A Case Study of the Writing Consultant as a Professional Development Model for Elementary School Teachers

Shirley E. Martin

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A CASE STUDY OF THE WRITING CONSULTANT
AS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL
FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

BY

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY OF THE WRITING CONSULTANT
AS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL
FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Teaching children to write successfully continues to plague educators. There are national and local initiatives to improve the writing of students on all levels. School district administrators are mandated to select and/or evaluate staff development programs. Research is needed regarding effective staff development to improve teaching strategies that will, in turn, improve literacy and student performance on writing assessments. Research indicates that one-day workshops are the least effective form of professional development. This case study is best described as an action research project that examined the perceptions of the second and third grade teachers who participated in a professional development model that utilized a writing consultant as a teacher/coach over a two year period. It also studied the perceptions of the consultant who administered the staff development. It was anticipated that the results of the study would be used to enhance the ability of administrators to recommend writing instruction practices and policy changes relative to program selection and evaluation, teacher selection and professional development. A review of the literature which provided the rationale for the research included teaching writing, staff development and program evaluation.

The background for the study was a suburban school district on Long Island. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were utilized. Survey research
methodology was employed to collect data regarding the teachers' perceptions of the program. An interview was utilized to collect data from the writing consultant who provided the staff development. Analysis of the data indicated that the majority of the teachers felt the teacher/coach model for professional development was effective and their students' writing had improved. The consultant thought the students' writing had improved as a result of the staff development she provided. Findings from the survey and the interview were used as a summative evaluation of the program.
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In memory of Pat LiSanti, I will always remember your sweet smile, your kindness and support.
DEDICATION

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CHAPTER I
The Research Problem

Introduction

Teaching children to write successfully continues to plague educators. The National Commission on Writing, in an April 2003 paper, *The Neglected R*: The Need for a Writing Revolution, argues the case for a writing revolution. The nation-wide panel of educators states: “American education will never realize its potential as an engine of opportunity and economic growth until a writing revolution puts language and communication in their proper place in the classroom” (p. 3). The commission recommends that “the nation’s leaders place writing squarely in the center of the school agenda and that policymakers at the state and local levels provide the resources required to improve writing” (p. 3).

Background of the Problem

Writing as a National Problem

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the “only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas. Since 1969, assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography
and the arts" (The National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2003, p. 1). In July 2003, the NCES reported the results of the NAEP 2002 Writing Assessment administered to fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students. While both fourth and eighth graders improved at the basic level, only 28% of the fourth graders were at or above the proficient level (defined by the NAEP as "representing solid academic performance demonstrating competency over challenging subject matter") (NCES, p. 8); 31% of the eighth graders were at or above the proficient level; and 24% of the twelfth graders were at or above the proficient level (NCES, p. 20). The NAEP writing assessment is administered every four years, with previous comparative data gathered in 1998. The 2002 results indicated an increase in writing skills for fourth and eighth graders, however, the percentage of twelfth graders at or above the basic level actually decreased between 1998 and 2002 and twelfth graders made no significant gain at the proficient level (NCES, p. 20). The historic gap between minorities and Whites with respect to writing ability did not change from 1998-2002. There were large performance gaps between White and Black students and White and Hispanic students on the NAEP 2002 Writing Assessment. In 2002, there was more than a 20% difference between the White and Black student achievement on the writing assessment and at least an 18% gap between White students and Hispanic students (NCES, p. 47). In 2003, U.S. Secretary of Education Paige focused national attention on these findings with the following press statement:

The report released today by the National Center for Education Statistics shows that fourth and eighth graders... are reaching higher achievement levels. This improvement is very important, considering that writing is a key
skill for communication that they'll need to excel academically and later, in the work world. . . . While it appears that our nation's schools are moving in the right direction in producing better writers, there is cause for guarded optimism. We still have a lot of work to do. Despite these significant gains, more than two-thirds of the nation's students still perform below the proficient level in writing. We need to make a collective effort to help our students become better writers. It will require diligence because one size does not fit all in any endeavor to improve student performance in any subject. We must find out what works best for which students. (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Several standards-based assessments in schools have been modified to include a writing component. In New York State, the English Language Arts (ELA) standards are tested annually in grades four, eight, and eleven. The results of these assessments are reported in the newspapers and are referred to as “high stakes testing.” For example, on June 6, 2004, The New York Times reported that, “Scores for Long Island fourth graders dropped slightly in this year’s standardized English Language Arts (ELA) tests, while eighth graders made marginal improvement. The [New York] state education commissioner, Richard P. Mills, called the decline in fourth-grade scores ‘troubling’” (Hoffman, p. 12).

The importance of writing skills is reflected in the inclusion of writing as a formal criterion for college admission. The Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) which touts itself as “the most widely used and most rigorously researched college admissions test in history,” has added an essay to the 2005 SAT “to see how well students use standard written English” (The College Board, 2003, pp. 3-4).
Educational consultant and writer Hurwitz (2004) emphasizes the importance of writing performance. “After years of being sidelined, student writing shows signs of moving to the center of the education policy agenda. Increasingly, decision makers are recognizing that writing is fundamental to learning and communication and therefore vital to success in education and the workplace” (p. 1). Hurwitz offers the following about what she considers a “writing crisis in the nation’s classrooms”:

1. Most students are poor writers;
2. Teachers themselves lack writing skills;
3. Students rarely receive rigorous writing assignments even in English class; and
4. Employers and college professors decry the quality of writing among their employees and students (pp. 1-2).

The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University offers a national writing program to improve student literacy. Lucy Calkins’ writing strategies are utilized at this “think tank, and books by project leaders are widely regarded as foundational to language arts education throughout the English-speaking world” (Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, p. 1).

Staff Development

A 1996 report by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future states that “a caring, competent and qualified teacher for every child is the most important ingredient in education reform” (as cited in Darling & Hammond, 1998, p. 3). However, the report concludes that most U.S. school districts invest little in
ongoing professional development for experienced teachers and spend much of these limited resources on unproductive practices." Sullivan (1999) maintains that "professional development is strongly tied to teacher quality, which is in turn crucial to student success" (p. 1).

The significant role of the teacher in the delivery of writing instruction is reflected in national specialty associations. For example, The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2004) has implemented the National Writing Initiative Campaign to "support practices in the teaching of writing across all disciplines, to increase policymakers' and the public's knowledge about the teaching of writing and to make available professional development for schools and educators" (p. 1).

The effort to improve student instruction through better teacher professional development has recently been undertaken in many educational arenas. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) (2000) has charged universities to prepare educational leaders to be able to "identify root causes of problems, propose solutions, and validate improvements with regard to all aspects of the school, including but not limited to: (1) curriculum development, (2) instructional strategies, and (3) professional support and development" (NYS Regulation of the Commissioner 52.21 (c) (2) (iv) (d)). The NYSED requires that every school district and its administrators "have a professional development plan, which describes how they will provide all of their teachers with substantial professional development opportunities" (p. 1). This professional development plan is to insure that professional development will be "related to teacher needs and focused on increasing student achievement" (p. 1).

During the past fifteen years, the states of California, Florida, Kentucky, Oklahoma,
New York, and West Virginia, have passed legislation aimed at improving professional development (Sullivan, 1999, p. 3).

The U.S. Department of Education in the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in defining professional development was clear to point out that "One day or short-term workshops or conferences" (p. 9) are not considered effective professional development. Some NCLB staff development descriptors are:

A vii - Advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are:

Il – Strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers

Axii – As a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development.

B.iii – Provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom. (p. 11).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) requires that basic programs in the areas of reading literacy and learning support centers be steeped in scientifically-based research. According to Section 9101(37) of the legislation, scientifically-based research is:

i) Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or
experiment;
ii) Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
iii) Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations and across studies by the same and different investigators (NCLB, 2001, p. 11).

Mazzano (2003) reports that a survey of 1,000 teachers found that "those features of staff development with the strongest relationship to reported change in teacher behavior (1) focus on content knowledge, (2) opportunities for active learning, and (3) overall coherence of the staff development activities" (p. 66). Carr and Harris (2001) have outlined seven principles for professional development:

1. Effective professional development experiences are driven by a well-defined image of teaching and learning.
2. Effective professional development experiences provide opportunities for teachers to build their knowledge and skills.
3. Effective professional development experiences use or model the strategies teachers will use with their students.
4. Effective professional development experiences build a learning community.
5. Effective professional development experiences support teachers to serve in leadership roles.
6. Effective professional development experiences create links to other parts
of the educational system.

7. Effective professional development experiences are continually assessed and improved (pp. 123-126).

Fullan (1997) states:

Professional development takes explicit account of the contexts of teaching and the experience of teachers. Focused study groups, teacher collaboratives, long-term partnerships, and similar modes of professional development afford teachers a means of locating new ideas in relation to their individual and institutional histories, practices, and circumstances. (p. 153)

Statement of the Problem

Students cannot write to the level required to meet rigorous standards or societal demands. Teachers have difficulty teaching writing. There are national and local initiatives to improve the writing of students on all levels. School district administrators are mandated by national and state regulations to select and/or evaluate staff development programs. Research is needed regarding effective staff development to improve teaching strategies that will, in turn, improve literacy and student performance on writing assessments.

Purpose of the Study

There is a national effort to improve student writing. Research indicates that one-day workshops are the least effective form of professional development. This study of the writing project in the Victory School District examined teacher
perceptions of teaching writing to students using a teacher/coach model of staff
development over a two year period of time. The Victory School District administered
the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP) to a cohort of
students in grade two during the 2002-2003 school year; these same students received
the intervention as third graders during the 2003-2004 school year. It was anticipated
that the information on the perceptions of the writing consultant and the teachers
regarding the DEGWCP could serve as the basis for program continuation,
modification, or elimination. In addition, suggestions for the implementation of policy
and practice as it relates to writing would be formulated.

The Research Questions

The rationale and purpose of this study provide the foundation for the
following research questions:

1. Did the consultant perceive that the students’ writing improved as a result
   of the DEGWCP?

2. What were the teachers’ perceptions of this model of professional
development?

3. Did the teachers perceive that their students’ writing improved as a result
   of the DEGWCP?

4. What is the relationship between the students’ writing scores on the third-
   grade Test of New York State Standards (TONYSS) and the teachers’ perceptions of
   the DEGWCP?

5. Is there a difference in teachers’ perceptions as it relates to years of
teaching experience?

6. Is there a difference in teachers' perceptions as it relates to the teachers' educational level?

Significance of the Study

The theoretical framework for this study is supported by the research that says staff development is effective when the:

- activities address specific strategies for specific subject areas. At the very least, pedagogical knowledge must be presented to teachers in the context of their specific subject areas. Staff development activities that present generic strategies and do not provide opportunities for classroom application are probably not very effective in terms of actually changing teacher behavior. (Marzano, p. 66).

This study provides the follow-up evaluation component of this model of staff development. School districts often use professional development and program evaluation as part of their strategic planning and/or goal setting. The results of this study can be used to enhance the ability of administrators to recommend writing instruction practices and policy changes relative to program selection, teacher selection, program evaluation, and professional development. The study also examined if teachers' teaching experience and educational level have an impact on their perceptions of professional development.
Definition of Terms

Professional Development. As defined in this study, it refers to the process by which educators update their knowledge, refine their skills, inquire into and reflect upon practice, and develop new methods and strategies.

Writing Process. As defined in this study, it refers to an instructional writing model that views writing as a constant process where students follow procedures for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and creating final drafts of their writing.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was conducted within a limited time frame so that the effects of the DEGWCP have not been studied over a long period of time.

2. The range of the study is restricted to examining what has occurred in elementary schools in one school district.

3. This study may include uncontrolled variables of the students which could contaminate the study, such as: IQ, home advantages, socio-economic status, mobility, etc.
CHAPTER 6
A Review of the Literature

This research is a case study of a writing program implemented at the elementary level that reflects a significant change in the focus on and delivery of writing instruction at the elementary level. The review of literature examines (1) teaching writing; (2) program evaluation; and (3) professional development. This first section of the literature review will look at the developments regarding written composition which recognize that the written product, the writing process, and the context of writing are all critical to program effectiveness.

Teaching Writing

History of the Writing Process

The National Writing Project, initiated in the mid-1970s, promoted collaborative research between university professors and K-12 classroom teachers. The project encouraged teachers "to write, to reflect on that experience, and to conduct university-level research as practitioners of writing and the teaching of writing" (Strickland et al., 2001). Much of the 1970's research was focused on the writing process from a sociological perspective. Emig's (1971) work with secondary student writing is often cited as the focal change from the writing product to the writing
process. The Emig model identified dimensions of the composing process which include: (1) the context; (2) nature of the stimulus; (3) prewriting; (4) planning; (5) starting; (6) composing aloud; (7) reformulation; (8) stopping; (9) contemplation of product; and, (10) seeming teacher influence on piece. Emig found that the writing process is not a series of sequential steps, but, rather, a recursive and blended system of actions (pp. 33-35).

Sawkins (1971), using 60 fifth graders in a middle class Buffalo, NY community, investigated an aspect of the writing process rather than the product of writing. She found that effective writers were more concerned with content, and poor writers were more concerned with mechanics. In addition, Sawkins discovered that the compositions of girls were of a higher quality than the compositions of boys. This study provided a focus for later studies in the area of self-selection of writing topics.

Graves (1973, 1975), using 94 children with an average age of seven years and six months, in four classrooms, designed a three-phase case study. He created two groups: two formal classes and two informal classes. The groups were separated based on the degree of self-choice the students were allowed, and the students' ability to function with or without specific directions. In the first phase, writing folders were kept and analyzed for theme, teachers' comments, illustrations, number of words used, and type of writing presented. In the second phase, 14 children from each class were observed and their behaviors logged for prewriting, composing, and post-writing phases on a form which recorded (1) what was being written by the child, (2) any of the child's overt actions, and (3) and interruptions by the teachers for instruction or classroom management. An assigned observer, using questions, probed for non-overt
processes. In the third phase, 17 students were interviewed to determine their views on their own writing and their criteria for what constitutes a good writer. In addition, eight of these students were profiled for their educational-developmental histories, test data, parental input, and multi-environmental variables.

The results from the Graves's (1973, 1975) research introduced critical frameworks for further investigation regarding learning environments, gender differences and, developmental factors influence the writing process, as well as the writers' perceptions of their own processes. In the context of the learning environment, students who have a choice of task will write with greater frequency and will have longer text than students who are assigned tasks. Girls were found to write more (length and frequency) than boys in formal environments. In informal environments, boys were found to write more frequently than girls. The child's developmental level was found to have the most influence on writing behaviors, regardless of environment, materials, or methodologies. Graves identified two types of writers; the reactive writer and the reflective writer. For the reactive writer, oral language must accompany the prewriting and composing phases. Reactive writers model character behaviors after their own, proofread at the word stage, have no sense of audience, and rarely review the text. Reflective writers, on the other hand, use little oral language. They reread periodically, often at the phrase level, have a sense of audience, and can evaluate their work. Even though composition research increased in the first half of the twentieth century, Graves (1981) found that "only 156 studies of writing in the elementary grades, or an average of six annually, have been done in the United States in the last twenty-five years" (p. 93). After 1980, writing research
moved from a focus on prescriptiveness reflected in the quality of final text, to an objective and systematic description of composing (Hayes & Flower, 1980; Graves, 1981; Nystrand, 1989).

Calkins (1980c, 1983) used observations of 17 third graders in one classroom, asking them to recopy a researcher-prepared paragraph and alter it according to a simulated writing conference. The cumulative writings of each child were analyzed for the number and nature of drafts written. The results suggested that there are four types of rewriters, and they can be identified by distinct developmental-maturational phases. They include: random drafters, who work in the present and never look back to reread their writing; refiners, who reread but have difficulty inserting new information; transitional, who are similar to refiners, but are less satisfied with their drafts after rereading them; and, interactors, children who reread to review what they write, make changes, and consider what they might write next. The implication of this study is that writing skills cannot be taught prescriptively due to the heterogeneity of writers in the average third-grade classroom, and that instruction has to be differentiated to meet the needs of diverse student writers.

Additional studies attempted to identify the process steps that students engage in while producing a written text (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1986; Freedman, Dyson, Flower, & Chafe, 1987). Most models describe the following general steps in the writing process:

1. Writing requires active and complex problem solving.
2. Experts and novices solve these complex problems in significantly different ways and, moreover, there are marked diversities within the solutions enacted.
by individual experts and novices.

3. Writing consists of several processes — representation, planning, generation, evaluation, revising—which are invoked in a recursive rather than linear manner.

4. For effective communication, the strategy of problem solving adopted by the writer is intimately related to the nature and purpose of the writing task (as cited in Alkin, 1992, p. 1529).

The work of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) suggests that there are two models of the composing process: in the knowledge-telling model, the writer draws on content knowledge and discourse knowledge to complete a written assignment; in the knowledge-transforming model, the writer also draws on content knowledge and discourse knowledge, but, additionally, executes it within a reflective, problem-solving, context. The knowledge-telling model is most closely aligned to the strategies of the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project, because immature writers, such as most third graders, will have difficulty in generating texts without the kinds of supports typically available in conversational language.

Several researchers have identified that effective writing integrates the product with the process based on a specific social context. (Freedman et al., 1987; Langer, 1987, 1988). Rubin (1988) identified four ways in which writers communicate in a social context:

First, writers construct mental representations of the social contexts within which their writing is embedded; second, writing as a social process can create a social context; third, writers create texts collectively with other participants
in discourse communities; and, fourth, writers create a dimension of social
meaning by assigning consensual values to writing. Understanding and
negotiating the social context requires that writers participate in a discourse
community. Stating that writing is socially constructed implicitly
acknowledges the larger cultural context within which any written
communication is embedded. (as cited in Alkin, 1992, p.1533)

Rubin also notes that cultural issues and the integration of cognitive and
cultural theories in the social context of writing have implications for the instruction of
minority populations. The shift in teaching writing from an emphasis on the written
product to the process of writing is a response to various pressures from the
educational arena. Results from large-scale assessments of student achievement
(National Assessment of Education Progress [NAEP], 1986) indicate that the writing
achievement of African American and Latino children is approximately four grade
levels below that of White students.

The essential elements of most process writing models include the following:
complex and active problem solving processes; the recognition and acceptance of
markedly diverse solutions to problems; the processes of representation, planning,
generation, evaluation, and revising are invoked in a recursive manner; and the nature
and purpose of the writing task is directly related to the selected strategy of problem
solving adopted by the writer. The Hayes and Flower (1980) model reflects a newer
approach that puts emphasis on the task environment and the influence of the
knowledge that the writer brings to the writing task. It moves beyond former models
and focuses on the integration of the cognitive process with both the macro and the
micro-contexts and the actual written product. In addition, Hayes and Flower introduces a motivational component. However, Hidi and McLaren’s (1990) research suggests that motivation is not enough. They assert that

students must have a sufficiently detailed knowledge base from which to write for there to be any motivating interest. This finding again points to the necessity to link the cognitive, motivational, social, and contextual factors when attempting to explicate the writing process. (as cited in Alkin, 1992, p. 1531)

The Center for the Study of Writing has produced a series of studies that further our understanding of the components of the writing processes. Flower, Schriner, Carey, Haas, and Hayes (in press) suggest that writers use individually or in concert three planning strategies: knowledge-driven planning (the writer tells all that they know), schema- or script-driven planning (a script or schema is used to prompt writing), and constructive planning (set and establish goals into information-rich networks). The knowledge-driven strategies are not appropriate for early grade students because their knowledge base is not well organized and conceptualized in a manner that matches the requirements of the writing task (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Schema-driven strategies may be quite appropriate for narrative story telling which applies to early grade students (Flower et al., in press). Constructive planning is utilized when knowledge-driven and schema- or script-driven planning are not appropriate.

As a result of the school reform movement of the 1990s, rigorous standards for the language arts were defined at the national, state and
local levels. The standards include statements of what students should know and be able to do regarding writing even in the earliest grades. They call for higher expectations regarding performance in writing for all students, and they reflect changes in the writing curriculum. (Strickland, 1998, p. 5)

A study by Dickinson and DiGisi (1998), using first-grade classrooms, found a direct correlation between the amount of writing children did in class and their reading scores.

Students with higher reading achievement scores were in classrooms where teachers asked students to engage in narrative and informational writing. This conclusion is consistent with research showing that reading and writing are closely linked processes and that participation in strong writing programs benefits children's reading and writing development. (p. 2)

**Writing Strategies and Processes**

Critical to this case study are the strategies and processes of the DEGWCP and their relationship to the ability of teachers to effectively deliver them. In addition to the components of written composition, several researchers have looked at the development of strategies and processes required of elementary school learners.

Applebee (1978) and King and Rentel (1981) found that children entering school are able to display some features of use of knowledge- and schema-driven scripts. Crowhurst's (1990) research focused on the development of persuasive/argumentative writing in young learners. He suggests that for school-aged children, persuasive writing tends to be short and lacking in content. He posits that this may be due to the
typically irrelevant writing topics assigned to children. Other explanations offered for this phenomenon are that the schema of younger children is derived from an oral context and that the lack of someone to dialogue with them prohibits production (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1986), and that younger children have difficulty retrieving relevant information and using it logically (Gorman, White, Brooks, MacLure, & Kispe, 1988).

A critical factor of writing program design is an understanding of the ability of younger writers to use two critical components of the writing process: evaluation and revision. Beal (1990) found that 10-year-olds were not able to detect as many textual errors as 12-year-olds. It appears that younger and at-risk children may be less able to detect their written errors and be less capable of correcting an identified error. Willis (1997) contends that experts believe that the writing process has been turned into a formula. He agrees with Charles Suho, deputy executive director of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (1997), who states that “The writing process has often been overcodified in textbooks and workshops, presented as a rigid sequence rather than a flexible method with recursive components” (p. 2). Willis indicates that a good way to motivate students to refine their writing is “to have them write for real purposes and authentic audiences. When students write for a real audience, they keenly want their writing to be good, and they develop their own critical standards” (p. 4).

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1986) describe four basic instructional writing strategies: (1) The direct approach in which students are provided information on the specific strategies used by effective writers; (2) procedural or substantive facilitation
in which students are given prompts or feedback that will either enhance or facilitate their use of specific strategies; (3) product-oriented or directed instruction, in which students are required to focus on the product of the communication and assess the extent to which the known and agreed upon schematic requirements are met; and (4) inquiry learning in which students learn through gaining increasing greater understanding of specific cognitive strategies they are adopting.

Several recent studies have attributed poor writing performance to the lack of adequate writing instruction given by teachers. Sueirman (2000) discusses the multidimensional aspects of writing in instructional practices, assessment procedures, and language development. He cautions that writing "cannot be separated from other linguistic and meta-cognitive processes" (p. 2) and teachers do not look at writing as a basic skill necessary for the cognitive, social, and psychological growth of children. Faris (1997) suggests that the complex nature of the writing process makes learning difficult for children and the teaching of writing difficult for teachers.

Based on their research, Hidi and Hidyari (1983) and McCuehen (1987) suggest that less emphasis on mechanics for early writers result in increased text generation. Additional studies by King and Rentel (1981) and Postecorvo and Zuccherma (1969) propose that the elimination of mechanics through dictation also improves the quality of text for very young writers in the primary grades. However, a study by Graham, Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, and Whiteaker (1997) suggests that at-risk children may require instruction in writing mechanics in early grades. They suggest that the mechanics of writing, especially handwriting fluency, are predictive of compositional fluency and quality. Instruction in handwriting and
spelling can, therefore, contribute to increasing student achievement. They conclude that the de-emphasis of the teaching of mechanics to children who will not acquire these skills early or naturally may impede their writing development. They caution that whole-language approaches that de-emphasize or eliminate mechanics do not benefit certain groups of children.

Frank (1995) addresses the linear quality of the writing process, asserting that it is prescriptive. She offers ten stages of a writing process to guide students to an effective writing product. The linear approach assumes that the writer progresses in a one-dimensional fashion, completing each step and moving on to the next one. The stages include: the motivation, collecting impressions, organizing, the rough draft, author’s review, the mechanics check, the final copy, and presenting. Other researchers view writing as a cyclical (the writers will often jump from one step to another) rather than a linear process (Calkins, 1994; Farris, 1997; Graves, 1994). Graves has moved away from his earlier singular methodological position. He now advocates topic choice for students, teacher and student conferencing, teacher modeling of writing strategies, and emphasis on student understanding of writing conventions. Block (1997) concludes that “writing should not be taught as a linear process and rigid series of stages, but a recursive or fluid experience that allows children to move in and out of these stages in interactive ways” (p. 248). Suleiman (2000) identifies the writing stages as follows: prewriting, writing, rewriting, and publishing. The implication for teachers is that as writers move through these stages, writing becomes process and product, an act of discovery, and an ethical process. Suleiman adds that writing is deeply rooted in thought patterns, linked to reading and
vice versa, a social-psychological activity, and evolves through continuous writing.

**Writing Programs**

Power & Hubbard (1996) identified four developments which influenced writing programs used in schools. The first development was the work of Goodman (1986) who promoted the whole language philosophy. Commenting on whole language, Weaver (1996) described it as the approach in which language is kept whole and not fragmented into “skills”; literacy skills and strategies are developed in the context of whole, authentic literacy events, while reading and writing experiences permeate the whole curriculum; and learning within the classroom is integrated with the whole life of the learner.

The second development was the Writers Workshop, based on the research of Graves (1983), Calkins (1983), and Atwell (1987). Their research proposed that learners were more successful writers when they chose their own topics to write about; were involved in the writing process that included prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing; and were given direct instruction in response to their individual writing needs. The Network for Instructional TV (2001) explained the Writer’s Workshop as “an interdisciplinary writing technique which can build students’ fluency in writing through continuous, repeated exposure to the process of writing” (p. 1).

The third development was an artist-in-resident program that featured guest writers and/or poets to work in schools with students. The fourth and final development in writing instruction identified by Power & Hubbard was the National Writing Project, which is now known as the Teachers College Reading and Writing
Project. They describe their program as creating “learning communities which involve educators at every level throughout Project schools. Children and superintendents alike read, study, question, talk, inquire and learn together within ‘Project-supported learning circles’” (Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, 2003, p. 1).

Program Evaluation

The literature reviewed in this section supports the rationale underlying this investigator’s identification of the variables that need to be considered when selecting an intervention to improve students’ writing. The evaluation of educational programs is part of the national movement reflected in the No Child Left Behind legislation for accountability in the academic performance of students. School and district administrators are under increased pressure by the media and the general public to scrutinize their instructional program offerings. Smith and O’Day (1991) note that The National Commission on Excellence in Education’s publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983 prompted the creation of system reform strategies during the 1980s and 1990s. The systemic approach they recommend is primarily external to the school and focuses on broad issues of standards, assessments, accountability, governance, and funding sources.

A parallel approach is comprehensive school reform that starts with the school as the unit of reform. The aspects of curriculum, instruction, assessment, parental involvement, and professional development, internal to a school, are targeted for analyses and reform. The District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project, analyzed in this case study, is in the category of comprehensive school reform. School reform
interventions can have a direct and immediate impact on practices because they are researchable (Slavin, 2001). The present study is school based and focuses on program intervention, teacher delivery practices, and student outcomes. Reviews of research have identified effective comprehensive school interventions in comparison to matched control groups (Herna, 1999; Slavin & Fashola, 1998; Traub, 1999). In addition, it is particularly imperative to determine program effectiveness in elementary schools with racial and/or ethnic minorities when a restructuring of curriculum and pedagogy are required to improve student performance (Sapon-Shevin, 2001).

Educational reform, with its attendant demand for accountability has caused evaluation research to become one of the most rapidly evolving fields in education (LeTendre & Lipka, 2000).

Definitions of program evaluation can be identified in the works of several investigators. Posavec and Carey (1992) equate evaluation with measurement. Fitzpatrick (1998) and LeTendre and Lipka (2000) define evaluation as measuring the extent to which program objectives have been attained. Other researchers introduce value and judgment as critical constructs of evaluation. Popham (1975) views evaluation as synonymous with professional judgment, and Worthen and Sanders (1987) define evaluation as “determination of a thing of value” (p. 8). Case, Andrews, and Werner (1988) have combined the measurement and judgment approaches, stating that “to evaluate is to make an explicit judgment about the worth of all or part of a program by collecting evidence to determine if acceptable standards have been met” (p. 34).
Evaluation as a process for determining the value of a program encompasses most research definitions. The evaluator collects information about a program's actual inputs and outcomes, compares that data to specified preset standards or expectations, and makes a judgment about a program or activity. Several researchers have expanded on components of evaluative processes. LeTendre and Lipka (2000) expand the definition of evaluation by making distinctions between criteria and standards when judging the value or merit of a program. Criteria define the aspects of performance an evaluator will examine. Standards specify the quality of the performance one wishes to achieve, including the standards of components that will be examined and the standards or specific levels of performance to be attained. Worthen and Sanders (1987) posit that a program's outcomes must be measured based on the alignment of written goals and objectives to the standards or desired qualities or conditions. Cronbach (1980) and Fitzpatrick (1998) focus on the feedback dimension of evaluation, asserting that evaluation should be structured to serve as a learning process to address specific and pertinent educational questions.

Researchers have identified program evaluation as a critical skill for school administrators and an essential organizational practice in education (Cronbach, 1980; Popham, 1975). LeTendre and Lipka (2000) suggest that program evaluation provides the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of information about programs for decision-making. Posavec and Carey (1992) indicate that program evaluation is in fact research to measure the effects of a program based on its outcomes, goals, and/or criteria, and involves a determination of the alignment of the design of the intervention to goals, outcomes, and/or criteria. Most researchers agree that the purpose of
program evaluation, most broadly, is to maintain, modify, or eliminate an intervention. The formative purpose of program evaluation is viewed as program improvement. The summative purpose is concerned with program continuation. Anderson and Ball (1978) identify six major purposes that can be used by researchers for school program evaluation:

1. To contribute to decisions about program implementation; these activities include ascertaining the adequacy of resources for carrying it out;

2. To contribute to decisions about program continuation, expansion, or "certification";

3. To contribute to decisions about program modification; these include activities that appraise the competencies of the program staff, the delivery of the program as well as the program's content;

4. To obtain evidence to rally support to a program;

5. To obtain evidence to rally opposition to a program; and

6. To yield contributions to basic knowledge as well as information for program decisions (pp. 3-4).

There are a variety of types of evaluation that can be used to assess different aspects or stages of program development. This section will identify evaluation models based on the underlying knowledge of the distinctions and focus on the experimental model used in this study. The context evaluation models investigate how a program operates in a particular political, physical, and economic environment (Brinton, 1976). Formative evaluations addressed in the works of Clowes (1984) as well as deTendre and Lipka (2000) examine the early stages of a program's
development, assess a program in a pilot setting, or assess needs that a new program should fulfill. Objectives-oriented models focus on the specification of goals and objectives and determining the extent to which they are attained.

The experimental models focus on discrete causes and effects; in research, the most common experimental model is summative evaluation (Brinck, 1978). A summative evaluation typically occurs following a program’s implementation and assumes that explicit program goals can be isolated and the results of treatment can be quantitatively measured (Scriven, 1969). Experimental models seek to provide information about program or intervention effectiveness, utility, and value (Le Pendre & Lipka, 2000). In addition, it is often used as a measure of accountability since it attempts to assess a program’s success in meeting its objectives. There are two types of experimental models, according to Sangzilla (1980). The Behavioral Objectives Model typically measures the performance of a specific group based on the acquisition of skills, the formulation of concepts, and/or the understanding of relationships (Popham, 1975). The Goal-Free Model seeks to identify all effects of an intervention without regard to stated goals and objectives (Sangzilla, 1980). Five major steps have been identified in the evaluative process (Case, Andrews, & Warner, 1988): planning, gathering information, summarizing information, comparing to standards, and determining worth.

Professional Development

This section of the literature review is concerned with the professional development of teachers. Professional development in the context of this study is
defined as any coursework, in-service class, workshop, or conference that is intended to increase the abilities of teachers to perform classroom, building, or district responsibilities or functions. Many educational researchers concur that professional development is critical for the enrichment of teachers' content knowledge and the development of delivery strategies (Choy, Xianglei, & Ross, 1998; Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon, & Birman, 2000). Content knowledge is essential for teachers to deliver subject matter in a manner understandable to students (Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1998; Shulman, 1986). The logical organizational goal is that professional development will translate into increases in student learning and performance (Harwell, D'Amico, Stein, & Gatti, 2000; Porter et al., 2006; Renyi, 1996; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000; Vacc, Bright, & Bowman, 1998).

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) reported that research on effective practices for staff development includes:

1. Programs conducted in school settings and linked to school-wide efforts;
2. Teachers participating as helpers to each other and as planners, with administrators, of in-service activities;
3. Emphasis on self instruction, with differentiated training opportunities;
4. Teachers in active roles, choosing goals and activities for themselves;
5. Emphasis on demonstration, supervised trials, and feedback; training that is concrete and ongoing over time; and
6. Ongoing assistance and support available on request. (p. 1)

They go on to describe five models of staff development that they document as successful:
1. Individually-guided staff development
2. Observation/Assessment
3. Involvement in a Development/Improvement Process
4. Training
5. Inquiry

Porter et al. (2000) studied the breadth of professional development teachers experience throughout their careers. Professional development can be delivered in varied formats, including teacher study groups, teacher collaboratives, networks or committees, mentoring, internships or resource centers, within-district workshops or conferences, courses for college credit, as well as out-of-district workshops or conferences. Porter et al. add that professional development is typically made available to teachers through teacher centers, local colleges and universities, private agencies, consultants, school administrators, staff developers, colleagues, peers, state agencies, and local agencies.

The research suggests that professional development has an effect on student achievement if it is sustained and in-depth. Spar's and Hirsch (2000), in their study of professional development with elementary school teachers, identified sustained participation as a significant factor in the improvement of teacher knowledge and delivery strategies. Renyi (1996) found one-shot and short-term professional development activities had minimum effect on the growth of students and teachers. The research of Schweinhart, Epstein, Okoko, Odeo, and Fiori (1998) suggests that the one-shot approach without classroom follow-up had little effect on teacher instruction and student learning. The sustained and in-depth aspects of professional
development were found to maximize teacher effectiveness for both experienced and beginning teachers (Choy et al., 1998; Renyi, 1996).

Very few studies have focused on the variable of teaching experience and/or amount of teacher education as it impacts teacher perceptions of staff development. The limited available research has not yielded any conclusive findings. A 2004 study by Yates on the influence of professional development on teachers’ self-efficacy found that change in self-efficacy depended on the grade level taught and years of experience. A staff development study on teachers’ perceptions of professional development by Clifton (2003) found that there was no significant difference in teachers’ opinions associated with gender, age, years of teaching or years of experience. Similarly, Ruberto (2003) found in her research on attitudes of veteran teachers toward professional development, that the “data did not indicate that there was a relationship between gender, teaching level or assignment, certification, and degree attainment and the teachers’ attitude toward the necessity of professional development to maintain instructional methodologies” (p. 84).

Recent studies have identified a positive relationship between professional development and the improvement of teaching skills (Choy et al., 1998; Harwell et al., 2000; Renyi, 1996; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000; Vacca et al., 1998). Teachers indicate that professional development increases their understanding of students as learners (Renyi, 1996; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000; Vacca et al., 1998). In addition, teachers identified staff development activities as increasing their subject matter knowledge (Choy et al., 1998; Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1998; Harwell et al., 2000; Renyi, 1996; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000; Supovitz & Turner, 2000; Vacca et al., 1998). A report from the U.S.
Department of Education (2001) found that:

Professional development focused on specific, higher-order teaching strategies increases teachers' use of those strategies in the classroom. This effect is even stronger when the professional development activity is a reform type (e.g., teacher network or study group) rather than a traditional workshop or conference; provides opportunities for active learning; is coherent or consistent with teachers' goals and other activities; and involves the participation of teachers from the same subject, grade or school.

According to Miller, Wallace, DiBiase and Neubitt (1999), research on professional development indicates that:

Little attention has been given to the role of practice in helping teachers acquire new knowledge and skills. Pellicer and Anderson (1995) note that "... teaching is an extremely complex profession, requiring extensive training and practice before a reasonable level of proficiency can be obtained" (p. 140). . . . The importance of practice (repetition) and rehearsal in forming connections in the brain has been recognized. (p. 21)

Martin-Knief (2000) recommends six steps that she feels are "essential for purposeful, systemic staff development":

1. Identify and clarify the core beliefs that define the school’s culture.
2. Create a shared vision by explicitly defining what these core beliefs will look like in practice.
3. Collect accurate, detailed data, and use analysis of the data to define where the school is now and to determine the gaps between the current reality and the shared
vision.

4. Identify the innovations(s) that will most likely close the gaps between the current reality and the shared vision.

5. Develop and implement an action plan that supports teachers through the change process and integrates the innovation within each classroom and throughout the school.

6. Embrace collective autonomy as the only way to close the gaps between the current reality and the shared vision, and embrace collective accountability in establishing responsibility for closing the gap. (pp. 5-6)

The literature also suggests that consultants can be effective in professional development. A study in the Birmingham Public Schools investigated the effectiveness of a professional development writing intervention on teachers in grade three classrooms (Nurs, Abbott-Shin, & McCarty, 1999). University trainers delivered staff development. Findings indicate that teachers found demonstration lessons, on-site staff development, ongoing support throughout the year, supportive materials, and the expertise of the trainers as factors in making the staff development intervention successful. In evaluating professional development, many studies utilize Gukey's (2002) five critical levels of professional development evaluation.

1. Level 1 - Participants' Reactions
2. Level 2 - Participants' Learning
3. Level 3 - Organizational Support and Change
4. Level 4 - Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills
5. Level 5 - Student Learning Outcomes
Conclusion

Improving the teaching of writing is paramount to the future of education. The literature supports the current researcher’s premise that staff development is an important component in improving student writing. University of Texas researcher William Teale reports, “Good writing is high level thinking” and that giving learners useful feedback is “a difficult task. It’s not that teachers can’t do it, but it takes a lot of teacher education to make it happen” (as cited in Lucas, 1993, p. 6). The National Commission on Writing (2003) reports that “teacher professional development rarely offers teachers an opportunity to see themselves as writers—to experience the power and satisfaction of writing as a means of learning and self-expression” (p. 23). McRel’s (2001) research suggests that, “The content of professional development must be directly linked to the curriculum teachers are implementing in their classrooms. When staff development is connected to subject matter, it has much more impact on students’ achievement” (p. 42).
CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

The design for this research was case study. Krathwohl (1998) describes case study as being "bounded by a particular individual, situation, program, institution, time period, or set of events. Within those boundaries, whatever is the focus of attention is described within the perspective of the context surrounding it" (p. 332). This case study examined the use of a writing consultant as a professional development model for elementary school teachers during a two-year period. The participants included the teacher writing consultant, who completed an in-depth interview with the researcher, and second- and third-grade teachers who completed a survey that investigates their perceptions of the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project (DEGWP) model utilized in the Victory School District.

Sample

Writing Consultant

The teacher writing consultant was selected to deliver the staff development because of her master's degree in reading and proven success with students with reading and writing disabilities. The teacher writing consultant participated in an in-
depth interview with the researcher. The purpose of the interview was to determine the consultant's perceptions of the expectations and outcomes of the program.

Second-Grade Teachers

The twenty-three (23) second-grade teachers who were serviced by the teacher writing consultant during the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years were asked to complete a survey regarding their perceptions of the DEGWCP. (The consultant provided a less intensive consultant model for these teachers during the 2003-2004 school year.) The survey included a personal data section for each teacher to identify: age, gender, race, school and grade levels taught during the last two years of the project, total years of teaching experience, and highest educational degree attained.

Third-Grade Teachers

The twenty-five (25) third-grade teachers who were serviced by the teacher writing consultant during the 2003-2004 school year were asked to complete a survey regarding their perceptions of the DEGWCP. This survey also included a personal data section for each teacher to identify: age, gender, race, school and grade levels taught the two years of the project last two years, total number of years teaching experience, and highest educational degree attained.

The teacher participants in this case study were not randomly selected. They were requested to participate in the study by the researcher.
Background and Setting for this Study

This case study examined a writing intervention program that took place in the elementary schools of the Victory Public Schools, a 73-acre suburban school district on Long Island, New York, located twenty miles east of New York City. The community of 32,000 working class residents has evolved over the years to represent a multicultural and diverse socioeconomic population. The student population is 69% Black, 28% Hispanic, 1.7% White, and 1.4% other ethnicities. Victory Public Schools is considered a desirable community because of its proximity to New York City and its low tax rate. The district’s schools do well on the New York State assessments and have been listed on the state’s most improved lists. One of the elementary schools was named a “NYS School of Excellence” in the 1990s and, most recently, a middle school was selected as a “No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.” In 2004, a high school student was selected as an Intel Science Talent Search finalist.

The Victory School District contains eight schools, including one senior high school (grades 9-12), two middle schools (grades 6-8), and five elementary schools (grades K-5). The district has an enrollment of approximately 6,400 students with a total per pupil expenditure of approximately $16,745, which is higher than the state average of $12,265. Approximately ten percent of the student body is English Language Learners (ELL). The five elementary schools where the DEGWCP was implemented are described in Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Student Built</th>
<th>Student Mobility</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Free Lunch</th>
<th>Special Education Room</th>
<th>English Language Learners</th>
<th>Attendance Rate</th>
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<td>338</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
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Description of the District Early Grades Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP)

The Victory Public School District implemented the District Early Grades Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP) as part of the district’s Professional Development Plan in 2002. The DEGWCP was a staff development writing program developed by the writing consultant in conjunction with the district’s English Language Arts Director and Special Education Director. The program was initially administered during the 2002-2003 school year second grade students and to second and grade teachers. Throughout the 2003-2004 school, this same cohort of students, who were now third graders and third grade teachers, received the intervention delivered by the writing consultant.

The DEGWCP was a supplement to the district’s adopted elementary, K-5, English Language Arts curriculum. The program was designed to provide students with intensive support in order to improve their basic writing skills and to ensure structured writing time during the school day. The DEGWCP provided a writing consultant to work as a trainer/coach in a collaborative model. The writing consultant modeled effective writing strategies in each classroom, and then met with each teacher serving as a coach/mentor. The format was unique in that the writing consultant modeled writing strategies in the classroom for both the teachers and students. Each session was followed by a period of mentoring, where the teachers would ask specific questions of the consultant to improve their instructional writing strategies. Each succeeding training session was designed to build on what the teachers and students had previously learned.
In 2002-2003, year one of the program, the writing consultant modeled for the second-grade students and teachers such writing skills as: planning a story using a web, practice listening, note-taking, analysis of questions, analysis of responses, using rubric grades, revising, and editing. In the second year, 2003-2004, the writing consultant modeled for the third-grade teachers and the cohort who were now third grader students. The skills modeled were similar to those in grade two and, in addition, included different types of writing, such as narrative essay and persuasive essays, how to write an essay and how to compare and contrast essays. The writing consultant utilized the trainer/coach model with the third-grade teachers and consulted for four sessions with the second-grade teachers.

The DEGWCP was conducted for 90 days each school year. The third-grade classes received a 30-minute lesson followed by a 15-minute conference, totaling 45 minutes for each session. Each third-grade class received 12 visits. The program began in late September and was completed in either March or April, depending on the schedule of each individual school.

The DEGWCP was initiated in September 2002, after receiving board approval. The funding was made possible by a grant and the program is included in the district’s Comprehensive Professional Development Plan.

Instrumentation

Writing Consultant Interview

Utilizing program evaluation and professional development literature as a guide, the researcher developed interview questions for the teacher writing consultant.
who delivered the staff development writing program. The questions are open-ended and designed to provide the consultant with the opportunity to share information as well as express her feelings, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the DEGWCP (Cowl, 1996). A jury of experts that included three (3) elementary principals, an English Language Arts director, and the director of research validated the questions for content and construct validity. Any necessary revisions and or clarifications were made before administering the survey. A list of the seven questions can be found in Appendix A.

Teacher Survey

Although the staff development of teachers delivering instruction and the materials used for instruction in the DEGWCP were the same for all teachers, the researcher recognized that the perceptions of the DEGWCP could vary among the teachers. Accordingly, the researcher constructed the teacher survey using information from the consultant interview conducted in this study, the Victory District’s Comprehensive Professional Development Plan, New York State English Language Arts Learning Standards, New York State Test of Standards (TONYSS) for Grade 3, New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment for Grade 4, and Guskey’s (2002) critical levels of professional development evaluation. A jury of experts that included four (4) college professors and a director of research validated the questions for content and face validity. Any necessary revisions and or clarifications were made before administering the survey.

The DEGWCP survey included a personal data section for each teacher to
identify: age, gender, race, school and grade levels taught during the last two years of the project, total number of years teaching experience, and highest educational degree or credits attained. The questions regarding the writing program were categorized into six sections and a 5-point Likert-type scale was used to record teacher responses. The categories examined in the survey were: (1) Goals/Expectations/Outcomes, (2) Consultant Behaviors, (3) Program Format, (4) Student Behaviors, (5) Program Effectiveness, and (6) Program Recommendations. For each question, the teacher participants were required to circle a number using the following scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree. The Teacher Survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

Data Collection and Reporting

Writing Consultant Interview

The researcher conducted the writing consultant interview at the Grape School. The researcher met with the consultant to elicit her goals, objectives, and methodologies for the staff development writing program. The in-depth interview was tape-recorded and the researcher also took handwritten notes. The consultant provided the researcher with the lesson plans that were used for the staff development intervention. The lesson plans were used to confirm emerging findings and enhance internal validity (Merriam, 2001).

Teacher Survey

The forty-seven second- and third-grade teachers who participated in the
DEGWCP completed a survey instrument developed by the researcher to determine their perceptions of the writing program. The teachers were informed of the survey at each school's grade level meeting during the month of June 2005 by the building principal. The survey was distributed to the participants and they were asked to return the survey to the building principal no later than June 24, 2005. The building principal forwarded the completed surveys to the researcher in a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The results of the writing section of the third-grade Test of New York State Standards (TONYSS) administered in May 2004 were collected from the Victory School District.

Data Analysis

Writing Consultant Interview

Merriam (2001) describes a case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single, bounded unit. The goal of the data analysis is linked to the fact that data have usually been derived from interviews, field observations, and documents" (p. 193). The consultant's perceptions were written descriptively by the researcher.

Teacher Survey

The responses to the teacher survey were categorized according to the following themes: (1) Goals/Expectations/Outcomes, (2) Consultant Behaviors, (3) Program Format, (4) Student Behaviors, (5) Program Effectiveness, and (6) Program
Recommendations. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. The means and standard deviations of the responses are presented in table form to illustrate the frequencies and patterns of responses. The personal data from the teacher respondents are presented in the form of frequency tables. Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted on the perception scores of the DEGWCP and the teachers' teaching experience and educational level.

Test of New York State Standards (TONYSS)-Grade 3

The results of the writing section of the TONYSS were analyzed for means and standard deviations. A Pearson product-moment correlation for each school was conducted to determine the relationship between the students' TONYSS writing scores and the scores of the teachers' perceptions of the DEGWCP.

Research Design

This study was designed to examine the teachers' perceptions of the writing consultant as a professional development model for elementary school teachers. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were utilized by the researcher. Survey research methodology was employed to collect data regarding the teachers' perceptions of the DEGWCP. A five-point Likert-type scale survey was used. An interview was utilized to collect data from the writing consultant. Findings from the survey and the interview were used as a summative evaluation of the DEGWCP. A summative evaluation is used to make "decisions of whether to continue, discontinue, or to expand a program" (Krauthwohl, 1998, p. 598). The Victory School District will
be able to apply the results and recommendations from this study to improve the administrators' ability to suggest professional development models.
CHAPTER IV
Presentation of Data and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter will present the descriptive data collected from the survey and the interview with the teacher consultant regarding the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP) as well as an analysis of the data. A total of forty-seven (47) teachers completed the survey and one (1) teacher consultant was interviewed. The qualitative data from the survey and interview were evaluated according to the methodology described earlier in Chapter III.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of elementary school teachers who participated in teaching writing to students using a teacher/coach model of staff development over an extended period of time. The questions guiding this research were:

1. Did the consultant perceive that the students' writing improved as a result of the DEGWCP?

2. What were the teachers' perceptions of this model of professional development?

3. Did the teachers perceive that their students' writing improved as a result of the DEGWCP?
4. What is the relationship between the students’ writing scores on the third-grade Test of New York State Standards (TONYSS) and the teachers’ perceptions of the DEGWCP?

5. Is there a difference in teachers’ perceptions as it relates to years of teaching experience?

6. Is there a difference in teachers’ perceptions as it relates to the teachers’ educational level?

The Consultant

The consultant who was the coach for this model of professional development was a white female teacher in the 41-50 years age category. She holds a master’s degree in reading and had 15 years of teaching and working with students with learning disabilities, before participating in this professional development model.

The Respondents

All forty-seven (47) elementary teachers in the Victory School District who participated in the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project during 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 completed the survey. The first part of the survey (see Appendix A) asked for the respondents’ demographic information, which is presented in Table 2. It includes the gender, race, age, number of years of teaching experience, and educational level of the participating teachers. Most of the teachers were female (91.5%). The majority identified themselves as White (66.9%), followed by 25.5% as African-American, 4.3% Hispanic, 2.1% Asian and 2.1% other. Their ages ranged
Table 2
Demographic Data of Sample from the Victory School District Teacher Participants in the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP) (N = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued
Table 2 (cont’d.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Years Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
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<td>16-20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA + 30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA + 45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA + 60</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
from 21 to more than 50 years old, with the 31-40 years age group comprising the largest percentage (45.7%). The range of teaching experience for the respondents was anywhere from 1 to more than 30 years, with the majority (31.9%) having taught for anywhere from 6 to 10 years. Regarding their educational level, the largest group of teacher participants had a Masters' degree (49%), followed by 19.1% with a Masters' + 60 credits, and 8.5% with a Masters' + 45 credits. Only 4.3% of the teacher participants had only a Bachelor's degree, and none had a doctorate.

Statistical Analysis

The second part of the survey (see Appendix A) contained thirty-six statements that were sub-divided into six (6) sections regarding the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP) in the Victory School District. The six sections examined participating teachers' perceptions in the following areas: (1) the goals, expectations, and outcomes of the program; (2) the consultant's behaviors; (3) the program's format; (4) their students' behaviors; (5) the program's effectiveness; and (6) program recommendations. The participants in the DEGWCP responded to the statements in the six sections using a five-point Likert-type scale. Five of the sections used a scale coded as follows: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Uncertain = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1. Section Four also used a Likert-type scale; however, the scale was coded based on the teachers' perceptions of the students' behaviors as follows: 5 = 81-100% students, 4 = 61-80% students, 3 = 41-60% students, 2 = 21-40% students, and 1 = 0-20% students.
All of the statements in the survey were all worded positively. Consequently, in five of the sections, the closer the score was to 5, the more the participant agreed with the statement, and the closer the score was to 1, the less the participant agreed with the statement. In section four, the participants’ perceptions of students’ behaviors, the closer the number was to 5, the higher the percentage of students who were perceived as exhibiting the behaviors described in the survey, and the closer the number was to 1, the lower the percentage of students who were identified as exhibiting the behaviors described in the survey.

Research Question #1

“Did the consultant perceive that the students’ writing improved as a result of the DEGWCP?”

The researcher interviewed the consultant using the following seven open-ended questions to gather information pertaining to the above question.

1. What was the purpose of the writing project you implemented?

   The consultant indicated that the assistant superintendent for curriculum wanted to increase the writing scores in the district. In addition, it was designed to enhance the writing program that was part of the new EIA series the district had just adopted.

2. What were the goals, directives and target populations that you and the district agreed upon for the writing project? Was there a planning process? Who was involved? How was it developed?

   One of the goals was to enhance the writing program for the second graders; in
the following year it was extended to the same students who were then third graders. The skills the consultant targeted were aligned to the NYS ELA assessment: writing a personal narrative, descriptive writing, as well as short answer and extended writing responses to reading passages. In addition, the students had to respond in writing to listening passages. The students were also asked to respond in writing to two non-fiction articles. This often involved comparing and contrasting skills.

The consultant indicated that little planning was undertaken; however, whatever planning did occur took place with the ELA director. She indicated that the program evolved based on what was working and what was not working with the learners.

The consultant and the ELA director decided to base the teaching on the parallel assessment tests. The consultant modeled this for the teachers in the classroom with the students three days in a row: on day one she modeled just writing; on day two she modeled how to respond to a listening task; and on day three she modeled how to respond to a reading/writing task. Each day of modeling was followed by a conference session with the teacher during which the teachers also reported on what was working and what the learners were having difficulty with.

3. What classroom structures did you identify, modify, change and/or eliminate to achieve increased teacher delivery effectiveness (groupings, time, questions, daily tasks, homework, etc.)?

The consultant spent 45 minutes in each classroom. Each class received a 30-minute lesson taught by the consultant, followed by a 15-minute conference between the classroom teacher and consultant. The teachers were asked to work with the
students on the skills that the consultant had modeled. Each class received 12 visits over the course of about six to seven months. The tasks were modified based on teacher/student strengths. The consultant found that different teachers yielded different results regarding the students' writing skills. The better discipline the teacher had in the classroom, the better the learners did on their writing tasks. Classroom management also played an important part in how well the students did on their writing. The second grade teachers were encouraged to look at one specific skill when grading papers. For example, if the teachers were looking at mechanics, they were advised not to worry about whether the students used descriptive words. The consultant persuaded the teachers to add more skills as the students progressed. 

4. What writing skills did you model and/or change for teachers during this project?

The consultant changed the modeling of skills according to the ELA assessment. She said that she would change the emphasis in some classrooms based on which skills she saw the teachers having difficulty teaching. For example, she observed that one teacher had trouble getting the students to take notes, so the consultant did more modeling of that skill. She also changed the modeling to resemble items that the students would find on the assessments.

The consultant used fiction books to illustrate using descriptive words. She modeled how to write stories with great beginnings; how to use details, and, how to use voice.

5. What writing skills did you model and/or change for students during this project?

The consultant changed her emphasis for the students based on the how the ELA assessment was graded. Because mechanics was an area that was not emphasized in
the ELA, the consultant focused on reading/writing with short as well as long response questions. She used the college model for writing with the students. This model had an introductory paragraph, the second paragraph had information from the first text, the third paragraph had information from the second text, and the final paragraph contained the conclusion. The students were taught transition words that would help them to put it together.

The consultant also modeled how the students needed to respond to the listening component. She wrote the responses on chart paper so that the pupils would have visual cues.

She emphasized that the students needed a great deal of modeling before they became successful at responding to reading and listening pieces. The learners kept index cards in their writing folders that the teacher wanted them to work on. The students would go to the teacher’s desk to review the skill on the index card.

6. In what way is your DEGWCP project different from the program outlined in the district’s adopted English Language Arts (ELA) series?

According to the consultant, the DEGWCP was more aligned to the ELA and the NYS parallel tasks. The ELA series had no parallel tasks that mirrored the assessment. The reading/writing skills presented in the ELA series were distinct skills, such as cause and effect and synonyms and antonyms. The writing skills were not aligned to the ELA assessment and did little to prepare the students for the it.

7. What evidence do you have that you were successful in reaching your goals? What is the district's design for evaluating the success of the DEGWCP?

The consultant stated that there was no formal evaluation of the DEGWCP.
The second-grade students took the Multiple Skills Assessment (MSA) which had a writing component. The consultant felt that the program was successful based on the learners’ participation and that their writing products, which had improved over time. She stressed that at the end of the program the students were adept at proofreading their peers' papers.

During the interview, the consultant made the following recommendations:

1. More supervision from the ELA director and the principals;
2. Student writing folders should be evaluated at the beginning and end of the program;
3. Benchmark exams should be introduced to determine the learners' strengths and weaknesses. This would enable the consultant to plan and adjust lessons.

Overall, the writing consultant felt that the students' writing improved as a result of the staff development she provided. The full transcript of the interview can be found in Appendix C.

Research Question #2

"What were the teachers' perceptions of this model of professional development?"

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for each of the four positively worded statements in Section One regarding the teachers' perceptions of the goals, expectations, and outcomes of the DEGWCP. The means for the 4 items ranged from 2.20 to 3.93 (on a scale of 1 - 5). The standard deviations ranged from 0.65 to 1.08, indicating that the variability of responses was relatively small. The participants
### Table 3

**Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions – Section One: The Teachers’ Perceptions of the Goals, Expectations, and Outcomes of the DEGWCP (N = 47)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals/Expectations/Outcomes</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M*</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The goals of the program were explained to me prior to the intervention.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The program outcomes met my expectations.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prior to the program implementation, I had input regarding the format of the program.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When the program ended, I was asked for feedback from an administrator</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Range of scores: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = uncertain; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.

agreed most with the statements that the goals were explained to them prior to the intervention (M = 3.93) and that the program outcomes met their expectations (M = 3.83). The statement that they were asked for feedback when the program ended fell in the uncertain range (M = 3.47). The lower mean score for the item regarding program implementation (M = 2.23) indicated that the participants disagreed with the statement
that they had input regarding the format of the program prior to the implementation of the DEGWCP.

Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for each of the 10 statements in Section Two regarding the teachers' perceptions of the consultant's behaviors during the DEGWCP. The means ranged from 3.91 to 4.52 (on a scale of 1 - 5), indicating that the participants agreed with most of the positively-stated statements about the consultant's behaviors during the DEGWCP. The standard deviations ranged from 0.55 to 0.96, indicating that the variability of responses was very small. The respondents were in strong agreement that the consultant was organized (M = 4.50) and had a clear objective for each lesson (M = 4.52). The participants also felt strongly that the consultant modeled how to use details to support and illustrate ideas (M = 4.46). Respondents agreed somewhat less about whether the consultant modeled how to vary sentences and structure for better fluency (M = 3.98), and whether she modeled revising and editing techniques using students' writing (M = 3.91). In essence, their responses to the items regarding the consultant's behaviors indicated that they were more satisfied than not with the program format.

Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations of the four positively worded statements in Section Three regarding the teachers' perceptions of the program's format. The means ranged from 2.79 to 4.19 indicating somewhat more varying levels of agreement with the four items. The standard deviations ranged from 0.61 to 1.10 indicating that the variability of responses was small. The participants agreed most with the statement that they found it helpful collaborating with the consultant (M = 4.19). They were somewhat more uncertain as to whether the
### Table 4

**Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions – Section Two: The Teachers’ Perceptions of the Consultant’s Behaviors During the DEGWCP (N = 47)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant’s Behaviors</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M^a</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The consultant was organized.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The consultant had a clear objective for each session.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The consultant modeled how to sustain a clear focus, making writing a unified whole.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The consultant modeled how to present ideas in a logical order, by using transitional language and techniques.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The consultant modeled how to use details to support and illustrate ideas.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The consultant modeled how to analyze and make connections among relevant ideas.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The consultant modeled how to vary sentences and structure for better fluency.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The consultant modeled how to use precise and interesting words.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued*
Table 4 (cont’d.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant’s Behaviors</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M^a</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. The consultant modeled revising and editing techniques utilizing the students’ writing.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The consultant modeled note taking techniques for the listening passages.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aRange of scores: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = uncertain; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.
Table 5
Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions – Section Three: Teachers’
Perceptions of the Program’s Format (N = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Format</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M (a)</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The consultant provided sufficient time for collaboration following a lesson.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I felt I could change the objective of a lesson to best meet the needs of my students.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I needed more modeling in a specific skill that was not provided by the consultant.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I found collaborating with the consultant helpful.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Range of scores: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = uncertain; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.

The consultant provided sufficient time for collaborating after a lesson (M = 3.57) and if they felt that they could change the lesson’s objective to best meet their students’ needs (M = 3.53). The respondents disagreed with the statement that they needed more modeling in a specific skill that was not provided by the consultant (M = 2.79).
In essence, their responses to the items regarding the program format indicated that they were more satisfied than not with the program format.

Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations of the ten items in Section Four regarding the teachers' perceptions of improvements in their students' writing abilities as related to the DEGWCP. This section differed from the other five in that it asked for respondents' responses within the context of increased student ability. The Likert-type scale required the teachers to indicate the percentage of students who had demonstrated an increase in their abilities in ten specific skill areas as follows: 5 = 81-100% students demonstrated increased abilities; 4 = 61-80% students demonstrated increased abilities; 3 = 41-60% demonstrated increased abilities; 2 = 21-40% demonstrated increased abilities; 1 = 0-20% demonstrated increased abilities. The means for the ten items ranged from 2.74 to 3.61 indicating that, on average, the teachers perceived that 41–60% of their students demonstrated increased abilities in most of the writing skills outlined in Section Four. The standard deviations ranged from 0.61 to 1.04, indicating the variability of responses was small. The largest percentage of students reported to show improvement in their abilities was in the area of using specific examples and details to support and illustrate ideas (M = 3.61). The area in which the teachers reported the least improvement in ability was that of students being able to revise and edit their writing (M = 2.74).

Table 7 presents the means and standard deviations of the five items in Section Five regarding the teachers' perceptions of the program's effectiveness. The means ranged from 3.67 (some degree of uncertainty about program's effectiveness) to 4.09
Table 6
Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Items – Section Four: Teachers’
Perceptions of Improvements in Their Students’ Writing Abilities as Related to the
DEGWCP (N = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' Writing Abilities</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The students were able to sustain a clear focus, making their writing a unified whole.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The students were able to organize information in a logical order and used transitional language and techniques.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The students were able to use specific examples and details to support and illustrate ideas.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The students showed thoughtful analysis and made connections among relevant ideas.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The students varied sentences and structure for better fluency.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The students used precise and interesting words.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The students were able to take notes from listening to a passage read to them.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued
Table 6 (cont’d.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Writing Abilities</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. The students were able to utilize their notes to respond to a listening passage.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The students were able to read two passages and then respond in writing, and show a link between the two passages.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The students were able to revise and edit their writing.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Likert-type scale ratings: 5 = 81 - 100% students; 4 = 61 - 80% students; 3 = 41 - 60% students; 2 = 21 - 40% students; 1 = 0 - 20% students.
Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions – Section Five: Teachers’ Perceptions of the Program’s Effectiveness (N = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Effectiveness</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The writing behaviors of my students improved as a result of this program</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I learned strategies that improved my delivery of writing instruction.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This program better prepared my students for the TONYSS.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This program was a good supplement to the ELA series utilized by the district.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I learned writing strategies that improved my delivery of writing instruction.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Range of scores: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = uncertain; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.*
(a mild degree of agreement that the program was effective), indicating some variation in the participants' perceptions about its effectiveness. The standard deviations ranged from 0.72 to 0.87, indicating the variability of responses was small. The respondents agreed with the statements that the DEGWCP taught them strategies that improved their delivery of writing instruction (M = 4.04) and that it was a good supplement to the ELA (English Language Arts) series used in the district (M = 4.09). There was some degree of uncertainty among the participants about whether the program better prepared their students for the TONYSS (M = 3.67) or whether their students' writing behaviors improved as a result of the DEGWCP (M = 3.85). Yet, on balance, the data indicate that the teachers agreed that the program had been effective.

Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations for the three items in Section Six which dealt with the teachers' responses regarding program recommendations. The means ranged from 4.06 to 4.17 indicating that the participants agreed with all three statements regarding program recommendations, essentially wanting to see the program continued at their grade level and at other grade levels in the following year. The standard deviations ranged from 0.81 to 0.82, indicating the variability of responses was small.

Research Question #3

"Did the teachers perceive that their students' writing improved as a result of the DEGWCP?"

The ten questions in Section Four were designed to determine how much the participants felt their students' writing had improved as a result of their participation
Table 8
Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions – Section Six: Teachers’ Responses Regarding Program Recommendations \( (N = 47) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Recommendations</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would like to see the program continue with my grade level next year.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I would like to see the program continue with the next grade level next year.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I would like to see more grade levels included in this program next year.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( ^a \)Range of scores: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = uncertain; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.

in the DEGWCP and the changes they had made in their writing instruction. The teachers were asked to rate each question on a scale that allowed them to indicate what percentage of their students showed a change in that particular writing skill, as follows: For example: 5 = 81-100% students; 4 = 61-80% students; 3 = 41-60% students; 2 = 21- 40% students; and 1 = 0-20% students. Overall, the results presented in Table 9 indicate that the teachers felt that a sizeable percentage of their students’
Table 9
Frequencies and Percentages for Survey Questions – Section Four Teachers’
Perceptions of Changes in Students’ Writing as a Result of the DEC3WCP (N = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Behavior</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The students were able to sustain a clear focus, making their writing a unified whole.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The students were able to organize information in a logical order and used transitional language and techniques.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Behavior</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. The students were able to use specific examples and details to support and</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illustrate ideas.</td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The students showed thoughtful analysis and made connections among relevant</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideas.</td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The students varied sentences and structure for better fluency.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Behavior</td>
<td>% of Students</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>% of Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The students used precise and interesting words.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The students were able to take notes from listening to a passage read to them.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The students were able to utilize their notes to respond to a listening passage.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Behavior</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. The students were able to read two passages and then respond in writing, and show a link between the two passages.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The students were able to revise and edit their writing.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

writing had improved as a result of the DEGWCP. For example, for item #3: “student ability to use specific examples and details to support and illustrate ideas,” almost 44% of the teachers believed that anywhere from 61% to 80% of the students had shown improvement; for item #2: “organize information in a logical order and use
transitional language and techniques" 41% of the teachers believed that anywhere from 61% to 80% of the students had shown improvement; and for item #7: "take notes from listening to a passage read to them" 37% of the teachers believed that anywhere from 61% to 80% of the students had shown improvement. According to 33% of the teachers, however, the students showed least improvement in item #9: "revising and editing their writing," skills they also felt had not been as adequately addressed in the program (see Table 4).

Research Question #4

"What is the relationship between the students' writing scores on the third grade Test of New York State Standards (TONYSS) and the teachers' perceptions of the DE/GWCP?"

Tables 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18 present the means and standard deviations of the teachers' perceptions at each of the five individual schools in the Victory School District, identified here as Blueberry, Grape, Peach, Apple, and Orange. The means indicate how much the teachers agreed with the survey questions. The standard deviations indicated some variability in the participants' responses. However, the standard deviations in section four, specifically regarding student behaviors, showed the greatest variability of responses among the teachers. This was true for all five of the schools.

Tables 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19 display the 2004 writing scores of the third grade students on the TONYSS at each of the five individual schools in the Victory School District. The tables with the TONYSS data also include the scores from third graders
tested in the year 2003. It should be noted that this information is provided as historical data to give the reader background on the performance of a different cohort of students tested the year before, without the benefit of the intervention. Table 28 shows the total mean scores of the teachers’ perceptions of the DEGWCP by school, across all six sections of the survey. The standard deviations showed a range of 7.26 to 18.63, which indicated there was some variability of responses. The highest possible score was 186, which would indicate very favorable perceptions of the program by all the participating teachers from that school. The Blueberry School had the highest mean score for teachers’ perceptions of the DEGWCP program with (M = 144.27) and the Orange School had the lowest score (M = 119.42). Table 21 presents the students’ writing scores for each of the five schools in rank order. The Orange School had the highest students’ writing scores with 78% of the students’ scores falling into the level 3 (Proficient) and 4 (Advanced) categories. The Apple School had the lowest students’ writing scores with only 28% of the students’ scores at levels 3 and 4. In order to maintain confidentiality, the individual teachers’ responses were anonymous and, therefore, the students’ scores could not be matched to them. For this reason, it was not possible for the researcher to determine whether there was a relationship between the students’ writing score on the TONYSS and the teachers’ perceptions of the DEGWCP. However, it was possible to get a mean score for each school’s teachers’ perceptions and each school’s percentage of student writing levels. The Blueberry School, which had the highest mean score for positive teacher perceptions (M = 144.27, see Table 20) did not have the highest students’ writing scores (51% of its students scored at levels 3 and 4, see Table 21). On the other hand, the Orange
School, which had the highest students' writing scores (78% of its students scored at levels 3 and 4, see Table 21) had the lowest mean scores for positive teacher perceptions ($M = 119.42$).
Table 16

Blueberry School Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions in all Six Sections (N = 12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.18</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45.25</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.75</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34.66</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.75</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>141.27</td>
<td>14.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Range of scores: Section I =1-20; Section II =1-50; Section III =1-20; Section IV =1-50; Section V =1-25; Section VI =1-15; Total =1-180.

The higher the score the more the respondents agreed with the questions.
Table 11

Blueberry School Frequency Data Related to Students' Writing Scores (N = 130)\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Level</th>
<th>2003 N</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
<th>2004 N</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 – Below Basic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 – Basic</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>46.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 – Proficient</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 – Advanced</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}The N (2004) refers to the number of children in this school who participated in the program through their teachers who comprised the sample for this case study.
Table 12

Grape School Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions in all SIX Sections
(N = 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.60</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.33</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.16</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>136.20</td>
<td>7.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Range of scores: Section I =1-20; Section II =1-50; Section III =1-20;
Section IV =1-50; Section V =1-25; Section VI =1-15; Total =1-180.
The higher the score the more the respondents agreed with the questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Level</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 – Below Basic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 – Basic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 – Proficient</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 – Advanced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The N (2004) refers to the number of children in this school who participated in the program through their teachers who comprised the sample for this case study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.44</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41.77</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.44</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31.88</td>
<td>9.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.66</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.09</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>134.22</td>
<td>18.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Range of scores: Section I =1-20; Section II =1-50; Section III =1-20; Section IV =1-50; Section V =1-25; Section VI =1-15; Total =1-180.*

The higher the score the more the respondents agreed with the questions.
Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Level</th>
<th>2003 N</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
<th>2004 N</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 – Below Basic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 – Basic</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>56.00</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 – Proficient</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 – Advanced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The N (2004) refers to the number of children in this school who participated in the program through their teachers who comprised the sample for this case study.
Table 16

Apple School Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions in all Sections
(N = 13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.92</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.53</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.76</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29.50</td>
<td>6.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.41</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>131.50</td>
<td>16.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Range of scores: Section I =1-20; Section II =1-50; Section III =1-20; Section IV =1-50; Section V =1-25; Section VI =1-15; Total =1-180.

The higher the score the more the respondents agreed with the questions.
Table 17

Apple School Frequency Data Related to Students' Writing Scores (N = 126)\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Level</th>
<th>2003 N</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
<th>2004 N</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 – Below Basic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 – Basic</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49.00</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>61.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 – Proficient</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 – Advanced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)The N (2004) refers to the number of children in this school who participated in the program through their teachers who comprised the sample for this case study.
Table 18

Orange School Means and Standard Deviations for Survey Questions in all Six Sections (N = 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M^a</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37.71</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.85</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.28</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.14</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19.57</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>119.42</td>
<td>13.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aRange of scores: Section I =1-20; Section II =1-50; Section III =1-20;
Section IV =1-50; Section V =1-25; Section VI =1-15; Total =1-180.

The higher the score the more the respondents agreed with the questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Level</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% of Students</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 - Below Basic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 - Basic</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51.00</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 - Proficient</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43.08</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 - Advanced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The N (2004) refers to the number of children, in this school who participated in the program through their teachers who comprised the sample for this case study.
Table 20

Overall Means and Standard Deviations for Teachers’ Responses to all Six Survey Sections: Across all Five Schools (N = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blueberry</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>144.272</td>
<td>14.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>136.200</td>
<td>7.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>134.222</td>
<td>18.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>131.500</td>
<td>16.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>119.428</td>
<td>13.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Range of scores: 1-186. The higher the score the more the respondents agreed with the questions.*
Table 21
Total School Frequency Data Related to Students' Writing Scores (N = 499)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>1 %</th>
<th>2 %</th>
<th>3 %</th>
<th>4 %</th>
<th>3 &amp; 4 Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>78.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>52.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueberry</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>46.00</td>
<td>46.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>51.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grape</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>43.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>61.00</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>28.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Level 1 = Below Basic; Level 2 = Basic; Level 3 = Proficient; Level 4 = Advanced.

aThe N refers to the total number of children in all five schools who participated in the program through their teachers who comprised the sample for this case study.
the Orange School, which had the highest students' writing scores (78% of its students scored at levels 3 and 4, see Table 21) had the lowest mean scores for positive teacher perceptions ($M = 119.42$).

**Research Question #5**

"Is there a difference in teachers' perceptions as related to number of years of teaching experience?"

The correlation data for this question appear in Table 22. Correlations were computed for each of the six sections of the survey as they related to the teachers' years of experience. The correlation coefficients were extremely low and non-significant at the $p = .05$ level, ranging from $r = -.131$ to $r = .166$, thus indicating little if any relationship between the teachers' perceptions and the number of years they had been teaching.

**Research Question #6**

"Is there a difference in teachers' perceptions as it related to the teachers' educational level?"

The correlation data for this question appear in Table 23. Correlations were computed for all six sections of the survey as they related to the teachers' educational
Table 22

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients: Relationship Between to Teachers’ Perceptions of the DEGWCP and Number of Years of Teaching for Each of the Six Sections (n = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals /Expectations/Outcomes</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>.815</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Behaviors</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Format</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.395</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Behaviors</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.722</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Effectiveness</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Recommendations</td>
<td>-.131</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p < .05.

Note. None of the correlations were significant.

levels. The correlation coefficients were all extremely low, negative, and nonsignificant at the p = .05 level, ranging from r = -.006 to r = -.207, thus indicating little if any relationship between teachers’ perceptions and their educational level.
Table 23
Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients: Relationship Between to Teachers' Perceptions of the DEGWCP and Educational Level for Each of the Six Sections (N = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals /Expectations/Outcomes</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Behaviors</td>
<td>-.161</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Format</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>.969</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Behaviors</td>
<td>-.207</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Effectiveness</td>
<td>-.153</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Recommendations</td>
<td>-.145</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p < .05

Note: None of the correlations were significant.
CHAPTER V
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to examine perceptions regarding a teacher/coach staff development model, the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP) in grades two and three, in order to recommend curriculum evaluation and implementation policies and practices within the Victory Public Schools for future faculty training. The goal was to determine whether the perceptions of the writing consultant and teachers regarding the DEGWCP could serve as the basis for program continuation, modification, or elimination.

A review of the literature relating to writing, staff development, and program evaluation provided the rationale for this research. The literature examined the history of writing, writing strategies and processes, and the writing programs utilized in schools today. In addition, the different types of successful program evaluation and staff development models currently available were studied. This literature review provided the framework for the present case study. The case study method of research allowed for an in-depth study of a staff development model using qualitative research methods.

The sample size of 47 was limited to the second and third grade teachers in the
Victory School District who participated in the DEGWCP during the school years of 2002-2004. All 47 teachers completed the Personal Data Sheet and the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project Teacher Survey. Each question on the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project Teacher Survey asked the teacher to respond to a statement. The quantitative methods used to analyze the data included frequency distributions and Pearson product-moment correlations.

The writing consultant who provided the staff development was interviewed separately with open-ended questions. The writing consultant was encouraged to offer additional comments. The consultant's interview responses were recorded and qualitatively analyzed by the researcher for emerging themes. The results from the consultant interview responses were presented in narrative style.

Conclusions and Summary of the Findings

This section presents a summary of the findings and conclusions based on the analysis of the data for each research question.

Research Question #1

“Did the consultant perceive that the students’ writing improved as a result of the DEGWCP?”

The in-depth interview indicated that the writing consultant felt that the students’ writing had improved as a result of the DEGWCP. She saw evidence of this as she observed the students’ writing over the months during which she modeled in their classrooms. The consultant stated that because the ELA series the district had
purchased was not aligned to the NYS assessment, she revised the program to parallel those tasks. One major skill she taught the students was to take quick notes to stimulate writing.

The consultant stated that linking the reading and writing was the biggest challenge. She also reported that the students needed a great deal of modeling from the teachers before they became adept at certain writing skills. The students were very good at proofreading each others' papers and helping their peers with a particular skill. The consultant taught the teachers to separate student papers into piles, for example, papers with great beginnings, papers with great voice, papers with good mechanics, and papers with great descriptive words. The teachers were encouraged to use these as examples of good writing.

The consultant found that teacher behaviors and expectations had the biggest impact on their students' writing. For example, the better the teacher's discipline and classroom management techniques were, the better the students did on the writing task. The consultant saw more success with students who kept a writing folder or journal at their desk at all times, so that the writing continued all day long. The more writing the students completed on a daily basis, the more comfortable they were with writing and the more their writing improved. In addition, the teachers who felt comfortable with writing themselves had higher expectations for their learners. The consultant felt that when teachers did not focus specifically on mechanics, the students felt freer to write.

Discussion. The consultant's positive feelings about the project and student learning support the professional literature that states that consultants can be valuable
in professional development. Norris, Abbott-Shim, and McCarty (1999) found that demonstration lessons, on-site staff development, continuing support throughout the year, support materials, and the expertise of the trainers were key factors in making the staff development intervention successful. Miller, Wallace, DiBiase, and Nesbitt (1999) found that teaching requires extensive training and practice before a reasonable level of proficiency can be obtained. The consultant found that she needed more time to work with the students and teachers. She also found that both the teachers and students were able to effectively apply the new knowledge and skills as outlined in Gasky’s (2002) five levels of professional development evaluation, which are as follows: (1) participants’ reactions; (2) participants’ learning; and (3) organization support and change; (4) participants’ use of new knowledge and skills; and (5) students’ learning outcomes (p. 48).

**Research Question #2**

“What are the teachers’ perceptions of this model of professional development?”

**Goal, Expectations/Outcomes.** A majority of the teachers in the survey (79%) indicated that the goals of the program were explained to them prior to the staff development; 77% also agreed that the program outcomes met their expectations. However, 72% indicated that they had little input regarding the format of the program. Yet, 55% said they were asked for feedback when the program ended, while 23% were uncertain as to whether they were asked for feedback.

**Consultant Behaviors.** The teacher respondents overwhelmingly agreed with
all positively stated statements regarding the consultant’s behaviors during the staff
development, with percentages ranging from 77% to 98%. The lowest percentages
were found in the areas of the consultant’s modeling of how to vary sentences and
structure for better fluency, and her modeling of revising and editing techniques
utilizing the students’ writing.

Program Format. Although as many as 64% of the teacher respondents
indicated that they had sufficient time for collaboration after the consultant modeled
for the class, 25% wanted more time for collaboration and 11% were uncertain about
how they felt. Similarly, 64% of those surveyed indicated that they felt they could
change the objective of a lesson to suit their students. Only 24% indicated that they
needed more modeling in a specific skill. Overall, the vast majority of the participants
(94%) agreed that collaborating with the consultant was helpful.

Student Behaviors. The teachers were asked to indicate what percentage of
students had improved specific writing skills. A large percentage (70-94%) of the
respondents felt that 60-100% of their students had improved in the following areas:
their focus, organizational skills, use of transitional language and techniques, use of
specific examples and details to support and illustrate ideas, sentence structure,
making connections among relevant ideas, using precise and interesting words, taking
notes from listening to a passage, organizing notes to respond to a listening passage
and responding in writing to show a link between two reading passages. However,
only 57% of the teachers felt that the majority of their students had improved their
ability to revise and edit their writing.

Program Effectiveness. Again, the majority of the respondents (72%) felt that
the program was effective and that their students' writing behaviors had improved. In addition, 81% of the teachers felt they had learned strategies that improved their delivery of writing instruction; 57% of the teachers indicated that the DEGWCP better prepared their students for the Test of New York State Standards (TONYSS), and a sizeable majority (85%) of the respondents agreed that the program was a good supplement to the ELA series utilized by the district.

Program Recommendations. A majority of the teachers (75%) indicated that wanted to see the program continue with their current grade level the next year and as many as 85% of the respondents wanted to see the program continue with the next grade level the following year. This meant the same students, as they moved to the next grade, would continue to receive modeling by the writing consultant, and new teachers would receive the staff development. A sizeable majority of the teachers (85%) also wanted to see more grade levels included in the program.

Discussion. The results showing the teachers' favorable perceptions of this model of professional development support the previous research that found that "effective professional experiences provide opportunities for teachers to build their knowledge and skills; and use or model the strategies teachers will use with their students" (Carr & Harris, 2001). The results also align with those of Parks and Loucks-Horsely (1989), who describe effective staff development as a program conducted in a school setting; training that is concrete and ongoing over time; and ongoing assistance and support that is available upon request. In addition, the results from the present study are consistent with findings from the U.S. Department of Education (1999) that professional development has a stronger effect when it is
provided for teachers from the same grade and school.

An unexpected outcome of this study was that it provided a summative evaluation of the DEGWCP which the program itself did not offer. LeTendre and Lipka (2000) believe summative evaluations give information about program or intervention effectiveness, utility, or value. In their research on school program evaluation, Anderson and Ball (1978) outline the need to identify program changes which can be utilized to re-direct the program to the needs and interests of the learners while still achieving previously set objectives; the need to contribute to decisions about program continuation; and the need to document program development and activities to help ensure successful replication. The teachers found that, overall, the program was effective, and they wanted to see the program continue. However, there were specific areas that needed modification for the future. Without the summative data from this current study, these recommendations may not have been made evident.

Research Question #3

"Did the teachers perceive that the students' writing improved as a result of the DEGWCP?"

Asked to indicate what percentage of students had improved specific writing skills, a large percentage of the teachers (70-94%) felt that 60-100% of their students had improved their focus, organizational skills, use of transitional language and techniques, use of specific examples and details to support and illustrate ideas, sentence structure, making connections among relevant ideas, using precise and interesting words, taking notes from listening to a passage, organizing notes to
respond to a listening passage, and responding in writing to show a link between two reading passages. However, only 57% of the teachers felt that the majority of their students had improved their ability to revise and edit their writing.

Discussion. The results of this survey that show professional development translated into increases in student learning and performance supports the position of Darling-Hammond and Ball (1998) and Shulman (1986) who found that content knowledge is crucial for teachers to deliver subject matter in a manner understandable to students. Researchers have found that when school districts include an organizational goal for professional development, it can result in increased student learning and performance (Harwell, D’Amico, Stein, & Gatti, 2000; Porter et al., 2000; Renyi, 1996; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000; Vacek, Bright, & Bowman, 1998). The teacher/coach model of professional development researched in this case study, the District Early Grades Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP), included effective practices outlined in Spark and Loucks-Horsley’s (1989) research that focused on demonstration, and feedback.

Research Question #4

“What is the relationship between the students’ writing scores on the third-grade Test of New York State Standards (TONYSS) and the teachers’ perceptions of the DEGWCP?”

The range of teacher perceptions of the program by school ranged from a mean of 119.43 to 144.27 out of a possible maximum score of 180, with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions. The range of students’ writing scores by school
in levels 3 and 4 ranged from 28% at the Apple School to 78% at the Orange School. The Blueberry School, which had the highest mean score for positive teacher perceptions did not have the highest students' writing scores. On the other hand, the Orange School, which had the highest students' writing scores had the lowest mean scores for positive teacher perceptions. The data does not explain this inconsistency, however, it is possible that the discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that the teachers in the Orange School had demonstrated effective writing skills before the intervention and felt that it had minimal effect on their delivery of instruction. Because the scores regarding teacher perceptions at the Orange School were not aligned with the other school, an in-depth interview with a teacher from the school might have provided a possible explanation. However, further investigation would be necessary to determine why this inconsistency occurred in the data. The researcher was unable to establish a relationship between the students' writing scores on the TONYSS and the teachers' perceptions of the DEGWCP because, in an effort to maintain confidentiality, the teachers' responses were anonymous and, therefore, the students' scores could not be matched to particular teachers. Because this data was too general, this information did not prove valuable.

Research Question #5

"Is there a difference in teachers' perceptions related to years of teaching experience?"

The data indicated that there was little if any correlation between the teachers' perceptions and the number of years of teaching experience. The obtained correlation
coefficients were negligible, ranging from -.003 to -.166, and were not statistically significant.

**Discussion.** There is little research regarding how teaching experience affects perceptions of staff development. For example, Clifton (2003) found that there is no significant difference in teacher's opinions as a function of their years of teaching experience. The current case study also found little correlation between teachers' perceptions of staff development and the number of years of teaching experience.

**Research Question #6**

"Is there a difference in teachers' perceptions as related to the teachers' educational level?"

Once again, the obtained correlation coefficients were negligible, ranging from -.006 to -.207 and non-significant, indicating little if any correlation between the teachers' perceptions and their educational level.

**Discussion.** Although there is little research on how teachers' educational level affects their perceptions of staff development, the limited research that exists indicate that there is no relationship between educational degree attained and teachers' attitudes toward professional development aimed at increase and maintain instructional competencies (Ruberto, 2003). The current case study also found little if any correlation between teachers' perceptions of staff development and the teachers' educational level."
Implications for Policy and Practice

In addition to the federal and state focus on writing through standards and assessments, this study suggests that the design and implementation of writing programs must be given direction through local school district policy statements. Policy and regulations must state the need for a systematic, ongoing program of writing program development and evaluation involving students, parents, and administrators. This study provides data for the effective design and implementation of a writing professional development program that can be included in a guide for professional development.

This study suggests the design of a specific writing professional development program that will enhance teacher delivery capacity. It focuses on the context and culture in which new learning for teachers was implemented through the writing intervention, and the process or means for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by teachers. The findings suggest that the critical attributes in this consultant/teacher model were the leadership and sustained support provided by the consultant/teacher, and the time provided to teachers to participate and practice new strategies. These elements should be identified in Board of Education policy design for professional development.

This study with elementary school teachers has implications for teacher preparation programs and school district human resource personnel. The findings suggest that teachers were deficient in the teaching of writing at the grade levels in this school district. The criticality of writing to students suggests that all teachers should be adept in the teaching of writing across all subjects and grade levels. This raises
issues of developing criteria relative to the skills of teachers to deliver writing instruction and an examination of teacher preparation syllabi to determine if and when and where prospective teachers are given instruction in the teaching of writing.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has provided guidelines for the mandated 175 hours of professional development instituted in 2004. One of the guidelines requires that the staff development involve educators in the design and implementation of such opportunities. The survey in the current study found that 85% of the teachers felt that they did not have input regarding the format of the staff development model. Therefore, it is recommended that the district’s professional development plan involve teachers in the design and implementation stages of future staff development projects.

Martin-Knief (2004) recommends collecting and using data analysis to determine gaps between a school’s vision and its reality. Guskey (2002) also addresses looking at student learning outcomes. Section four of the survey in this case study examined student performance as a result of staff development. This is an assessment tool that other school districts might want to utilize in order to improve or build upon effective professional development models.

Bernhardt (as cited in Champion, 2005) recommends using perceptual data to make effective decisions. According to Champion (2005) “perceptual data help us understand what students, parents, teachers, and others think about the learning environment. Perceptions are important since people act based on what they believe” (p. 2). Utilizing teacher perceptions following professional development would enable school districts to make changes in order to improve future programs.
The available literature suggests that using a consultant over an extended period of time is a more effective model of professional development than one-day workshops, a conclusion supported by the results of the present case study: 94% of the teacher participants in the consultant model of staff development found it to be effective, 75% wanted the model to continue with their grade level the next year, and 85% wanted it be extended to other grade levels. Given these positive evaluations of the program used, school districts may want to consider this model in their professional development planning.

This case study found that 42% of the participants reported that they were not asked for feedback from an administrator. NYSED recommends assessing professional development activities/experiences on an on-going and continuous basis in order to determine if the intended goals and objectives are being met. NYSED also suggests using evaluation tools in order to determine whether modifications to planned activities are needed.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. This case study examined one teacher consultant model, the District Early Grades Writing Consultant Project (DEGWCP), in one school district. Additional research using this model of staff development in different school districts with larger populations and different content areas would be beneficial.

2. This study found no statistically significant correlations between teachers’ levels of education and their perceptions of staff development. However, because there is very limited research in this area, further study using additional questions regarding
the teacher’s and consultant’s educational levels as well as other types of staff
development participants might have previously completed might produce more
significant data regarding either the optimum or saturation point for staff development.

3. The findings of this study found no statistically significant correlations
between the number of years of teaching experience and teachers’ perceptions
regarding staff development. Again, because there is very limited research in this area,
further study is needed to further explore this relationship.

4. A study of a staff development model that utilizes the consultant on a
weekly, rather than a monthly basis, might indicate whether increasing consultant time
in the classroom with the teacher has an effect on the teachers’ perceptions of the
teacher/coach staff development model.

5. The consultant found that there no pre or post writing assessments were
used as an evluitable tool of the program. Duplicating this type of case study utilizing
a pre- and post-writing assessment would provide the school district with better
evidence regarding the efficacy of this type of teacher/coach staff development for
writing.

6. The consultant found that teacher behaviors and expectations had the
biggest impact on their students’ writing. A study regarding how teacher behaviors
and teacher expectations affect student outcomes might provide information to guide
future staff development not only in the Victory School District but in other school
districts as well.

7. A replication of this study that includes interviews with the building
principals might provide more information regarding how the teachers’ viewed the
consultant. It might offer data on whether the principal’s leadership style had impact on the teachers’ perception of the consultant and the program.
References


Appendix A

Case Study Interview Questions for the Writing Consultant
1. What was the purpose of the writing project you implemented?

2. What were the goals, directives and target populations that you and the district agreed upon for the writing project? Was there a planning process, who was involved and how was it developed?

3. What classroom structures did you identify, modify, change and/or eliminate to achieve increased teacher delivery effectiveness? (Groupings, time, questions, daily tasks, homework, etc.)

4. What writing skills did you model and/or change for teachers during this project?

5. What writing skills did you model and/or change for students during this project?

6. In what ways is your project different from the program outlined in the district’s adopted English Language Arts (ELA) series?

7. What evidence do you have to identify that you were successful in reaching your goals? What is the district’s design for evaluating?
The purpose of this survey is to determine the teachers' perceptions of the District Early Grade Writing Consultant Project.

Personal Data Section

School

Gender:  □ Female  
□ Male

Race:  □ White  
□ African-American  
□ Hispanic  
□ Native Indian  
□ Asian  
□ Other

Age:  □ 21-30  
□ 31-40  
□ 41-50  
□ 51+

Grade level taught in 2002-2003

Grade level taught in 2003-2004

Current educational level:  
□ Bachelor's degree  
□ Master's degree  
□ Master's degree + 30 credits  
□ Master's degree + 45 credits  
□ Master's degree + 60 credits  
□ Doctorate

Total number of years teaching (including this year):  
□ 1-5  
□ 6-10  
□ 11-15  
□ 16-20  
□ 21-25  
□ 26-30  
□ 31
Please circle a number to answer the following questions using the scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Uncertain
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

Section I. Goals/Expectations/Outcomes

1. The goals of the program were explained to me prior to the intervention.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. The program outcomes met my expectations.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Prior to the program implementation, I had input regarding the format of the program.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. When the program ended, I was asked for feedback from an administrator.
   1 2 3 4 5

Section II. Consultant Behaviors

1. The consultant was organized.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. The consultant had a clear objective for each session.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. The consultant modeled how to sustain a clear focus, making writing a unified whole.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. The consultant modeled how to present ideas in a logical order, by using transitional language and techniques.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. The consultant modeled how to use details to support and illustrate ideas.
   1 2 3 4 5
6. The consultant modeled how to analyze and make connections among relevant ideas.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. The consultant modeled how to vary sentences and structure for better fluency.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. The consultant modeled how to use precise and interesting words.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. The consultant modeled revising and editing techniques utilizing the students' writing.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. The consultant modeled note taking techniques for the listening passages.
    1 2 3 4 5

Section III Program Format

1. The consultant provided sufficient time for collaboration following a lesson.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I felt I could change the objective of a lesson to best meet the needs of my students.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I needed more modeling in a specific skill that was not provided by the consultant.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I found collaborating with the consultant helpful.
   1 2 3 4 5

Section IV Student Behaviors

Please circle a number to answer the following questions using the scale:

1 = 0-20% students
2 = 21-40% students
3 = 41-60% students
4 = 61-80% students
5 = 81-100% students

As an outgrowth of my participation in this program and through changes I have made in my instruction, I see increased student ability in the following areas:
1. The students were able to sustain a clear focus, making their writing a unified whole.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. The students were able to organize information in a logical order and used transitional language and techniques.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. The students were able to use specific examples and details to support and illustrate ideas.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. The students showed thoughtful analysis and made connections among relevant ideas.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. The students varied sentences and structure for better fluency.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. The students used precise and interesting words.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. The students were able to take notes from listening to a passage read to them.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. The students were able to utilize their notes to respond to a listening passage.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. The students were able to read two passages and then respond in writing, and show a link between the two passages.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. The students were able to revise and edit their writing.
    1 2 3 4 5

Please circle a number to answer the following questions using the scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Uncertain
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree
Section V Program Effectiveness

1. The writing behaviors of my students improved as a result of this program.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I learned strategies that improved my delivery of writing instruction.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. This program better prepared my students for the TONYSS.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. This program was a good supplement to the ELA series utilized by the district.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. I learned writing strategies that improved my delivery of writing instruction.
   1 2 3 4 5

Section VI Program Recommendations

1. I would like to see the program continue with my grade level next year.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I would like to see the program continue with the next grade level next year.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I would like to see more grade levels included in this program next year.
   1 2 3 4 5
Appendix C

Case Study Interview Transcript for the Writing Consultant
1. What was the purpose of the writing project you implemented?

The purpose was two-fold. The ELA director told me the purpose was to enhance the writing program that was part of the new ELA series the district had just adopted. There was a writing program with the series that went with each unit. They wanted me to enhance the descriptive writing and/or persuasive writing. The assistant superintendent wanted the test scores to be higher in writing.

So when it started off, I took apart the book and I saw that the book did a great job in the writing process for teachers. I took a look at it and felt, this is great; I would just model lessons that go with the units. For example, personal narrative was the first unit. I took a look at what the book suggested; a personal narrative would be like for example, a trip to the beach or a trip to museum, and just adjusted it for the kids in Uniondale. For example one of the personal narratives was a trip to the theater. A lot of the second graders did not have that experience so we just adjusted it to a trip to McDonald’s. We did a lot descriptive writing, describing the smells, tastes and what things felt like, what you saw. I thought that would be better. So that was fine the first couple of weeks, but as I started the program, I looked ahead to see that kind of evaluations the students would have to do for writing. I assumed that in the McGraw-Hill book they were teaching certain targeted skills. Let’s say cause and effect, synonyms and antonyms, and this personal narrative, that this was part of the writing and that at the end they would be given a task. For example they would be given a task to do a personal narrative. But that wasn’t it. What they were given was something called the NYS parallel assessment. It was a separate book and it looked just like the 4th grade ELA. (but they were for second grade and third graders.) So there was a
personal narrative in there, but they also had to read two passages and answer short response questions and extended response questions. They had to compare and contrast writing. There was an independent writing section which would go with the personal narrative section. But there was also a listening section, which the fourth grade book did not have the listening passage. The kids who were taking the test for the first time, on let's say a listening passage had to respond in writing with short answer responses and there was also a reading/writing section just like the ELA. They had to read two articles and respond in writing to several short answer questions. In second grade short answers is four of five sentences, which is a challenge. Then there was an extended piece that took both pieces of writing. I looked at that and realized that what they were being tested on what not what they were taught. The second unit wasn’t aligned. I called the company to find out if something was missing. I found out that they sell the text to NYS schools and say that they are aligned, but because the books are used nationally, that was not was necessarily true. The materials that were aligned were supplemental. The writing process used by the text was good but not comprehensive enough for the NYS ELA exam. The kids had to know how to compare and contrast, compare something in a story and an article about Abner Doubleday. The second graders had a hard time with what’s the same, what’s different. The kids needed to be exposed. I also changed the [district’s] pacing chart. The ELA director and I decided to use the parallel assessment tests to teach from. The kids could write on it. I modeled three days in a row.

Day one I modeled just writing; day two I modeling how to respond to a listening task and day three I modeled how to respond to a reading/writing task. The
2nd graders were not ready to handle all three pieces at the same time. The first month I did personal narrative or personal writing. They learned to read and take notes, planning page, set up responses. The kids put in their writing style, individual, mechanics, and voice.

A few months later in December, I introduced the listening part. The students listened to a passage two times. The teachers needed instruction on how to instruct the students on how to take notes. The teachers were used to using full sentences. I modeled how to take quick notes to stimulate writing. The teachers were the biggest challenge. The next session for three days in a row I modeled literature, taking notes and how to respond. The next week I modeled a process using a different story. I used questions that looked like the assessment. It worked well, the kids became independent writers. I put their writing on the overhead (no names) using different schools. This worked particularly well-excellent. Some retold the story without answering the questions, while others didn’t use supporting details. I took a simple story like Aesop’s fable and gave them questions that looked just like the questions on the ELA.

In February, I introduced reading and writing; this would be the hardest. I made a judgment call to read the story and article and showed the students how to respond. Because of a lack of time, I read the story to the kids and they did the writing. The teachers would have the students read the story themselves when they practiced the writing.
2. What were the goals, directives and target populations that you and the district agreed upon for the writing project? Was there a planning process, who was involved?

The first goal was second grade. I found out that that the second graders were taking the Multiple Skills Assessment at the end, which did not line up with ELA, or the NYS parallel assessment, they’re very different looking. If the question looked different it would have thrown the kids. If I could have gone into the classroom every week to address the writing, it would have been better. So that was a problem.

As far as planning, the ELA director met with me, there wasn’t a lot of planning. Like I said before, she said to enhance the writing program and it wasn’t until I was working in the classroom and starting observing, that I knew what they were going to be doing in the future. Remember the series was new to the teachers also, so they did not even know that this parallel assessment was coming up. They didn’t even realize they were working with workbooks. My program evolved. If the teachers had the series a year of two before I got there, it would have happened quicker. I think it did happen relatively quickly. I think the ELA director was mislead by the book company as to what that part of it was aligned to the assessment. The book company was not surprised when I questioned them, looked like they had been asked that question before.

3. What classroom structures did you identify, modify, change and/or eliminate to achieve increased teacher delivery effectiveness? (Groupings, time, questions, daily tasks, homework, etc.)

As far as structures, I did find that with different teachers, it was a very big difference in how far you’d get with the same lesson. You could tell that there were
some classes, this was an interesting thing. The better discipline the teacher had, the
better control she had in her class, the better they did on the writing task. I think it was
because they were just used to staying on task longer. There were just certain teachers
were a little looser with the kids and it took them longer to get settled. So that was a
very big difference. It really wasn't the kids; it was the teachers' expectations of how
long they would work in this 45 minute time period. Little things, like little classroom
management things, you'd go to into some classes, and not everyone has a pencil. This
was little thing but I was surprised there was actually one teacher; I liked her style,
where she had the kids grouped into tables. She had pencils in cans or the group's
tables and all fresh pencils, and there was someone every morning to sharpen them,
that was their job. And then every day after lunch they sharpened them again. It was a
little thing, but there was never an issue, I don't have a pencil. It wasn't discussed,
where other classes, you go there and you go to do the writing and there were four or
five kids who either didn't have a sharpened pencil or couldn't find their pencil, and
the teacher didn't have a supply of pencils for them. One teacher said, well I expect
them to bring their own. But it took up a lot of time. And I noticed, that was very
interesting to me, I didn't realize until I was in other classes. You know I was used to
being a teacher by myself, how much classroom management affected how well they
did. That was the biggest eye opener. Some teachers had that book sitting out ready to
go as soon as I walked in, the book that they were working on, the overhead.
Other teachers now had to go on the shelf and find them. You know that made a big
difference, it ate up time. You could see teacher who wrote naturally. One teacher
gave the kids writing every single day, those kids were used to writing. She had a
journal. It wasn’t a journal where you just write your thoughts and feelings, she had a prompt. What she did was she had 20 prompts in the table of contents of their journals. They could respond to any prompt in any way they wanted. But every day they had to choose one. I guess it was homework every night. And then she would give a response of 1, 2, 3 or 4, but those kids were used to writing.

You could tell the class where the teacher did not expect as much in writing. I think there were some teachers who got stuck. For example, they were marking everything about the paper. So in other words, if a student handed in a paper, I would try to explain to the teacher, don’t look at everything. If you’re looking at mechanics, look at mechanics, if you’re looking at if they answered the question, don’t look at everything, because you’ll never get to mark it, it takes too much time. Especially in second grade and third grade, by fifth grade you’re looking at a lot of things. But in the early stages pick one skill that you’re working on and then slowly add to it. I know one teacher was looking to see if they did they give good descriptive words, did they attack it they way they were supposed to. She wasn’t really paying attention to mechanics, so the kids felt freer to write and not be stuck with, ‘did I spell it right.’

You could have a daily editing task for that. That could be a separate task and I think some teachers disagreed with this. Some teachers thought you should look at all of it together. But I felt with second grade you have to take one piece at a time and then slowly add to it and slowly combine. Because now you have to use good descriptive words and we have to use our mechanics. But slowly put it together. But I did think teacher expectations and which teachers were comfortable with writing impacted on the program. Now some teachers I felt were very good writers themselves, but you
have to get down on child's level, to what a second grader should look like. There was
one teacher who was very hung up on tense, past tense, future tense and they were
only in second grade. Leave that out, you could attack tense later, right now are they
responding to the short response question? Did they understand the story and answer
the question? Tense is something later on that you could deal with. Some people's
expectations were almost too high, so it was kind of like a balance.

4. What writing skills did you model and/or change for teachers during this project?

I did change the modeling of what I was doing according to the test. I did
change a little bit of what I would emphasize in some classrooms. I saw that one
teacher had trouble getting the kids to take notes so we did more of that. I did try
within each classroom. I sat down with the teachers and I explained what I was doing
so they understood it. I would model the lesson for a half hour-35 minutes and the way
the time constraint was, I was given 15-20 minutes to discuss with the teacher what I
had done. So I taught the lesson and after I had taught, they would have the sub come
in and take over while I sat with the teacher. What I started to show the teachers was
that every classroom had strengths and weaknesses, depending on what you have
emphasized. For example, in classroom A I noticed that the kids sat down with their
writing and quickly went through it. And I was trying to teach the teachers was,
instead of painstakingly going through each piece of writing, go through it quickly,
what sticks out in your mind? Make piles, for example here's a pile with great
beginnings but fell apart at the end, here's the pile of kids who had great voice, here's
another where the pile whose mechanics was so poor, you can't even understand
what they're saying. So we made piles and we started to see the bigger pile. In one
particular class I saw the kids had great beginnings they all had a great beginning and they backed it up. This one teacher, they had great beginnings. Every kid had a different one, they were all interesting and then they messed it up. The rest was kind of dry after that, so that teacher obviously she had great beginnings, so I suggested she share her papers with the teacher down the hall, who had good ideas but not great beginnings. And they could switch them and the kids could actually see each other’s papers. ‘This is what class A did, this is what class B did,’ and the kids then they could see it. I like I said again, using their own writing, they could see it that helps.

The teachers definitely had certain things in certain classes it depends on what you chose to teach them, what you emphasized. That’s why I wanted the teachers to sit down and make piles, so you could see, you’d know that the kids were doing great beginnings, great descriptive words but there’s no voice, or the mechanics are poor, or sometimes great mechanics but no voice. But you have to model and show them. One of the things I started doing that I did not do in the beginning, I started using fiction books to show them. I always heard if you’re a good reader, you’ll be a good writer. I truly could never see that. I would always agree but I didn’t see it. Finally, I felt that I had unlocked the key to this. I took a picture book; it was called “My Father’s Luncheonette.” A girl took a plain old luncheonette, and she used such descriptive words to describe the luncheonette, the stools that swirled, the super duper hamburgers with the ketchup on top. So I took it and instead of just reading with the kids I said, this is a person who used descriptive words and we talked about each page and the descriptive words on each page. And then there was another book that had a great beginning that caught your attention right away. I read that one but I think you point
out to the kids, this author used great descriptive words; this is an example of a great beginning that catches your attention. This author uses beautiful figurative language. Whatever it might be, read a couple of books to show what you’re talking about. They could be easy picture books so the kids could read them. We say to kids to use voice, but we have to show them. Sometimes it’s just other kids writing. There’s nothing wrong with taking down the kids writing and putting it on the overhead and letting the kids hear that.

5. What writing skills did you model and/or change for students during this project?

You know it’s funny because I paid attention to how they marked the state ELA; mechanics was the lowest thing on the list, now all of a sudden it isn’t. When you mark the test, mechanics is going to be part of it. So kind of adjusted it. I’ve learned myself, I didn’t do it at the time, but I do it no. I have would added a more serious balance to it. The district was very clear; they wanted their test scores in writing to go up. I modeled reading/ writing with short response questions, extended response question, children had to use information from both texts; that was a challenge. Some of the teachers had trouble with that themselves until they were shown. I modeled based on the college model. Introduction, info from the 1st text, and then the 3rd paragraph had info from the 2nd text, and then the conclusion. You can use transition words to put it together. I was just learning that formula and I had noticed that some of the better natural writers don’t need the formula. I suggested to the teachers that some kids don’t have to stick to it, but it is up there for them to see. It was important for the teachers to model the writing. I modeled the listening piece and they had to respond. I would write it up on chart paper, so the kids would have a visual
cue of how to set up their writing. Many of the kids knew how to write but they didn’t know how to set it up on paper. Once they could see a visual, then they understood, the formula. It was okay to expose them to it. Once they saw a model hanging up, let’s say an intro, I wrote it and labeled it.

The 3rd graders caught on quicker. I think the teachers thought they were going to get more writing from them. Teachers had to get it through their heads that they had to model it for them. It’s one thing for them to write their own stories. They could do the personal narrative, like a trip to the beach, that they could all do, but I’m talking about a response to two texts. When you got more technical where they had to compare two stories, or say a lesson to be learned, that was harder. And some of those short responses are tricky. They had to learn what the words meant. The wording was tricky, for example ‘what did the farmer not do,’ you had to know those key words when they responded. I found that all of that needed to be modeled. By third grade they really can start to do it on their own. I would model it and then come back and model it again. I felt that the classes that I saw more success with were the ones who keep a writing folder or journal at their desk at all times, so the writing continued all day long. It wasn’t like, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, take out your writing. They were expected every day to respond in writing. Those children were comfortable with writing.

One teacher used index cards that they kept in their folder, with things the teacher wanted them to work on. When they would go to teacher’s desk and she would review the skill on the index card. Or sometimes she would call a group that had the same skills on their index cards. I shared this idea with all of the other teachers. Some
liked it and used it and others didn’t. The kids also identified what they were doing with their writing using the index cards.

The teachers were very willing to share their ideas at staff development. However, they wanted to do it informally, just talking with each other about what they were doing in their classrooms. They weren’t interested in presenting it formally by typing it up and presenting it formally.

6. In what way is your project different from the program outlined in the district’s adopted English Language Arts (ELA) series?

I think answered that before, that this program was more aligned to the ELA and the NYS parallel tasks. But I think it’s what the district wanted but they assured that McGraw Hill had it in there. The district was very clear, they wanted their test scores in writing to go up and their writing to be enhanced. They were clear on flat but I don’t think they realized that we had to supplement the book. The special education director gave me a schedule of what they had done with Columbia. I followed that, every day to a different school. After a week or two I changed it. I changed the 2nd grade about the second week of school. I was just concentrating on this one little piece. I changed it so I would go three days in a row. Some were conscientious and wanted to do it the way I wanted them to do it.

7. What evidence do you have to identify that you were successful in reaching your goals? What is the district’s design for evaluating?

You could tell by the kid’s participation, and their own writing. Many pieces were displayed on bulletin boards I think I was most successful in classrooms where teachers were following up. I would see evidence of the writing. There was a direct
Recommendations:

1. More supervision from the ELA director and the principals.
2. Student writing folders that are evaluated at the beginning and end of the program.
3. Benchmark test to see where they were, adjust lessons.