had to ‘use illustrations to support the information’.”

Sofia, a third grade dual language writing teacher, described a successful writing lesson in her classroom. She discussed, “I gathered books for my students to help support them as they ‘developed a topic’. Then they needed to include ‘relevant facts and details to support their information’.” As demonstrated by a variety of responses, the teachers at SAS were beginning to speak the language of Common Core Anchor Standard 2 during their interviews.

Four of the 15 teachers discussed Standard 3 during interviews. This Standard required students to develop narrative writing (CCSS, 2012). One participant, Rachael, a third grade teacher, discussed how she had immersed her students in a form of narrative writing. She explained,

The students were investigating the adaptation of fairy tales. I created stations around the room. Each station had a classic fairy tale and an adapted fairy tale for the students to read. I wanted them to see the difference between the classics and the ‘liberties that authors’ take. That really helped support them when they went to ‘write their own adapted fairy tale’.

This third grade teacher chose fairy tales for her students to write narrative while other teachers chose to represent this type of writing in another way. April affirmed her belief in modeling narrative writing in her writing notebook while her students watched and listened. She shared, “I thought out loud as I was thinking so the students could hear what I was doing in my mind.”

Michelle, a fifth grade dual language teacher, created a memoir and then encouraged her students to do the same. She described her students’ reaction to their

narrative writing assignment, “They loved it. It was so personal for them. The students enjoyed sharing ideas with each other along the way.”

Standard 4 was the one standard left out of conversation. This Standard asks students to produce well-defined and logical writing that are fitting to the task (CCSS, 2012). All 15 teachers noted in interview question three that their students were either writing opinion, informational, or narrative writing in their classrooms although they did not explicitly use the language of Standard 4 related to “well-defined and logical writing.” Further discussion of this evidence will take place in chapter 5.

In the CCSS, Standard 5 asked students to plan, revise and edit (CCSS, 2012). This Standard suggested that students in grades 3-5 should develop and strengthen writing as needed by being immersed in the process of writing. Through examination of the interview transcripts, 13 out of 15 participants when discussing their knowledge of writing used the language of Standard 5. It was evident that the teachers at SAS elementary school were beginning to internalize and speak the language of the CCSS. Ten out of the 15 interviewees discussed the importance of taking their students through the writing process in their classrooms. Julia, a fifth grade teacher shared, “I really focused on the qualities of good writing and used this to help my students as they circled through the writing process.” To effectively implement the CCSS in writing, teachers are challenged to foster independent and critical writers. Therefore, there was also an increased focus on the writing process, which required educators to learn the importance of how to develop and strengthen student writing. April, a fourth grade teacher noted, “I needed to understand the writing process in order to teach my students to learn how to write well.” Then Sara, a third grade teacher, explained in her interview, “I learned how

to teach students to go through the writing process such as having students ‘drafting, revising and editing their writing’.” Maria, a fourth grade writing teacher, also described how she learned through the district writing training the importance of taking children through the writing process and how important it was to teach them each component. She discussed, “I always demonstrate the writing process in my classroom. I want my students to see me ‘planning, revising, and editing’ my work.” More specifically, Danielle used the language of the standards when she discussed the writing process. She explained, “The students had so much fun creating narrative pieces in writing. Before we could celebrate our writing work, I had the students ‘revise and then publish their work’.” This suggested that the teacher demonstrated their PCK through speaking the language of CCAS 5, the writing process.

Writing Standard 6 was discussed during three out of the 15 interviews as it demonstrated the participants PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6. Three out of the 15 participants spoke the language of this standard. Laura described the outcome of her informational writing piece that her students created. She noted, “The outcome was their creation of a brochure. The students were able to ‘publish the brochure using the computers’ in the computer lab at school.” In addition, Mia explained how she used technology in her classroom to support her students in publishing their writing pieces. “I had the students ‘type up the pages in their newly created books’. Then they added graphics and visuals to support their information.”

Maria internalized the language of Standard 6 by discussing the importance of collaboration during writing in her classroom. She discussed how she gives her students time to collaborate with each other during writing. “I like to give them the opportunity to

collaborate with others' in the class. This helps them troubleshoot their ideas and road blocks in their writing.”

As a result of how the teachers demonstrated their PCK with respect to the Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6, teachers at SAS were beginning to internalize the language through discussions, sharing ideas, and techniques when teaching writing. Knowledge and discussion of five of the six Standards were in evidence during teacher interviews and LTMs.

Fighting for the Right to Teach Writing. The CCSS discuss the importance of student writing. The standards explicitly propose students spend a significant amount of time and effort on writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year (CCSS, 2012, n.p.). Through interviews and Learning Team Meetings, the teachers' discussion of their 'fight' suggested that they are aware of the CCSS stance on its value. According to the Common Core note on range and content of student writing:

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understandings of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. (CCSS, 2012, 18).

When their administrator told them to stop teaching writing and focus on the standardized tests, the participants in this study had an understanding of PCK in writing that enabled

them to articulate the importance for writing to stay in the curriculum through their fight to teach writing. Shulman (1987) claims, “The teacher has special responsibilities in relation to content knowledge, serving as the primary source of student understanding of subject matter” (p. 9). The teachers at SAS were advocating for their responsibility to continue to deliver content writing knowledge to their students. Sara, a third grade teacher, shared the barriers she encountered when trying to teach writing, “Administrators make us stop teaching writing before our state test. Writing gets brushed under the table until the students get to fourth grade.” Students need to be fluent writers and effectively communicate to an audience whether they are sharing their opinions, teaching others, or writing real or imagined events. During an interview, a fifth grade teacher, Michelle shared her thoughts on her challenges at the school, “Fifth graders don’t have time to write when we are preparing for the state test.” Alexa, another fifth grade teacher, shared her frustration with administration stopping the teaching of writing, “The principal says we have to stop teaching writing because we have to teach more science.” Clearly, the teachers interviewed discussed their frustration of being told to halt the teaching of writing. In addition, during LTM meetings, grade level teachers argued with administrators and tried to offer solutions to the directives of discontinuing the teaching of writing.

During a fourth grade LTM, the teachers enthusiastically planned to teach their students the art of opinion writing. The teachers were building on each other’s ideas to develop a plan to get the students excited about writing. A week later, during their next LTM meeting, the principal entered from a side door and sat down with the grade level. She spoke, “I want you to begin to teach less writing now that the writing test is over.”

All teachers were staring at the administrator, not speaking. After several minutes, the teachers at SAS really believed writing was important that they were willing to be bold enough to offer suggestions that could persuade the administrator to allow them to continue to teach writing. A fourth grade teacher responded, “We want to continue to teach writing.” Another fourth grade teacher trying to fight the right to teach writing said, “I would like to incorporate writing into my content so my students are writing for more than 30 minutes a day.” During that same fourth grade LTM, a group of three teachers whispered to each other for several minutes then one shared out, “We would like to write more during science and reading. For example, the students could be writing in their reader’s notebook.” Two other dual language teachers conversing with each other during the LTM shared, “We want to do some writing in Spanish and in English to support writing. The students will write in Spanish during reading and math then they will write in English during reading and science.” During the same meeting, two fourth grade teachers shared, “We will write during social studies.”

According to Shulman (1987), research-based knowledge should be a component of PCK. Clearly, the teachers knew the importance of students writing daily. It was evident that the teachers at SAS understood that it was critical for their students to continue writing.

In addition to fourth grade teachers, third grade participants were also asked to discontinue writing. The researcher observed a third grade teacher during an LTM respond to the principal by saying, “Writing really helped my students understand figurative language when reading and helped my students successfully identify authors craft moves when answering standardized test questions.” The Common Core State

Standards Initiative (2012) stated, “Students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year (p. 18). The teachers at SAS demonstrated their PCK through their interviews and LTMs on their fight to implement writing on a daily basis.

Research Question 1b

To address research question 1b, “Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school report using PCK in teaching writing?” , the researcher utilized interviews and LTM observation data. The writing standards were designed to promote and foster students to become critical writers. The CCSS included College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards that are consistent across all grade levels as well as grade-specific standards. For the purposes of this study, the researcher focused on Standards 1-6 only. These writing standards emphasize the need to address writing in the content areas across all grade levels. The data indicated that the teachers in this study used PCK with respect to Common Core Anchor Standards 1-6 which constituted the two emergent themes: Social Studies as a viable content area to embed writing and intentions for content writing but not yet practiced.

Social Studies as a Viable Content Area to Embed Writing. Classroom writing sessions at SAS were limited to a 30-60 minute writing block. However, the participants also reported using Social Studies as a way to incorporate more writing throughout the day. Table 4 summarizes these findings based on the participants’ interview responses and LTM content area discussions.

Table 4

Embedding Writing in Social Studies and Other Content Areas

Grade Level	Participant Reported Content Area Writing	Researcher Witnessed Content Area Writing Discussions during LTMs
3 rd Grade	Social Studies	Science
	Social Studies	Math
	Social Studies	Social Studies
		Social Studies
4 th Grade	Social Studies	Social Studies
	Social Studies	Math
		Science
		Reading
		Social Studies
		Science
		Social Studies
5 th Grade	Social Studies	Reading
	Social Studies	Social Studies
		Social Studies
		Social Studies
		Social Studies

Seven out of the 15 participants chose to use social studies as a viable content area within which to embed writing. Laura, a fifth grade gifted teacher, studied the 50 states in social studies but tied researching and writing into her unit. She shared, “My students spent time in writing learning how to write and move through the writing process then they spent time in social studies practicing all the things they learned during

their writing block.” One of her outcomes was the creation of a brochure, which addressed Common Core Anchor Standard 6.

Sofia, a third grade dual language teacher, discussed using informational writing during her social studies units. “The results were amazing!” She shared in her interview how the 3rd grade students created informational books, which addressed Common Core Anchor Standard 2. When they studied landforms during the school year, the students read books as they began to be a teacher from the learned facts. She explained:

First, I spent time with each student. They began to find the main ideas, details, and interesting facts. From there, they began taking the information and created their own books. They could not wait to teach others using their informational books.

Sofia found the results to be so amazing that she wanted to consider writing in other content areas too. She explained, “My students asked if they could create informational books on animals next. So now, I would like to try this type of writing in other content areas too.”

Hope, a third grade dual language teacher, chose to write in one content area. She connected writing to social studies. When they studied the presidents, she had them write presidential speeches as they tried to persuade their classmates why they would make a worthy president, which correlated to CCSS 1. However, during her LTM, she recognized the potential to incorporate writing into other subjects when she said, “Because of the speech writing, their opinion writing began to get stronger. I would like to begin to write more during reading to see if their writing can develop even further.”

Mia, a fourth grade dual language teacher, incorporated informational writing into the content areas. When asked about the use of informational writing in her classroom, she recalled, “My students researched animals, plants, and places in the state of Florida. We then created informational books to teach others about the state of Florida.”

Intentions but not yet practiced. In addition to the interviews, the researcher witnessed nine out of fifteen LTMs discussing their intentions of writing in other content areas. One particular fifth grade LTM was devoted to writing across the curriculum. Several teachers were beginning a unit on the Westward Expansion while another group was studying the Holocaust. Eight teachers and the Reading Coach talked about writing during reading and social studies as they began their meeting. One teacher began to speak, “I am going to have my students read and write in their reading notebook to gather their thoughts, ideas, factual information, main ideas, and key details.” She continued to explain, “Then during social studies we will continue to learn and create an informational essay using text features as we continue reading and writing about the Westward Expansion.”

In addition to the fifth grade, a fourth grade LTM also discussed the importance of writing across the curriculum. Teachers were brainstorming ways they could incorporate writing across the curriculum in their classrooms. Two teachers were whispering and jotting notes when one began to speak to the group. She shared that their goal was to write more during science and reading. She continued to speak, “For example, the students could create and write in their science notebook.” To add to their thinking, another teacher shared that she would like to incorporate writing into her content areas so that they would write, “...longer and stronger.” Another teacher agreed

and added, “We can have them write in math too.” As demonstrated by several teachers and through LTMs at SAS, writing potentially can be used across the curriculum. However, the intention to write in the content area was witnessed as the participants’ brainstormed alternate avenues for their students to write not only during writing but also across the curriculum. This included an increased focus on the writing process as well as the importance of effective content writing. Implications for these findings will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Research Question 1c

To address research question 1c, “Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3 -5 teachers in one South Florida elementary school use PCK in order to teach writing to ELs?”, the researcher examined interview transcripts and LTM observations to understand SAS teachers writing knowledge as they educate ELs in their classrooms. To determine how the teachers perceived and gained their PCK in writing in order to teach ELs, 15 interviewees were asked four questions (4, 5, and 6) on how they advanced their knowledge about writing, what useful scaffolding strategies they used with ELs to develop vocabulary and oral language. Participants identified three specific categories of EL instructional strategies that they used with ELs to teach writing: oral language, biliteracy strategies, and strategies using visuals.

The art of employing oral language strategies. It was evident that oral language instructional strategies were embedded within the culture of the SAS community. During interviews, several participants discussed using a variety of oral language strategies such as oral rehearsal and talking before writing. Seven out of the fifteen participants noted storytelling as the EL oral language strategy that they incorporated most often into their

daily writing routines in their classrooms. Table 5 summarizes these findings based on the participants' interview responses.

Table 5

Interviewees' Self-Reported EL Training and Employed Oral Language Strategies

	Teacher	Grade Level	Trainings	Oral Language Strategies
1	Hope	3 rd	ESOL Endorsement	Storytelling
2	Nancy	3 rd	EL Trainings	Storytelling
3	Sofia	3 rd	Masters in EL	Talk about
4	Sara	3 rd	DLT	Oral Rehearsal
5	Rachael	3 rd	None	Storytelling
6	Danielle	4 th	None	Oral Rehearsal
7	Bobbie	4 th	None	Storytelling
8	Mia	4 th	DLT	Oral Rehearsal
9	Maria	4 th	None	Storytelling
10	April	4 th	NABE	Storytelling in dominant lang.
11	Laura	5 th	Masters in EL	Conferring
12	Julia	5 th	None	Talk before write
13	Ana	5 th	NABE	Talk before write
14	Alexa	5 th	ESOL Endorsement	Storytelling
15.	Michelle	5 th	DLT	Oral Rehearsal

Note: NABE = National Association for Bilingual Education; DLT = District Literacy Training;

Seven out of the fifteen participants chose to use the art of storytelling when developing oral language strategies in their classroom. One participant, Nancy, a third grade dual language teacher, discussed how she learned to utilize storytelling before her

ELs began to place their ideas on the page, “I like to see partnerships established so that students can practice oral storytelling to help them gain and organize their thoughts before they begin writing.” Another teacher, Hope a third grade dual language teacher noted, “It is exciting to see the students’ story tell first then write then read what they wrote.” Then Maria, a fourth grade teacher with three active ELs said, “I allow my students to tell the story first to me or to a peer. I like to give them time to gather their thoughts before they have to put them down on the paper.” In a fourth grade dual language classroom, storytelling is the oral language strategy that Bobbie enjoys using the most. She discussed, “I have my EL students practice storytelling together. They can create stories orally together before they have to begin writing.”

Another strategy discussed by the participant teachers was oral rehearsal, which usually consisted of students gathering in a circle to collect their thoughts around a shared experience. Then the students began orally telling the story. English Learners who are still developing their oral language proficiency and literacy skills, can be overwhelmed by sitting and writing in the classroom. Sara used the oral rehearsal activity as a vehicle to oral language development among her ELs because it created an awareness of vocabulary and concepts that they will encounter during writing instruction. She shared her experience with using oral rehearsal, “I use oral rehearsal before my English language learners write. The class stands in a circle and we go around to each person and add something to our shared experience. It is beneficial because they can gather their thoughts and ideas before they get to write or add to their writing.”

Mia, a fourth grade dual language teacher noted,

We sit in a circle during oral rehearsal to talk about a shared experience. We all have to think of a sentence and then add on to each other's thoughts. We can add details, internal thinking, dialogue, and actions. This activity guides my ELs to think and share with others before having to sit and write in isolation.

Another fifth grade dual language teacher at SAS shared her own experience with Oral Rehearsal,

I learned from the Literacy Rollout training that oral rehearsal in writing is an important strategy that my English Language Learners would benefit from.

During the training, we practiced it as adults. We all got into a circle and created a story around a shared experience.

Learning this strategy and trying it out first, made Michelle feel confident when she did it with her students. "My students love it! I try to do this activity at least three times a week with my ELs." In this case study, throughout the interview transcripts it was clear that eleven out of the fifteen teachers at SAS employed oral rehearsal and storytelling as a strategy to develop oral language with their students. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, the 3rd-5th teachers at SAS used their PCK along with their knowledge of employing oral language strategies in order to scaffold their teaching of writing to ELs.

Biliteracy learning. Some of the ELs do not always understand what the teacher is asking them to do during writing, as well as, what they are trying to put down on the paper in a language that is not native to them. However, biliteracy learning during writing was very evident among the culture of the school. Nancy, a third grade dual language teacher, decided that she and her Spanish language partner were going to allow their

students to write in their dominant language. Nancy noted, “We wanted to see if they had the concepts of writing down that we were trying to teach them. It was very successful. I read the English papers and my partner read the Spanish papers.” The students were given their strengths and next steps of their writing in their dominant language.

Sofia, a third grade dual language teacher, also speaks English and Spanish. When asked about the scaffolding strategies she used with her ELs to develop their vocabulary or oral language, she shared that her students struggled with vocabulary when writing. It was important for her to help the students understand the vocabulary words they were using in their writing. To accomplish this, Sofia shared, “I help them to understand what the words mean that they are using in their native language. I try to make connections to their native language.” By supporting students in their dominant language, The EL writers were able to gain an understanding of the words they are using in their writing.

Participants embraced biliteracy opportunities with their students and also encouraged those same opportunities among students and their peers. Danielle, a fourth grade teacher, shared that she had a student in her classroom that wrote in Arabic. She encouraged her to continue writing in Arabic while she was beginning to develop her oral language skills in English. Danielle shared her success with this,

I found a fifth grade girl in the school who was fluent in Arabic and English. She would come to my classroom for part of my writing time. She talked with my student, helped her write first in Arabic, and would read it to me in English.

Towards the end of the school year, my student began to read her writing to me as she began to write in English.

The biliteracy learning that took place in the fourth grade classroom supported the student as they were working in their dominant language and slowly transitioning into the English language.

April, a fourth grade writing teacher, had seven ELs in her classroom. The assistant principal went with her to the NABE (National Association to Bilingual Education) Conference. During some of the sessions, April learned how important it was to teach students in their native language. During her interview she mentioned, “I let my ELs write in their dominant language. I am hoping that this will help support them and allow them to keep up with their peers academically.” She also shared that her grade level partner had some Spanish writers and she read their writing and provided feedback to the children in their dominant language. April said, “I let them write in their dominant language and I talk with them in their native language. I try to help them learn words that are similar in English and Spanish.” April believe that their ELs benefited from biliteracy learning in their classrooms.

Alexa, also shared the importance of her students writing in their dominant language. She noted, “It was important for me that my ELs write and continue to use their academic language in their dominant language. Then I will help them to develop English.” During the interview, it was evident that Alexa wanted her students to thrive by writing in their native language. She shared, “To me, there is a difference between academic language and conversational language. We need to support our students and help them transfer their skills in both languages.” Based on the teachers’ self-reported data, it is evident that the teachers at SAS used the strategy of biliteracy as an effective technique to teach their ELs writing. Nine out of fifteen teachers practiced biliteracy

learning. However, Eight out of the fifteen teachers who practiced biliteracy had expertise in EL learning.

Visuals as a Scaffolding Writing Strategy with ELs. Interviews and LTM meetings revealed that some teachers at SAS utilized visuals as a scaffolding strategy to support their ELs in the classrooms. Participants felt that the exposure to visuals helped their students gain a deeper understanding of their writing. Sofia attributed some of her students' successes with using pictures during her writing lessons. First, she discussed herself as an EL "I'm visual. I have to see pictures." Then she shared how she utilized visuals to help support her students during writing. She continued, "Providing pictures to help them make connections to words, objects, and content is important to me." Sofia believed her students learned new vocabulary words by using visuals as a scaffolding strategy in their writing.

Danielle and Michelle thought that visuals were also important to their ELs. However, they saw visuals as using culturally relevant mentor texts in their classroom. Mentor texts are familiar books that can be used as an example of good writing for students. Students can use the writing and illustrations in these books to improve their own writing. These texts provided visuals that can be lifted and infused into their own writing. Danielle shared, "I like to use the illustrations to help guide their thinking before they write." She continued, "I use mentor texts to give the students a visual to think about before they write."

Danielle and Nancy also identified word walls as an important component to using visuals with your ELs. They believed in using word walls for developing words that the students would begin to internalize and use in their writing. Nancy believed in

creating pictures that were positioned next to each word on her word wall. She shared, “I place pictures with all of the words on my word wall to support vocabulary development in my classroom.”

Like their colleagues, Bobbie and Mia also identified word walls as an important visual to support their students when writing. They too discussed the importance of having a picture drawn next to each word. Mia and Bobbie both shared how the visuals next to the words in the word wall supported and encouraged their students to write better. Bobbie discussed, “My ELs used the pictures to help them understand the words they wanted to use in their writing.” Mia also shared how the pictures next to the words supported her students as they began writing in their writing notebook. Mia noted, “The way my word wall is set up, the students are able to have a picture in their mind of what the word means. This helps support their vocabulary development as they begin to write.” Images drawn next to words on a word wall was the strategic tool that these teachers utilized when while supporting writing instruction with their ELs in their classrooms.

Ana and Laura discussed the benefits of having a picture attached to the words they wanted their students to use in writing. However, Ana shared the importance of giving her students visuals to help support their writing. She also suggested videos as an aid to developing an understanding of the vocabulary words used during their writing time. “They can also look at pictures or videos to help support them before they begin writing.”

The participants of the study discussed the importance of using visuals during their interviews but it was also discussed during a fourth grade Learning Team Meeting. Using interactive word walls was the topic of a discussion between the fourth grade

teachers and the Assistant Principal of the school. During the observation, the researcher captured some of the dialogue as the Assistant Principal was telling the teachers that she wanted the word walls to become interactive, not stagnant. The visual images next to the words should be accessible to students at all times. Then a fourth grade teacher shared, “I have a word wall behind my desk that my students can use when writing.” The Assistant Principal sitting across from the teacher responded, “I need it within reach of the students. It must be interactive and change over time.” This brief conversation during a Learning Team Meeting between an administrator and the fourth grade team showed the importance of all teachers at SAS having a word wall with images as support for students during writing. Visuals at SAS had several different meanings; word walls, mentor texts, and videos were all suggestions that the teachers at SAS utilized their gained PCK in order to teach their ELs how to write well. Based on self-reported and Learning Team Meeting observation data, teachers at SAS utilized visuals

Moreover, the findings indicated that participants perceived oral language, biliteracy, and visuals as effective EL strategies to incorporate into their SAS classrooms. All 15 participants had the content knowledge to identify and describe how they employed the EL strategies during writing. The 3rd-5th grade teachers tailored their writing instruction by incorporating the EL strategies into their daily writing lessons. This approach enabled teachers to differentiate instruction for all students. It would be interesting to conduct classroom observations in order to compare participants’ self-reported data (obtained during interviews) and (discussions during LTMs) with their actual practice.

Research Question 2a and 2b

To address the research questions 2a and 2b, the researcher used the data from interviews and LTM observations. “How do 3rd-5th teachers in one South Florida elementary school collaborate to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6?” and “Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, in what ways does collaboration in LTMs contribute to selected 3rd-5th grade teachers’ PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?” The researcher noted teachers collaborated to demonstrate and contribute to PCK and with respect to the Common Core Anchor Standards in two ways, which constituted the emergent themes to address research question 2a and 2b: 1) Teachers who were partnered as dual language instructors in the classroom demonstrated collaborating to teach writing in their dialogue during LTMs; 2) collaboration concerning the teaching of writing, the adaptation of the CCSS, and the strategies used with ELs extended beyond the grade levels.

The data collection was designed to include five 60-minute Learning Team meeting observations per grade level. The LTMs began at 1:45 and continued to 3:00 for the 2014 school year. The meetings were intended to include time for teachers to work together and look at their student writing data or mock testing data. Then, they either prepared themselves for an upcoming writing unit or for the upcoming state standardized test. During each meeting, the researcher sat in the back of the room and captured notes and dialogue without participating.

Dual Language Partnerships. Learning Team Meetings revealed that eight dual language teachers out of the 15 participants consistently collaborated during all meetings

in third, fourth, and fifth grade. In fifteen out of fifteen 60-minute LTM observations, the researcher captured the dual language teachers collaborating. Table 6 summarizes the coding for the captured collaborative language and actions of the dual language teachers based on the LTM observations.

Table 6

A List of the Codes for Captured Collaborative Language and Actions of the Dual Language Teachers during Observations for the Current Study

Code List from Observations of Captured Collaboration

Discuss student writing together

Making notes together

Spanish/English partner discuss strengths

Spanish/English partner slides book between them

Spanish/English partner teacher sharing

Spanish/English partner put paper between them

Spanish/English partners whispering and pointing at student papers

Spanish/English partners looking at student writing together

Spanish/English partners –note taking on their paper

Spanish/English teacher writing down ideas

Spanish/English partner discuss students

Spanish/English partner discuss which content to teach writing

Spanish/English partner jot ideas on a paper together

Spanish/English partner make chart of strengths and weaknesses

Spanish/English partner look at writing data together

The reading coach facilitated each LTM for SAS. She asked questions such as: “What are your student’s strengths? What strategies did you use? What do you notice?” Dual

language teachers consistently sat next to their partners and consistently worked side-by-side sharing all tasks that were given during the meetings observed by the researcher.

Table 7 summarizes the number of times the dual language teachers collaborated in their LTM.

Table 7

Dual Language Collaboration during Learning Team Meetings

Grade Level	Captured Collaboration Among DL teachers	Captured Collaboration Among Non DL teachers	CCSS 1-6
3 rd Grade	8	2	3
4 th Grade	5	3	3
5 th Grade	10	2	3

This table suggests that although collaboration existed among all the participants in LTMs, clearly the dual language teachers may have illustrated an understanding of the approach to collaboration enhancing their PCK in writing. Table 8 illustrates the codes for the captured collaboration during Learning Team Meetings among dual language teachers and non-dual language teachers.

Table 8

Sample of Captured Collaboration Codes for DL Teachers and Non DL Teachers

Codes for Collaboration Among DL teachers	Codes for Captured Collaboration Among non DL teacher
1-1 grew ideas together	1-1 exchange shared ideas
1-1 helped select a strategy to teach	1-1 exchange shared student strengths
1-1 discussed student writing together	1-1 exchange shared EL strategies
1-1 wrote strengths and next steps	1-6 exchange shared Persuasive Writing idea
1-1 put student writing between them	1-6 exchange shared creating brochures
1-1 looked at student data together	1-7 exchange shared incorporating
1-1 made notes together	writing in content
1-1 discussed strengths found Studies In Spanish and English	1-7 exchange shared idea to write in Social
1-1 shared ideas on incorporating writing in Science and reading	
1-1 shared ideas on writing in content in the Spanish classroom and English classroom	

Table 8 illustrates what constitutes coding for captured collaboration among the teachers at SAS. The researcher coded actions and language from the 3-5 teachers at SAS that signified a collaborative exchange.

Participants in 3rd-5th grade spent two consecutive LTMs on the CCSS that were aligned to their upcoming writing unit. The dual language partnerships relied on each other for PCK learning in writing. For example, during an interview, Hope shared, “My dual language partner was an ELL learner growing up and she helps me with different

strategies to use with my students.” She continued speaking about the collaborative support she received from her partner, “She guides me when I need to reteach something that my students did not get the first time I taught it.” Hope also added, “I love collaborating with my partner!” It is evident through Hope’s words that she is learning through the collaboration of her dual language partner.

Then the researcher observed Hope and her dual language partner in a 3rd grade LTM. The teachers in that meeting were about to begin a unit on poetry. First, the reading coach asked the teachers to look at the Common Core Writing Standards they will be teaching in the unit. Then they were told to look at their student writing and decide what are their strengths and next steps. Immediately, Hope and her dual language partner put their students writing between them. They discussed their students’ writing. If the writing was in Spanish, the Spanish teacher read it to Hope and shared what she noticed as strengths and next steps. She wrote feedback to the student in their dominant language.

In addition to the observational data, Mia shared how her partnership worked best for her during her interview,

I had a student that moved here from Cuba. He only wrote in Spanish. My partner talked with me about how I could help him in my classroom. She would take his writing, read it, and give him feedback in his native language. She would let him walk to her room during writing time if he needed to ask a question of wanted feedback.

Then, the researcher captured their collaborative work in a 4th grade LTM. Mia and her partner were deciding how to teach their opinion writing unit. They began growing ideas together about how they would teach opinion writing (CCAS 1). Mia

shared with her partner, “I will be doing a baseline over the next two days.” Her partner responded by asking, “Do you mean just writing and not teaching?” The collaborative conversation continued, “Yes, give them time to write in their native language. If we teach in to the baseline, we will not know what they can do on their own.” These dual language collaborative discussions in LTMs clearly revealed the effective way dual language teachers collaborated as they demonstrated their PCK with respect to the CCSS standards.

Ana recalled how she collaborated with her partner. “Sharing with my partner is great! I talk with her on how best to group my students or about which writing activity might work best for my kids.” Ana found that working with her English partner was very effective and helped her make decisions about her students’ writing.

During the 5th grade LTM, Ana and her dual language partner were beginning to prepare for their Informational Writing unit (CCAS 2), they were first told to look at the Common Core Standards they would be teaching. Then they were asked to look at their student data. When looking at student data, Ana and her partner immediately began collaborating. Her partner placed their student writing between them. Ana made a T-Chart of strengths and next steps. The other teacher began looking at the student’s paper and whispering to Ana. If the paper was written in Spanish, the Spanish teacher read it and shared her feedback. For example, The Spanish teacher discussed, “He has a very good topic sentence with 3 solid reasons. He needs to add some stronger evidence to support his idea.” Then Ana responded, “I will find a mentor text in English that I can use to help show him how authors use strong evidence to support their reasons in informational writing.” She continued, “Will you confer with him in Spanish to make

sure he understands what we are asking him to revise in his writing?” These partners continued working together on English writing and Spanish writing. With reference to the research question “How do 3rd-5th grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school collaborate to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6?”, it was evident through interviews and observations collected in Learning Team Meetings that dual language partnerships participated in more collaborative dialogue than their non-dual language peers to demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge in writing with respect to the Common Core Anchor Standards 1-6. The dual language teachers at SAS demonstrated PCK through their collaborative discussions of student’s individual writing progress, their knowledge of instructional writing strategies, and their knowledge of CCAS 1-6. The teachers also shared their insights and understandings of the writing abilities of their students in a collaborative effort to meet the needs of their students through their PCK in writing.

Extending Collaboration Beyond the Grade Level Team. Though collaboration was a main component of this research question “How do 3rd-5th teachers in one South Florida elementary school collaborate to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6?” and “Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, in what ways does collaboration in LTMs contribute to selected 3rd-5th grade teachers’ PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?” The interaction among participants at SAS seemed to focus on dual language partnerships. In the LTMs, there was little or no evidence of a connection between the classroom teachers, the EL teacher, and Dual Language Coordinator. Unfortunately, the EL teachers and/or the Dual Language Coordinator were not in

attendance. Seven out of the 15 teachers mentioned the importance of their collaboration with the EL teacher and Dual Language Coordinator. In fact, the EL teacher and Dual Language Coordinator were absent from all 15 observed LTMs. Throughout the LTMs, teachers asked the reading coach if the EL teacher received their data results. Each time the Reading Coach said, “No.”

The principal, who attended a third grade LTM, requested that the team members share strategies that they used with their students who performed well on their writing assessment. The third grade participants did not respond with any EL instructional strategies when teachers were sharing ideas. Having an EL expert in the room would have created a learning experience for the participants. This was a missed opportunity for all participants at SAS.

In addition, when the researcher attended 15 LTMs at SAS, only one third grade meeting and one fifth grade meeting had some collaborative dialogue about EL students. For example, at 2:45, the reading coach said, “Tell me what the strengths of your students are based on your writing assessment.” After a few minutes, one third grade teacher responded, “I have so many Spanish speakers with limited vocabulary. What can I do?” One male teacher briefly shared, “I help them by gesturing and creating visuals with vocabulary words.” The teacher asked if she could see the visuals. “Come by my room after the meeting.” Unfortunately, this conversation ended when the reading coach interrupted and said, “We will continue this next time.” However, the following LTM did not continue or reference this particular conversation.

During another 3rd grade LTM, the reading coach passed out results from a diagnostic test. The reading coach asked, “Look at what your students did well, write it

down, and share what strategies you used.” The teachers began silently looking at their data. After several minutes, one teacher shared, “I have an EL cluster in my second group. That is why my scores were lower than my first group.” The principal, who joined the meeting, responded to the teacher, “Let’s just motivate your students. Be positive with them.”

During one of the 5th grade LTMs, the teachers were looking at their latest testing data. When a male teacher sitting at the end of the conference table mentioned, “I have an EL cluster. That is why my scores were low.” He continued speaking, “Does the EL teacher have my results?” The reading coach responded, “No, not unless you give it to them.” The reading coach added to their conversation, “Use this information to see when you need whole group or small group.” Although there was strong evidence of partnered collaboration, dialogue, and the sharing of writing ideas between grade level teams obtained in interviews and LTMs, collaboration during LTMs between the Dual Language Coordinator, EL teacher, and the classroom teacher was not found during this study.

Grade level teachers were discussed seven times during interviews. For example, Laura shared, “I met weekly with another teacher. We shared different angles to approach writing, completed writing lessons together, and shared different strategies to use with the students. I learned so much and we collaborated constantly.” The 3rd-5th teachers at SAS created opportunities for themselves to build their pedagogical knowledge in writing by reflecting on their practices and collaborating in writing with their grade level colleagues to build a strong network within the school community.

The participants at SAS shared their many learning opportunities that happened through collaboration and how it supported their ELs in the classroom. The reading coach facilitated the development of PCK for the teachers at SAS, including pedagogical representations and instructional strategies, in order to transform content knowledge into pedagogically powerful forms.

In addition, seven out of the 15 LTMs the researcher witnessed collaborative dialogue between the reading coach and the participants. During a 3rd grade LTM, the reading coach pulled a chair up to two female teachers. She asked the teachers to look at their student's writing to find some patterns of strengths in their classroom. The teachers began to read the writing and jot notes on a T chart to illustrate the strengths on one side and next steps on the other side of the chart. The reading coach read a few of the writing papers. After 15 minutes of reading and jotting possible strengths, the reading coach asked, "Now that you have established some strengths of your writers, think about what may be some next steps that you need to teach." That was the last comment in the collaborative dialogue.

The reading coach then takes her chair, wheels it up to another teacher, and asked, "What are you noticing about your students' strengths in their writing?" The teacher responded, "Leads and figurative language." The teacher continued speaking to the coach, "The poetry unit I just taught helped with using figurative language." The reading coach continued the collaborative dialogue by asking, "What are some of your next steps?" The teacher responded, "I am not sure yet. I need to read over my notes." The reading coach moved to another teacher and repeated the same type of collaborative dialogue. This type of coach-teacher collaboration was witnessed in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade

LTM. It was evident that the reading coach can facilitate collaborative dialogue with the teachers about their student writing.

The researcher witnessed another collaborative experience during a 4th grade LTM between the reading coach and the participants. The teachers wanted books for their new informational writing unit. A Spanish teacher inquired, “Do we have enough nonfiction Spanish materials to use for writing?” The reading coach replied, “Let’s all visit the resource room. We can use this time to select the materials you need for your writing unit.” Then upon entering the resource room, the Spanish teachers began pulling out informational books. They took turns reading the book summary. They had a brief discussion in Spanish about the book. Some of the books the teachers kept and others they put back in the book bins.

During a 5th grade LTM, the teachers were looking at their student writing. The reading coach pulled a chair up next to a Spanish teacher. The reading coach whispered, “What are the strengths of your students?” The teacher responded, “They can compare and contrast very well.” The teacher continued, “I used mentor texts and small group instruction to teach them that type of text structure.” The reading coach requested, “Will you share some of your books and small group lessons with the team?” However, the meeting ended before this teacher had a chance to share with the grade level team. This collaborative learning between the reading coach and teachers allowed for a balance between pedagogy that focused on strategies to address student learning and pedagogy that was subject-matter focused.

It was evident that the participants self-reported collaboration among colleagues at SAS and also collaborated in LTMs. However, teachers’ collaboration in LTMs may

have contributed to the 3rd-5th grade teacher's pedagogical content knowledge with respect to the strengths and next steps in their student writing. It may have contributed in which strategies worked best in the teachers' classroom.

Summary

The qualitative case study was conducted to investigate whether selected volunteer teachers in a Title 1 school increased their understanding as they described and used their PCK in writing along with the CCAS 1- 6 and how they collaborated to advance their knowledge in the area of ELs in the classroom by participating in interviews and Learning Team Meetings. By choosing interviews and LTM observations as the instruments to gather data, the triangulation revealed an interesting find within this study. The research design actually fostered a methodological finding. The combination of Interviews and observations gave special insight that the interviews were not primary source of data. Without the two, much of the thick, rich data may have been lost.

The findings indicated that teachers at SAS were beginning to demonstrate their PCK in writing by internalizing and speaking the language of the CCAS 1-6 in writing. The interview responses and LTM observations provided numerous examples of how the participants were speaking the language of the standards. The participants demonstrated their PCK by acknowledging how important the writing standards were for their students that they began to fight for the write to teach writing daily (Research Question 1a). Immediately following, the researcher gathered information about how participants' self-reported using their PCK in teaching writing. Based on the interviews and LTMs, the teachers at SAS used social studies most often as a vehicle to embed the Common Core State Standards through Writing (Research Question 1b). Numerous teachers responded

with their intentions of writing in the content area yet the SAS participants needed more professional development to put this practice in place. Then (Research Question 1c) addressed how teachers gained their knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms. The teachers reported that they employed oral language strategies, biliteracy learning, and visuals as strategic tools to scaffold their ELs. These strategies are indicative of the teachers' knowledge and use of PCK.

During interviews and LTMs, participants were asked about how they collaborated and the researcher observed evidence of collaboration during their LTMs (Research Questions 2a and 2b). The researcher found dual language partnerships indicated that teachers were gaining their PCK in writing and enhancing their EL learning in their classrooms. The researcher found evidence that the dual language participants did collaborate which empowered them to meet the needs of their ELs in the classroom. The findings also suggested that participants in the study utilized opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. The teachers were influenced to infuse oral language strategies, biliteracy learning, and visuals with ELs to develop vocabulary and oral language in writing. Finally, the dual language partnerships consistently collaborated to gain their PCK in writing and attained and enhanced their writing knowledge in order to educate ELs in their classrooms.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The current qualitative case study investigated how elementary teachers in a Title 1 school collaborated in order to gain pedagogical content knowledge in writing. In addition, the study examined the way the teachers reported their collaboration to attain and enhance their writing knowledge in order to educate English learners (ELs) in their classrooms during the 2014 school year. The study was conducted at “South Area School,” (SAS) which, at the time of the data collection, had a large population of ELs. All participants, who were 3rd-5th grade teachers, attended weekly Learning Team Meeting during their school hours. In addition, interviews were conducted with 15 participants and the transcripts from each interview were sent to the interviewees for member checking. In the following chapter, the researcher discusses the findings of the interviews and Learning Team Meeting observations with regard to the research questions posed at the start of the study. Then, based on the findings of the study, the researcher will discuss possible recommendations for future research of this nature. Finally, the researcher will discuss implications as well as the potential contribution of this study.

Discussion

Internalizing their PCK in Writing with CCSS 1-6

In order to address research question 1a, study participants were asked to answer guided interview protocol questions. From the participants’ answers and the researcher’s

LTM observations, the teachers began to demonstrate their PCK by speaking the language of the Common Core. This finding suggests that, prior to this study, the teachers were beginning to internalize the language written in the Common Core as they addressed their PCK in writing. During their interviews, the teachers spent time discussing Standard 1 (opinion writing), Standard 2 (Informational Writing), Standard 3 (Narrative), and Standard 5 (Writing Process).

Only one participant referred to Standard 6, the “Use of technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing,” (CCSS, 2012, 18). A possible explanation for this finding may be that, in the interviews, teachers were discussing the students’ published books that were made by hand. However, in this stance, each classroom had three computers. Perhaps the ratio of students to the number of computers in the classroom played a role in teachers not having the students publish their writing through technology. During LTMs, the CCSS Standard 6 was never discussed or problem-solved with regard to why the teachers and students were not using technology to produce student writing. This issue shows that even though the teachers at SAS were beginning to speak the language of the standards, they need more time to truly understand all of those pertaining to writing. O’Brien and Scharber (2008) claim that in addition to skills and strategies to read, write, speak, and listen, students need to effectively navigate technology to be successful in today’s world. It would be interesting to replicate this study in a non-Title 1 school in order to investigate the use of teachers PCK in writing with the Common Core Anchor Standard 6. This would help indicate if the lack of published writing through technology is common among all schools.

Standard 4 was missing from in the interviews as well as the LTM discussions.

The purpose of Standard 4 is for students to “Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience” (CCSS, 2012, 18). Even though the actual language of Standard 4 was not apparent in any of the SAS conversations, the participants were teaching their students to meet this standard. All 15 participants discussed a form of writing either opinion, informational, or narrative in their classrooms. All 15 participants noted in their interviews or LTM conversations that their students were developing and organizing their writing whether they were creating informational books to teach others about a topic, scripting speeches, writing letters to try to persuade others, or developing memoirs to share personal experiences. In addition, LTMs allowed for teachers to spend quality time reading, searching for strengths, next steps, and providing appropriate feedback to allow students to continuously progress in their writing.

Moreover, the teachers at SAS began to internalize and demonstrate their PCK of writing through their fight for the right to teach writing. This find is interesting as it provides evidence about the nature of collaboration of SAS teachers. Individually, during the interviews, the teachers shared their barriers with the administrator stopping them from teaching writing. They reported being told to needlessly stop teaching writing in order to focus on other content areas that were being tested. Individually, teachers remained silent with administration. However, during LTMs, grade level teams collaboratively spoke up. This latest revelation may foster individual teachers’ courage to speak up and advocate for what they know is good for students.

All 3rd-5th grade teachers who participated in LTMs tried to fight for the right to teach writing by planning to embed writing into other content areas. The LTM

participants were listing their content area writing ideas with the reading coach and principal. The participants at SAS fought to teach students to write daily by writing in the content area of social studies. The participants began to brainstorm and establish goals whereby they could address writing across the curriculum. The teachers at SAS did not yet integrate writing elsewhere. The fact that they talked about it establishes their pedagogical understanding of the importance of this classroom practice. However, as a notable point of interest, they were willing to ‘fight’ for the right to teach writing, and yet they hadn’t integrated it too much. This group of educators is in need of development of higher-level awareness to incorporate writing across the curriculum. This collaborative action for speaking about going beyond the current practice of integrating writing throughout the content areas is in an urgent need of professional development to maintain and sustain this practice into their present curriculum. The teachers seem to have working knowledge of the standards and yet they did not display any real motivation to integrate writing across the curriculum. For the participants to move this type of thinking into practice, the teachers at SAS need more than one LTM to help support this type of thinking. Calkins, et al. (2012) noted that when daily writing instruction is taken and used across the curriculum it deepens a student’s understanding of the discipline. When students get that opportunity, it engages them in that discipline. Interviews and LTM observations made it clear, that the teachers at SAS were beginning to use their knowledge of the CCSS to sustain students in daily writing. A Learning Team Meeting gave teachers time to brainstorm the integration of writing across the curriculum, but did not provide the incentives to build content knowledge that would actually embed it in other content areas.

Shulman (1986) defined pedagogical content knowledge as teachers' interpretations and transformations of subject-matter knowledge in the context of facilitating student learning. He further proposed several key elements of PCK: (1) knowledge of representations of subject matter (content knowledge); (2) understanding of students' conceptions of the subject and the learning and teaching implications that were associated with the specific subject matter; and (3) general pedagogical knowledge (or teaching strategies). The teachers at SAS began what Shulman (1986) referred to as the knowledge base for teaching. By beginning to speak the language of the CCSS participants were demonstrating their: (1) curriculum knowledge; (2) knowledge of educational contexts; and (3) knowledge of the purposes of education (Shulman, 1987). To this notion of pedagogical content knowledge, the teachers at SAS were beginning to demonstrate their knowledge for the standards. As a result, more professional development around the standards along with standard discussions during LTMs may help support the teachers as they continue to teach writing.

Intentions versus Performance

Research question 1b was developed to investigate how participants were using their PCK in writing. Qualitative data analysis from the interviews and observations revealed that participants at SAS were using their PCK in writing by using Social Studies as a viable content area to embed writing. The grade level discussions during LTMs were indicative of the participants' intentions of writing across other content areas to deepen subject area learning. However, the participants explained their intention to write across other disciplines and yet these actions were not yet practiced in the classrooms.

Further, the participants discussed their knowledge of writing and the incorporation of the CCSS by teaching their students to write in the content area of social studies. The teachers at SAS felt challenged to foster independent and critical writers by setting goals to implement writing during other content areas, in addition to the writing block. This was an interesting finding. The teachers explored the notion of writing in social studies. During one LTM meeting, the participants examined the idea of writing during other content areas. This raises the question as to why the participants began infusing writing into social studies. Perhaps social studies was the vehicle for writing in the content area because the interviewed participants taught reading and writing. Calkins, et al. (2012) noted that writing instruction must be taught by every teacher through all disciplines in the classroom. Writing is expected to be intertwined through math, science, social studies, and reading.

This finding proposes that the administration at SAS provide future professional development to support the teachers with the integration of writing throughout all content areas, not just social studies. Weekly LTMs could become professional development meetings with a long-term plan for improving both teaching practices and extending teachers' current subject knowledge in order to more adequately prepare the 3rd-5th grade teachers to be effective classroom writing instructors. Throughout the professional development opportunities, teachers can create communities of learners. Those communities allow members to share, reflect, and learn from one another. The exchange of ideas, and the revolving roles of those in the group from expert to learner, may help teachers reflect on their own practice. This could lead to improvements in their classroom with the manner in which they create learning opportunities while they engage their

students. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) affirmed that in order for teachers to learn to teach in new ways, they must participate in professional development that is participant-driven with opportunities for collective and shared knowledge. Teachers at SAS can become reflective on their teaching and learn to infuse writing into their content areas in new ways through professional development experiences. Learning from others, applying new writing ideas, and implementing best practices in writing can lead to continual development.

Evidences of EL Learning at SAS

Research question 1c explored how participants used their PCK in writing concerning teaching ELs in the classroom. Participants reported that they had gained PCK with respect to how they teach ELs in their classrooms. First, the guided interview questions (4, 5, and 6) asked participants to express how they advanced their knowledge in writing to teach ELs. It also asked participants to consider which useful strategies they implemented. Finally, they had to identify which scaffolding strategies they used with ELs to develop their vocabulary and oral language. After conducting open coding (Appendix F), the researcher explored units of data including specific words, phrases, and sentences that were relevant to the study. From the analysis, themes emerged across the data based on the 3rd-5th grade SAS participants' responses. The strategies participants discussed were embedding oral language strategies into their writing routines, biliteracy learning, and visuals as a scaffolding strategy for vocabulary development. Additional research is needed on the impact of biliteracy instruction with respect to writing for the ELs.

Qualitative data findings revealed that participants implemented EL strategies in various ways. The teachers at SAS chose to incorporate storytelling in their writing lessons. Others decided to begin their writing lesson with oral rehearsal. Some participants, especially the dual language teachers, selected to have students learn and write in their dominant language while most teachers at SAS added visuals to guide their decision making around their vocabulary words, word walls, and concepts they wanted their ELs to understand. These strategies were implemented in the 3rd-5th grade classrooms to meet the writing needs of the diverse learners. The teachers at SAS consistently implanted oral language, biliteracy, and visuals as a way to scaffold their ELs during the subject of writing.

For this study, the teachers' importance of multiple oral strategies was a critical finding. It seems, with respect to the teaching of writing, that we don't always associate this with oral learning. Oral strategies reshaped the teacher's understanding of what a classroom looks like. The use of the EL strategies is an example of PCK. Instead of traditional language instruction, which is usually based on drill and practice of decontextualized skills, the teacher's incorporation of oral language, biliteracy, and visuals were effective in increasing students' writing skills. Having the opportunity to speak in their dominant language and utilizing visuals eased the tension and encouraged experimentation with the new language. These strategies facilitated the promotion of oral language proficiency as well as writing skills. Pedagogical Content Knowledge emerged in the form of these three sets of strategies and according to Shulman (1986, 1987), content knowledge includes being aware of the frameworks of a subject and how new knowledge is generated in that subject.

Because of the strategies utilized for the ELs at SAS, it was clear that the teachers had an understanding of what instructional methods should be used to teach writing to their ELs. In this qualitative case study, teachers' content, pedagogical, and curricular knowledge may have influenced the nature of students' oral and written work. The teachers used visuals, biliteracy, and oral language strategies to teach students how to effectively communicate while writing.

The participants in this study were already using a variety of EL instructional strategies. Due to the large population of ELs at SAS, it is necessary for teachers to incorporate strategies into their daily writing instruction. However, specific bilingual strategies such as code-switching, lexical borrowing, and bidirectional transfer (phonetic, syntactic, semantic, and rhetorical structure) are viewed as markers of low language proficiency in both languages. These specific biliteracy writing strategies were never discussed through interviews or LTMs. Perhaps the teachers at SAS need more professional development opportunities that include explicit naming of bilingual strategies so that teachers can label them, discuss them, and use them with students. Though it was not considered in the current study, a follow-up study might compare teachers' reported use of EL instructional strategies in the Title 1 School and compare it to the EL strategies reported in non-Title 1 schools. It also might be useful to investigate whether teachers' prior experience in the dual language program and teaching ELs affects their ability to identify biliteracy teaching strategies compared to schools that do not have a dual language program.

A Deeper Analysis of Research Questions 1a, 1b, and 1c

A deeper analysis of research questions 1a, 1b, and 1c are necessary to truly understand this case study. First, the researcher was searching for the ways in which teachers were demonstrating their PCK in writing with respect to the CCSS. It was important to this study to understand the teacher's PCK and how they demonstrated their communication of knowledge to the learners. This question clarified how teachers are not only required to obtain subject matter, but how they demonstrated the transfer of the subject matter knowledge of writing to the students. It was additionally important that they expressed a working knowledge of the Common Core Anchor Standards 1-6. Through the qualitative data analysis, it was clear that the participants began to speak the language of the Common Core. However, it was not evident that the participants collaborated in grades 3-5 to incorporate the writing standards into their classroom curriculum.

Second, the researcher investigated how the participants were then using their PCK concerning teaching writing. This was important to the case study because the researcher was seeking to recognize how the teachers at SAS used their attained content knowledge with teaching writing with 3rd-5th grade students. The investigation into question 1b revealed that the teachers at SAS were able to extend their PCK and transfer their knowledge of teaching writing to support their students with writing across the content area to learn social studies. The participants intended to use the act of writing to address the Common Core Anchor Standards in other content areas. Consequently, this study found that the participants were just beginning to use their PCK to deepen their students understanding of writing and content.

The final component, question (1c), was based on how the participants used their PCK to teach the ELs in their classrooms. The researcher explored how participants used their PCK in order to teach ELs within the subject of writing. Biliteracy learning, oral language strategies and visuals played a key role in how the participants at SAS used their PCK in writing to scaffold and support their ELs when they were engaged in writing. This type of knowledge included pedagogical representations as well as instructional strategies that were appropriate for the students' learning level in order to actualize how these three questions were employed. Table 9 shows the importance of the questions and how they connect yet needed to be separated.

Table 9

Distinctions Between Questions 1a, 1b, 1c

RQ	What	How
1a	Demonstrate	The Way Participants describe their PCK Speaking the CCSS Knowing the importance of writing
1b	Use	Incorporating CCSS Social Studies as a vehicle for writing Attempting to write in other content
1c	Use with ELs	PCK in writing with ELs Biliteracy Learning Oral language strategies Scaffold vocabulary with visuals

This table illustrates the way participants self-report the way(s) in which they demonstrate their PCK and writing with respect to the CCSS 1-6. It then illustrates how

the teachers used their PCK and incorporated the CCSS into writing. In addition, question 1c adds how the participants used their PCK in writing to support their ELs in the classroom.

An interesting finding occurred between research question 1b and 1c. In 1b, it refers to all students which is parallel to research question 1c being focused on only the ELs in grades 3-5. The emergent categories for 1c are strategies, which participants did not discuss in research question 1b. When referring to all students, the participants at SAS discussed how they taught writing through the content area of social studies with the intentions of writing across other content areas. When the administrators at the school tried to stop the participants from teaching writing in order to focus on test-taking strategies, this seemed to guide the teachers in the direction of embedding writing throughout all content areas. The intention, as well as implementation, was to share how they tied their informational and opinion-based writing through the content area of social studies.

Conversely, the data led me in two different directions within this case study between question 1b and 1c. The teachers at SAS never communicated their strategies during writing until they began to discuss their ELs in the classroom. Unlike research question 1b, research question 1c is not just about ELs, but also about collaboration. At SAS these emergent strategies were a reflection of collaboration through their LTM meetings. The reading coach specifically asked the teachers to look at the strengths in their data and share the strategies they were using to teach the students writing. Also during LTMs, a few of the discussions led to which strategies could be utilized to support the ELs in their classroom. Ten out of the 15 teachers at SAS either attended NABE or

the District Literacy Training. During interviews, eight out of the 15 teachers who shared their strategies for ELs came from either NABE or the district writing training that taught the participants at SAS to utilize oral language strategies during writing. Many of the same participants discussed how they experienced those strategies during their trainings. Dewey's (1938) work discussed the importance of educators not only comprehending the subject matter for themselves, but also providing educative experiences for the learners. This seemed to be the case for all of the participants in this study. The evidence shows that the participants' educative and collaborative experience through the trainings they attended with oral language strategies led to better-equipped teachers who successfully immersed their ELs in oral language strategies. Further, an educators' experience can enhance subject matter knowledge (Shulman, 1987) when providing collaborative inquiry practiced through professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Collaboration throughout SAS

Research question 2a and 2b were concerning how participants collaborated when demonstrating their PCK in writing with respect to the CCSS 1-6. Then examined the ways does collaboration in LTMs contributed to selected 3rd -5th grade teachers' PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6. During LTMs, the reading coach facilitated all meetings that the researcher attended. In six out of the 15 observations, the reading coach asked the teachers in 3rd-5th grade to look at their goals and standards they would be teaching. In all 15 observations, teachers were beginning to speak some of the Common Core language, but they never discussed each standard as a group. The participants were never directed to look at the vocabulary words in the standards, discuss the specifics of what the standard was asking students to know, and be

able to accomplish at the end of the grade level. However, when grade levels began collaborative dialogue, it was about the students writing, students' strengths, next steps, and strategies used in the classroom that worked well, as well as writing in the content areas. During the 15 LTMS the participants never intentionally discussed standards directly. In some cases, it may not be necessary to discuss the standards as long as they discuss the students work associated with it.

During several LTMs, collaboration was sequestered by administration. Two LTMs per grade level had the principal join the participants. During those visits, the researcher noted that collaboration did not happen. The principal offered the majority of the conversation and the captured dialogue was more of directives than facilitating collaboration among the teachers. However, when LTMs were controlled by an authority figure, collaboration regarding PCK and practice was less likely to occur. In fact, when an authority figure entered, collaboration among the teachers ceased. The principal was not empowering to, or connecting with, the teachers, discussions and their desired purpose for the LTMs. For future lessons, it is important for the principal to consider meaningful, collaborative dialogue with their teachers. This helps to keep best practices for teachers and students a primary concern. Unfortunately, standardized testing and test preparation was the only interaction between the principal and the teachers during LTMs.

Moreover, collaboration among the participants at SAS revealed that teachers participating together in LTMs were building their confidence in working with ELs. There was courage in unity relative to the pressure from the school administration around the teaching of writing. This leads to a tertiary benefit of LTMs, study groups, and teacher collaboration. According to Fullan (1993), personal strength goes hand-in-hand

with effective collaboration. Together, the teachers at SAS were, in fact, displaying personal strength in their collaboration when engaged in conversations with the school administrator in order to continue teaching writing.

The grade level teachers did not collaborate as effectively as the dual language teachers. Through interviews, the dual language partnerships supported, reflected, and guided each other towards educating their students. It was clear that they supported each other. They prepared their lessons, analyzed student work, and collectively reflected to create the next steps. These partnerships complimented each other as they planned, prepared, and collaborated during LTMs. This type of collaborative experience was not evident among the grade level teachers. The dual language partners consistently placed their students' work between each other as they reflected on their strengths and projected next steps in the students' dominant language. Discussions occurred between the partners with regard to how to support the writing in both languages.

There were many missed opportunities between EL specialists, the Dual Language Coordinator, and the classroom teachers. Many participants were silent when asked to share EL strategies. The reading coach, as an LTM facilitator, did not understand the literacy development among all learners during the LTMs. More EL specialist expertise is necessary to support the 3rd-5th grade teachers. A future study should seek information as to how the EL specialist were perceived by the teachers at SAS in order to discover who is responsible for making the decision to go forward without having an EL specialist supporting the teachers at SAS. This lack of presence may hinder successful EL instruction in the classroom.

Also, several teachers offered excuses for their EL students as to why their scores were lower than other classrooms. It seemed that many teachers felt the need to excuse low scores in this way and that this type of dialogue was acceptable. Hopefully, this study increases awareness of the fact that these are not acceptable excuses. The collaborative practice in LTMs with expertise in the room regarding ELs might, in fact, help ELs succeed in order to be on par with their peers. The attitude of some of the participants towards their EL learners in the classroom was unacceptable. Such an attitude can be very detrimental to bilingual students' development and growth. The dual language teachers recognized that their students needed to write in their native language, allowing their ELs time to develop academic language in English. Professional Development for the teachers at SAS should include the principal and teachers learning side-by-side studying topics such as attitudes and perceptions towards ELs, second language development, and strategies to utilize when working with emergent language learners.

Lessons Learned through the Implementation of Biliteracy Learning

The qualitative data revealed that participants gained writing PCK in various ways. Some teachers chose to speak the language of the Common Core while others chose to fight the right to teach writing on a daily basis. Evidence shows that performance improves when students and teachers write more often. According to several writing researchers (Atwell, 2002; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Routman, 2005), immersing students into daily successful writing experiences will better prepare them to effectively write and they will continue to strengthen. The participants knew this as they were searching for ways to expand their use by writing in social studies, while others brainstormed ways to incorporate writing in all content areas. The wide range of attempts

towards writing across the content areas revealed the need to build participant writing pedagogy across the curriculum. The participants at SAS are beginning to demonstrate how writing can be modified to meet the needs of diverse students, including ELs. Participants recognized the need to alter their methods depending on their students' prior knowledge and understanding of the language. Writing in Laura's fifth grade classroom, which she described as gifted, would probably differ from Hope's third grade classroom where 12 out of her 18 students were ELs. These findings are important in that the participants at SAS employed writing techniques that enabled them to differentiate instruction for all students. It would be interesting to conduct classroom observations in order to compare participants' self-reported data (obtained during interviews and Learning Team Meetings) with their actual classroom practice.

The Learning Team members explored students' strengths and next steps in writing. They reflected on the most effective strategies. During the LTMs, participants planned and reflected on their students' data as well as their classroom experiences. Interviews and LTM observations revealed that collaboration among the dual language partnerships exposed the benefits that enabled them to implement the biliteracy approach with enthusiastic confidence.

Drawing on the Expertise of the Spanish Teacher

Biliteracy learning leaned towards the most frequently used strategy at SAS. This was an interesting finding because the English writing teachers relied heavily on their Spanish partners to support the ELs in their dominant language. A possible explanation for this outcome is that some of the participants were teaching in the dual language program, as is often the case with dual language teachers; many were fluent speakers of

both English and Spanish. In order for students to benefit from biliteracy learning, a certain degree of native language literacy is required from the participants. It would be interesting to investigate ELs participating in biliteracy learning in order to compare their experiences with EL students in elementary schools that have limited or no access to native language literacy instruction. According to Soltero-Gonza'lez et al. (2012), educators who address the students' writing needs through two-language instruction enhance their instruction through the explicit teaching of biliteracy strategies to make cross-language connections. At SAS, especially the Dual Language Program, participants were clearly supporting the students to make the cross-language connections through their writing instruction. Biliteracy learning was an important component to the writing curriculum. Soltero-Gonza'lez et al. (2012) found that if teachers have deficit notions about bilingual strategies then their instruction may be less than effective. While biliteracy learning was frequently in use at SAS, the teachers in the current study also reported using other EL strategies that include visuals, storytelling, or oral rehearsal to scaffold the ELs oral language and vocabulary development. It would be interesting to replicate the current study with Title 1 teachers in other parts of the United States in order to investigate which strategies were commonplace in the classrooms nationwide.

The participants explained the importance of the Spanish teachers at SAS. Hope described how she drew from her dual language partner when she needed guidance in her classroom with her ELs during writing. "I always collaborate with my DL partner. She is an ELL learner and she helps me with different strategies to use to help the students. She tells me to be patient. She guides me when I need to reteach something that my students

did not get the first time I taught it.” Then, Alexa explained the support she gives and receives from the Spanish teachers.

My grade level and I are constantly working together to help each other. Our Spanish teachers answer our questions, read or support our students in their dominant language. Just like I help to support them on English writing skills and ideas. We constantly connect, share ideas, share strategies that help the students in their dominant language. There is a difference between academic language and conversational language. We need to support our students and help them transfer their skills in both languages.

The evidence is clear that students and educators can attain PCK in writing during collaborative experiences as they draw on the expertise of the Spanish teachers. This helps to support the diverse learners in their classrooms. When dual language teachers were asked about a collaborative experience, all of them shared that their dual language partner was their supportive collaborative person. During all LTMs where collaboration was evident and noted by the researcher; one set of dual language partners in 3rd-5th grade sat side-by-side and conversed to share their knowledge of writing while supporting ELs. This important finding among the dual language participants also revealed that they discussed their experiences using differentiating instruction within biliteracy, as well as oral language learning in writing, with students of varying academic abilities and levels of language proficiency. This is fascinating in that the actual structure of the one-to-one teacher assignments enabled that to take place. The dual language teachers shared students, had adjoining classrooms, and needed to collaborate on a daily basis for their

writing lessons to be successful. The larger grade level teams did not have this type of a relationship with each other.

According to Christine Sleeter (2005), teachers have an opportunity to take the needs and diverse knowledge base of their students into consideration when they plan for writing lessons. This is particularly critical as the public school student body becomes increasingly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. It was apparent that the teachers at SAS did take their students into consideration when planning their biliteracy instruction. Further, Cummins (2001) would agree that teachers' knowledge for ELs is encoded in their home languages. The teachers at SAS did explicitly teach writing in a way that fostered the transfer of concepts and skills in that particular content area from the student's home language to English. The findings in this study clearly show the potential for this kind of cross-language transfer in school contexts that support biliteracy development.

Implications

Though the results of this study cannot be generalized, initial findings support the researcher's assumption that teachers at SAS scaffold and support their ELs during the subject matter of writing. Data analysis revealed that participants identified three specific EL instructional strategies embedded in their writing lessons. Not only did teachers indicate that many strategies were an inherent part of their professional development, they also noted that they relied on the expertise of their Spanish dual language partner for the implementation of writing in the students' dominant language.

One of the most important findings was the relationship between the dual language teachers. Through interviews and LTM observations, it was clear that they took

ownership with the subject matter of writing with ease whereas other instructional approaches require the dual language teachers to consciously plan for strategy implementation throughout their writing lessons. By design, the dual language partnerships appeared to address the complex needs of ELs who are challenged to learn concurrent language and academic writing content. The findings of this study illuminate the potential benefits offered through biliteracy learning through the dual language partnerships. The benefits warrant additional research to further investigate how similar approaches that incorporate writing, academic content and collaborative techniques can be transferred to all teachers. The collaborative nature of the dual language partnerships illuminates the importance of studying this type of collaborative teaching with other demographics.

The current qualitative case study also has important implications for the design of professional development and school-based LTMs. During much of the professional development offered by school districts, teachers are introduced to new approaches and materials in one session while being expected to return to their classroom and immediately apply what they have learned often with little or no follow-up support. The LTM model included in this study featured participant collaboration and analysis of student writing. What was lacking in the LTMs was expert professional development or collaborative lesson. A future study might investigate the role of prior knowledge by comparing the impact of the professional development experience among the teachers who were actively participating in the LTM compared with those who were not members of the LTM.

There are implications of this study for school leadership and administrators that

focus on high stakes testing. During many LTMs, the principal steered teachers away from the discussion of writing, choosing to shift toward reading and test preparation. Professional development for school leaders should be related to the importance of writing in the curriculum. According to Fullan (1993), school districts need to push and support principals to develop interactive professionalism. Fullan (1993) claimed that professional learning must occur for every teacher and principal and that such learning cannot happen unless the administrator engages jointly in the efforts.

Another finding of this study was the participants' connections to the Common Core State Anchor Standards 1-6. Interview participants were all intermediate elementary teachers (3rd-5th grades) who were in the process of implementing the CCSS in writing. Participants at SAS were beginning full implementation of the addressed CCSS writing practices and strategies. Interviews revealed that teachers were starting to incorporate various aspects of the Common Core Writing Standards 1-6. It was clear that the participants at SAS were scaffolding their ELs when teaching the writing Anchor Standards. Sleeter (2005) noted that teachers have an opportunity to evaluate how they are taking the needs and diverse knowledge base of their students into consideration when they plan. This is particularly critical information as the participants at SAS, and in other parts of the country, become increasingly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. As the majority of the country adapts to the rigors and shifts in instructional and assessment practices that are associated with the Common Core Writing Standards, it would be beneficial to further investigate how teachers in other regions are demonstrating use of the Common Core Anchor Standards 1-6 in writing. More specifically, how they are acquiring PCK and transferring their subject matter knowledge

to support the ELs in their classroom.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Due to the growing need and exploratory nature of the current case study, there needs to be further research investigating the benefits of writing for teaching ELs. The design of the study had several limitations. Initially, the case study took place in one title 1 elementary school in southeastern Florida and the sample size was limited to a maximum of 48 participants with only 15 teachers who agreed to participate in the interviews. This relatively small sample size limits the generalizability and scope of the findings. In addition, the qualitative data collection was reliant upon interviews and observation notes. For this study, the researcher interviewed and observed teachers at SAS; however, certain aspects of this study easily could be replicated at other locations throughout the county. Though the current study had limitations, the researcher's preliminary findings indicated that it might be beneficial to replicate aspects of this study with a larger population.

The design of the case study revealed insights about the teaching of writing to ELs that may not have been evident from just one data source. The combination of the interviews and observations added a perspective to the research questions. The researcher may lose many of their insights if one of these sources was missing from the data collection. This triangulation made it a more reliable study. However, this study would be even more reliable had the researcher observed in the participants classrooms. Adding classroom observation would be a recommendation for future research.

Moreover, a future study should include the researcher not only interviewing but also collecting these kinds of observation notes in classrooms and LTMs as a means of

improving pedagogical content knowledge, as well as teacher collaboration. Allowing teachers to view, reflect, and then discuss the observational notes may improve the quality of teacher discourse in terms of pedagogy and planning curriculum for ELs. According to Darling-Hammond (2010), when teachers are given these types of collaborative opportunities routinely, administrators will encounter well-prepared teachers, who are working in concert around a thoughtful, high-quality curriculum.

The researcher believed that specific EL instructional strategies, such as oral language, biliteracy learning, and visuals were prominent within the approach to writing. These beliefs were affirmed by participants' responses but some unexpected findings also occurred when there was no consideration to the power of the dual language partnerships. In addition, data analysis revealed that research is needed to present a clear analysis of participants' understanding of each CCAS 1- 6 in writing. It is necessary to consider the nature of each participant's understanding of the Common Core Anchor Standards and writing. Especially with respect to how it impacted his or her ability to self-report their attained PCK in writing and ELs. It might be necessary to reconsider the design of the instruments, particularly the interview protocol. The discrepancy between the reported collaboration among participant's interview responses and the witnessed collaboration emphasized during the LTMs suggests a possible misunderstanding.

It is also possible that participants did not comprehend what the researcher intended when asked about their collaborative activities. Perhaps it is also a lesson learned for other schools in that all EL specialists of a school must be present at LTMs during collaborate activities. Teachers listed the Dual Language Coordinator and ESOL teacher as those people that they leaned on to learn and collaborate within the school

setting. However, in all 15 LTM observations, these pertinent members of the school culture were never present during the researcher's observations. These missed opportunities to collaborate were evident as not one teacher, reading coach, or principal used that time to engage in a collaborative discussion on how to scaffold and support the EL students in the classroom.

The CCSS want educators to share the writing responsibilities among all educators in the school.

Unfortunately, the LTMs at SAS never utilized the resource specialists to enhance the collaborative bilingual learning within the school. The Reading coach or participants never revealed why these EL specialists were not included in their LTMs. Future studies should seek answers to the importance of this kind of collaboration. According to Dewey (1938), we do not always learn from experience but we learn when reflecting on our experiences. This time of reflection and collaboration was needed during LTMs between the classroom teachers and the EL specialists.

Conclusions

During interviews and LTM observations, the teachers indicated that dual language collaboration positively affected writing achievement and helped to promote a deeper understanding of biliteracy learning. Cummins (1981) stated that students need to acquire content knowledge in their first language in order to keep on grade level while learning English. Their academic content knowledge transfers to their second language. Teachers at SAS reported that their students were excited to write in their dominant language and the ELs became more actively engaged during some of their oral language lessons. This current study focused on the 3rd - 5th grade teachers, their PCK in writing and how they taught ELs. The participants approach to supporting ELs in writing at SAS

was extremely beneficial as it engaged the students in educative experiences. The dual language partnerships were engaged in those experiences during LTM that promoted collaborative inquiry. Darling-Hammond (2010) claimed that educators must practice collaborative inquiry through professional development. This consistent practice among the dual language partnerships enhanced their desire to effectively implement strategies to scaffold and support their ELs to successfully write in their dominant language.

Conversely, perceptions revealed throughout interview and LTM observations suggest a need for additional research. It might also be important to consider what specific elements of the CCSS approach led to positive student reactions and results. Biliteracy learning is effective because of its design at SAS; with oral language infused with visuals. It is also important to note that dual language partnerships enjoyed the opportunities to collaborate with each other as well as the chance to allow ELs to write in their dominant language. The students at SAS enjoyed and engaged in writing activities such as oral rehearsal and storytelling because they are out of their seats and actively engaged. This type of activity gave the students extra time to gather their thoughts before they put the printed words on the page. SAS Elementary demographics, which included a large population of ELs, made it an ideal location to discover and explore the potential benefits of their dual language program.

The study offers policymakers opportunities to benefit from engaging in professional dialogue, trying new curricula, and implementing innovative EL strategies that provide collegial feedback to colleagues. The participants in this study also believed that writing was important as a means of self-growth, as a way to learn and as a way to participate in a social world and not just as a set of skills to be demonstrated on a test.

The researcher further recommends that schools and districts look to policy changes that include opportunities for collaborative professional development to be part of the school culture (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). This will help to reduce isolation of teacher learning, support an environment of professional trust, and encourage teachers as learners. When we discourage students from writing, either by teaching them poorly or by reducing instruction time, we rob them of one of the best tools they will ever have for making sense of their education and of their lives. Today's writing efforts, such as the CCSS, emphasize both preventing writing difficulties and maximizing all students' opportunities to learn.

There is a need to guide teachers to provide sustained writing instruction in schools. At the policy level, whether state or district, the findings display a need for a conversation about creating collaborative partnerships among teachers to provide biliteracy learning opportunities for students. Training needs to be diversified to allow teachers to be more effective and support students in their dominant language as they begin to transfer the academic language into their new learning. Future studies should explore the skills that best support the teachers of writing and focus on the use of this information to develop new generations of writing teachers who are able to effectively collaborate to meet the expectations of educating all diverse learners.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Institutional Research Board Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board

Mailing Address:
Division of Research
777 Glades Rd., Bldg. 80, Rm. 106
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Tel: 561.297.0777 Fax: 561.297.2573

<http://www.fau.edu/research/researchint>

Michael Whitehurst, Ed.D., Chair

DATE: December 4, 2013

TO: Gail Burnaford, Ph.D.
FROM: Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB

IRBNET ID #: 527772-2
PROTOCOL TITLE: [527772-2] Writing, elementary teachers, and english language learners:
A case study of teacher reported pedagogical content knowledge and collaborative inquiry

PROJECT TYPE: New Project
ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: December 4, 2013
EXPIRATION DATE: December 3, 2014

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # B7

Thank you for your submission of Response/Follow-Up materials for this research study. The Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB has APPROVED your New Project. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

- This study is approved for a maximum of **20** subjects.
- It is important that you use the approved, stamped consent documents or procedures included with this letter.
- ****Please note that any revision to previously approved materials or procedures, including modifications to numbers of subjects, must be approved by the IRB before it is initiated.** Please use the amendment form to request IRB approval of a proposed revision.
- All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All regulatory and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed, if applicable.
- Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.
- Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.
- **This approval is valid for one year.** A Continuing Review form will be required prior to the expiration date if this project will continue beyond one year.

If you have any questions or comments about this correspondence, please contact Elisa Gaucher at:

Appendix B

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

1) Title of Research Study: Writing, Elementary Teachers, and English Language Learners: A Case Study of Teacher Reported Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Collaborative Inquiry in a Title 1 School

2) Investigator: Principal investigator is Dr. Gail Burnaford

3) Purpose: The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand how elementary teachers report their own pedagogical content knowledge in writing at a Title 1 elementary school. In addition, the researcher will investigate how PCK affects the way they collaborate with each other and then immerse second language learners in successful writing experiences from the perspective of those same teachers.

4) Procedures: As a participant, you are asked to respond to questions about your pedagogical content knowledge in writing and your collaborative experiences. This interview is part of a research project and will last for 30 minutes. All collected information will be confidential and a pseudonym will be given to keep all data confidential. With your consent (below), the interview will be audio taped. If consent is given to audiotape, the interviews will be conducted without typing.

5) Risks: The risks involved with participation in this study are no more than one would experience in regular daily activities.

6) Benefits: Potential benefits that subjects may attain from participation in this research study include the satisfaction of knowing that they have contributed to a better understanding of how educators to collaborate to enhance their PCK in writing and how this may affect the instruction of ELs.

7) Data Collection & Storage: All of the results will be kept confidential and secure and only the people working with the study will see your data, unless required by law. The interview data will be kept for 1 year in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office and then destroyed.

Subject's Initials: _____

Investigator's Initials: _____

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Interview Time: _____

Interview Date: _____

Interviewee: _____

Position of Interviewee: _____

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to this interview and allowing me to audiotape it for later review. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand how elementary teachers report their own pedagogical content knowledge in writing at a Title 1 elementary school. In addition, the researcher will investigate how PCK affects the way they collaborate with each other and then immerse second language learners in successful writing experiences from the perspective of those same teachers. This interview is part of a research project and will last for 30 minutes. All collected information will be confidential and a pseudonym will be given to keep all data confidential.

(Prompts...tell me more..."Can you elaborate on that ...", " Why do you think...",

"Why did you state..."

1. Tell me about the writing classes/trainings you attended, since you began teaching.
2. Have you received training either formal or informal to assist you in developing your knowledge of writing with all of your students? Can you give me a specific example?
3. Describe a writing lesson that students responded to in your classroom and how did you develop the lesson?

4. Briefly explain what you do to advance your knowledge about writing to English language learners?
5. In your opinion, what are some of the most useful strategies you have learned from any conference or training on teaching writing to English language learners?
6. What scaffolding strategies do you use with ELs to develop vocabulary and oral language in writing?
7. When you reflect, can you describe to me how you reflected outside of your grade level or outside of school?
8. Describe the challenges or barriers you have encountered when teaching writing.
9. Recall a time you collaborated with a colleague and it enhanced or changed the way you taught writing to an English language learner in your classroom.

Closing

“Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you. I appreciate you taking the time to help me with my research study.”

.

Appendix D

Observation Templates

The observations will be conducted within a 60-minute time interval. The time will be noted when changing viewing (moving from teacher to teacher conversation) or to mark specific areas of observation. A diagram of the setting will be included. I will separate out any personal thoughts on the material being observed

Observation Time: _____

Observation Date: _____

Grade Level: _____

Teacher Number: _____

Observed fact with time stamp	Running Thoughts

Setting Diagram	

Appendix E

Data Collection Summary

Teacher Interviews:

Grade 3

1. 2/27/14 5:00-5:30
2. 3/4/14 3:30-4:00
3. 3/7/14 2:30-3:00
4. 3/11/14 4:00-4:30
5. 3/11/14 2:15-2:45

Grade 4

1. 3/10/14 11:30-12:00
2. 3/10/14 2:30-3:00
3. 3/10/14 3:30-4:00
4. 3/13/14 2:15-2:45
5. 3/13/14 3:30-4:00

Grade 5

1. 2/20/14 3:00-3:30
2. 3/3/14 7:00-7:30
3. 3/7/14 11:30-12:00
4. 3/14/14 1:30-2:00
5. 3/18/14 2:30-3:00

Document Summary Forms:

3/5/14 Retrieved the English Language Arts Standards for Writing (CCSS Writing)

3/7/14 Retrieved School District Writing Units for 3rd-5th grade

Grade 3

Poetry: Writing, Thinking, and Seeing More

Grade 4

Test-Taking Grade 4 Writing Unit of Study

Grade 5

Fantasy, Writing Unit Grade 5

Observations:

Grade 3 Learning Team Meetings

1. 2/11/14 1:45-2:45
2. 2/25/14 1:45-2:45
3. 3/4/14 1:50-2:50
4. 3/25/14 2:00-3:00
5. 4/1/14 1:45-2:45

Grade 4 Learning Team Meetings

1. 2/12/14 1:45-2:45
2. 2/26/14 1:45-2:45
3. 3/5/14 1:45-2:45

4. 3/26/14 1:45-2:45

5. 4/2/14 1:45-2:45

Grade 5 Learning Team Meetings

1. 2/13/14 1:45-2:45

2. 2/27/14 1:45-2:45

3. 3/4/14 1:45-2:45

4. 3/27/14 1:45-2:45

5. 4/3/14 1:45-2:45

Now, I have reviewed my methodology/design. I began open coding on the interview transcripts, observations, and on my document summary form.

My codes were analyzed to discover similar patterns across the data, which served as a foundation for clustering. I would like to review my open coding and clustering with you before I continue with my data analysis and begin writing chapter 4 and 5.

Appendix F

Sample Open Coding

Interview Response	Open Coding
<p>Yes! People have come into my classroom. The reading coach came in and modeled writing lessons. Because I teach writing twice to two different groups, I was able to try that same lesson out with my second group. Oh...and we had another district person come in and she met with us as a grade level team. Then we would go into our classrooms.... like a learning walk.... and look at each other's environments, anchor charts, how each of us was teaching.</p>	<p>Read. Coach</p> <p>Grade Level Team</p>
<p>Umm...Goodness...let me think... Persuasive writing! We discussed what they feel strongly about. Because I taught this group last year, I connected it to the election. I reminded them of the time we wrote presidential speeches about what they would do for the country if they became the president. I wanted them to see things in their own perspective. First, they developed the speech for the president and they were so into that. So, the persuasive speech writing was tied or reminded them of their work from last year.</p>	<p>Pers. Writing</p> <p>Wrote Speeches</p> <p>Voice Opinion</p>
<p>Umm. Okay...oral language strategies, with my ELL kids. It is exciting to see them talk first then write then read what they wrote. I still use that model I have the students talk first before they write. When using oral language strategies, I begin by showing the students a picture. Here is where the small group of students begins talking with each other to build their oral language. Then they tell me a sentence about their thoughts around the picture. I write it down and we read the sentences together. So, before they write, I give them time to think and talk about their ideas with a partner or small group of students. I think that gives them time to organize their thoughts before they write it down on the paper.</p>	<p>Oral Lang</p> <p>Talk first Then write Pictures</p> <p>Think and talk Organize Thoughts</p>

Appendix G
Categories and Themes from Open Coding
July 2014
Page 181 Merriam

Research Question 1a

How do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1 – 6?

Categories to Theme

Speaking the Language of the Common Core State Standards

Common Core State Standards
Common Core Standards
Persuasive
Persuasive writing
Persuasive writing suggestion
Teacher shares persuasive writing idea

Standard 1

Wrote Speeches
Voice Opinions
Teacher shares write letters
Opinion Writing
Opinion Writing
Write letters
Writing letters
Making a brochure

Standard 2

Expository
Expository writing
Write nonfiction
Informational Lesson
Make books
Students choose topic
Time with students
Informational Writing

Standard 3

Modeled narrative writing
Modeled a narrative story
Narrative
Memoir
Memoir
Adaptation of Fairy Tales

Standard 5

Writing Process
Writing process
Writing process
Writing Process
Writing Process
Modeled the writing process
Modeled writing process
Demonstrate the writing process

Standard 6

Use technology
Create brochures
Make Brochures
Teacher shares make brochure
Created Informational Books

Fighting for the Right to Teach Writing

Don't have time to teach writing
No time for writing
Stop teaching writing
Brushed under the table
Teach less writing
Teach less writing
No teaching writing
Stop teaching writing
Don't teach writing
Incorporate writing in content area
Work together to teach writing
Incorporate writing in content
Content writing ideas
We want to teach writing
We don't want to stop
Writing in other content areas

Research Question 1b

Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school report using PCK in teaching writing?

Social Studies as a Viable Content Area to Embed Writing.

Write in science

Write in Science

Write in Science

Write in reading

Write in reading

Write in math

Write in math

Write in Spanish

Write in English

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write in SS

Write about Westward Expansion

Write about Westward Expansion

Write about Holocaust

Write about Holocaust

Intentions but not yet practiced.

Try to incorporate writing in content areas

Want to incorporate writing in content area

Want to incorporate writing in content area

Want to write in science

Want to write in Science

Will try writing in science

Will have my student try writing in reading

Try to write in reading
Add writing in math
Add writing in math
Write in Spanish and English

Research Question 1c

Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3 -5 teachers in one South Florida elementary school use PCK in order to teach writing to ELs?

The art of employing oral language strategies

Storytelling
Story telling
Create stories orally
Tell the story first
Oral Language Development
Oral Language Development
Oral Language Development
Oral Language Development
Think and say
Oral Rehearsal
Oral Rehearsal
Oral Rehearsal
Oral Rehearsal
Oral Rehearsal
Oral Rehearsal
Oral Rehearsal
Turn and Talk
Turn and Talk
Think and talk
Build on Thoughts

Biliteracy learning

Teach in Native Language
Dominant Language
Academic Language
Write in Spanish
Students write in dominant language
Students write in dominant language
Teach in Dominant Language
Write in Dominant Language
Write in Native Language
Talk in Both Languages
Understand words using native language

Talk and Write in dominant Language

Visuals as a Scaffolding Writing Strategy with ELs

Using Word Wall

Word Wall

Word Wall

Word Wall

Word Wall

Interactive Word Wall

Interactive Word Wall

Visuals

Using Pictures

Pictures to make connections

Pictures

Visuals

Visuals

Visuals

Draw Stories

Research Question 2a

How do 3rd-5th teachers in one South Florida elementary school collaborate to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6?

Dual Language Partnerships

Spanish/English partner discuss strengths

Spanish/English partner Slides book between them

Spanish/English partner Teacher sharing

Spanish/English partner Teachers put paper together

Spanish/English partners whispering and pointing at student papers

English/Spanish partners looking at student writing together

English/Spanish Partners –note taking on their paper

English/ Spanish teacher writing down ideas

English/Spanish partner discuss students

English/Spanish partner discuss where to teach writing

English/Spanish partner jot ideas on a paper together

Spanish/English partner make chart of strengths and weaknesses

Spanish/English partner look at writing data together

English/Spanish partner make T –Chart

English Spanish partner make a list of student strengths

English/Spanish partner make a small group list

Extending Collaboration Beyond the Grade Level Team:

Interviews

Grade level partner would sit with me

She always listened to me

Looked at my student work

Gave me suggestions to support my students

My grade level team meets to discuss writing

We share ideas with each other

We plan writing lessons together

Sharing with my Grade Partner is very effective

She helps me group my students in writing

I call my partner and talk about writing lessons

I call my DL partner

We share strengths and next steps for our students

My DL Partner helps me select culturally relevant mentor texts for my class

DL Partner reads my Spanish writing and gives me feedback

We share ideas and strategies to help our students write

My DL Partner gives me ideas

My DL partner listens to me and then shares ideas

I help support students that do not speak English

Teaching Partner shares ideas with me

Spanish Teacher reads my student writing and gives me their strengths and next steps

My DL partner and I constantly collaborate to help English and Spanish students in writing

My DL partner was an ESOL student and she helps me a lot

She helps me with different strategies

I collaborate with my DL partner

She helps me with different strategies

My DL Partner helps me

She shares writing ideas

I collaborate with my DL Partner

I take ideas from her for my classroom

ESOL Teacher gives me resources to help my students

I ask the DL Coordinator for ideas and resources

She gives me ideas to help my students write

I ask the DL Coordinator for advice

I talk with the DL Coordinator about my ELs

She helps me with ways to change my teaching

The DL Coordinator gave me ideas to help my students understand writing

She gave me materials to build their oral language

The reading coach Reading Coach demonstrates writing lessons for me

The Reading Coach gave me materials to help me teach writing

My grade level Team constantly works together

We give each other ideas

We trade writing papers

My grade level partners work together
We ask each other questions
We share writing ideas to make our lessons better
My 3rd grade team met about the writing process
We wanted to learn how we should teach writing
My grade level team collaborates
A Spanish teacher on my team gave feedback to my student in native language
She helped me teach him to become a better writer
I met weekly with my Grade Partner
We shared different angles to teach writing
We shared different strategies

Observations

No EL teacher present
No EL teachers present
No DL Coordinator Present
No EL teacher present
No EL teacher present
No EL teacher present
No DL Coordinator Present
EL teacher not given access to data

Research Question 2b

Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, in what ways does collaboration in LTMs contribute to selected 3rd-5th grade teachers' PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?

Collaborative Dialogue.

Participant Reported Collaborative Dialogue

Who

Grade level partner
Grade level team
Grade Level Team
Grade Level Team
Grade level Teams
Grade Partner
DL partner
DL Partner
DL Partner
DL Partner

DL Partner
Teaching Partner
Spanish Teacher
DL Partner
DL Partner
DL teachers
DL Partner
DL Partner
ESOL Teacher
DL Coordinator
DL Coordinator
DL Coordinator
DL Coordinator
Reading Coach
Reading Coach
Team Meetings
Meetings with Colleagues
Learning Team Meetings
Learning Team Meetings
Grade Partner

How teachers at SAS Reported Collaboration

Discuss student writing
Teacher share idea
Share strategies/ideas
Gave suggestions
Share papers
Share ideas
Share ideas
Share angles
Share strategies

Researcher Witnessed Collaborative Dialogue in LTM

Discuss student writing
Teacher to teacher conversing
Coach-teacher question/response
Coach-teacher question response
Reading coach –teacher shares
Reading Coach-teacher looking at student writing together
Teacher shares a writing strategy
Teacher shares small strategy group
Teacher tells reading Coach student strengths
Making notes together
Teacher grow idea together
Spanish/English partner discuss strengths

Spanish/English partner Slides book between them
Spanish/English partner Teacher sharing
Spanish/English partner Teachers put paper together
Spanish/English partners whispering and pointing at student papers
English/Spanish partners looking at student writing together
English/Spanish Partners –note taking on their paper
English/ Spanish teacher writing down ideas
English/Spanish partner discuss students
English/Spanish partner discuss where to teach writing
English/Spanish partner jot ideas on a paper together
Spanish/English partner make chart of strengths and weaknesses
Spanish/English partner look at writing data together
English/Spanish partner make T –Chart
English Spanish partner make a list of student strengths
English/Spanish partner make a small group list
Teacher asks EL question
Teacher responds to EL question
Teacher shares an idea
Teacher shares a writing strategy
ESOL cluster –low scores
EL Cluster low scores
ESOL cluster-scores low

Principal Led – No teachers speaking
Principal Led – No teachers speaking
Principal Led – No teachers speaking
Principal Led – No teachers speaking
Principal Led – No teachers speaking
Principal Led – No Teachers Speaking

Appendix H

Sample Analytic Memoranda

Analytic Memo #1

Research Questions

- 1a. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1 – 6?
- 1b. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3-5 grade teachers in one South Florida elementary school report using PCK in teaching writing?
- 1c. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do selected 3 -5 teachers in one South Florida elementary school use PCK in order to teach writing to ELs?
- 2a. Based on self-reported and Learning Team Meeting observation data, how do 3rd-5th teachers in one South Florida elementary school collaborate to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6?
- 2b. Based on self-report and Learning Team Meeting observation data, in what ways does collaboration in LTMs contribute to selected 3rd-5th grade teachers' PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6?

What am I learning from the data gathered?

By doing the interviews with six different teachers, I am able to see some

similarities among teacher language. Having conducted 6 LTMs, I am also hearing the same vocabulary and observing some similar actions from the teachers in the LTMs. I am wondering if these are some emerging themes.

Is the data informing my research questions?

Yes, the observations really compliment the interviews. The actions and dialogue of the teachers has been a vital piece of data. I believe the transcribed interviews and the observation form have given me critical information that address the research questions.

Appendix I

Emergent Themes and Corresponding Codes from Data Analysis

I. Demonstrating pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with respect to Common Writing Anchor Standards 1 – 6

- a. Speaking the Language of the Common Core
- b. Fighting for the Right to Teach Writing

II. Reporting their use PCK in teaching writing?

- a. Social Studies as a Viable Content Area to Embed Writing
- b. Intentions but not yet practiced

III. Using PCK in order to teach writing to ELs

- a. Oral Language Strategies
- b. Biliteracy Learning
- c. Visuals as a Scaffolding Writing Strategy

IV. Collaborating with colleagues to demonstrate their PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Standards 1-6

- a. Dual Language Partnerships
- b. Extending Collaboration Beyond the Grade Level Team

V. Collaborating in LTMs contribute to teachers' PCK with respect to Common Core Writing Anchor Standards 1-6

- a. Research Witnessed Collaborative Dialogue
- b. Participant Reported

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