THE NATURE OF PEER COACHING AT A NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT SUMMER INSTITUTE

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents. Thank you for providing me with love, nurturing, and a belief in myself that I can do anything I set out to do. By the grace of God, you have both inspired me to set my expectations high, with the understanding that I could always fly back home when I needed to. For this, I am eternally grateful. I love you with all my heart!

THE NATURE OF PEER COACHING AT A NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT SUMMER INSTITUTE

by

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THE NATURE OF PEER COACHING AT A NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT SUMMER INSTITUTE

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Peer coaching is an alternative form of professional development in which teachers coach other teachers in the development of their practice. Studies have shown that teachers who have participated in a peer-coaching model have a higher rate of transfer of skill when compared to teachers who do not participate in this type of model. Although peer coaching has been proven to be effective, there is a lack of research documenting peer coaching interactions, how peers establish trust, and how they perceive peer coaching to impact their instruction. Analyzing how peers interact and what they say to each other to move instruction forward is therefore, important to understanding how school leaders and program directors can set up their environments to encourage these types of interactions.

The participants for this study enrolled in a National Writing Project summer institute. The data set for this study included semi-structured interviews, stimulated recall interviews, and digital entries relevant to the inquiry. To identify the codes, categories, and themes emerging from the data set, this study used constant comparative analysis.

Findings from this study suggest that informal interactions are just as important as formal interactions in building trust between peer coaches. Findings also suggest the importance of the writing group as paramount and purposeful for both composing and teaching writing. Findings also suggest that trust is built quickly in an environment such as a National Writing Project summer institute. Participants felt a sense of comfort when they were able to attend this summer

institute with somebody that they already knew, believing that this helped them in establishing an initial level of comfort that served as a springboard for building additional relationships. Future research could continue to analyze both formal and informal interactions at the summer institute to revise a model of peer coaching that would assist program leaders in developing and enhancing the interactions between participants.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Many experienced teachers readily admit that they long for companionship with adults to share the joys, challenges, and frustrations of teaching (Atwell, 2002; Christenbury, 2000; Murray, 2004). Even though most teachers meet in groups to address school obligations, there is a lack of sustained commitment toward collaborative understanding of promising practices (Kaplan, 2008). The goals of most of these group meetings (faculty meetings and in-service seminars) are to discuss how to carry out procedural objectives, assuming the "promise" of these objectives (Cazden, 2001; McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001). Since these types of traditional in-service and workshop formats have not resulted in sustainable change in teacher practice (Darling-Hammond, 1996), this poses an area of concern.

As the call for high-quality teachers has increased (International Reading Association [IRA], 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2004a, 2005/2006; Learning First Alliance, 2003; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), the need for the ongoing professional development of teachers has increased, as well. Research supports the importance of effective collaboration between teachers, but it does not tell us much about how teachers learn from each other (Hammerness, 2005). Analyzing how teachers interact with one another in a peer-coaching situation can provide an understanding of learning as it relates to their school's success (Harrison and Killion, 2007). Identifying this kind of learning can promote high-quality learning among teachers (Cornett & Knight, 2009).

Currently, many schools have incorporated a variety of alternative methods to the traditional forms of professional development to include collaborative activities, such as book study groups, vertical teaming, professional learning communities, and peer coaching. According to researchers, these types of collaboration may be a more effective way of helping teachers to grow in their practice (Thibodeau, 2008; Nelson & Slavit, 2007; Darling-Hammond,

1996). One approach that has helped teachers to improve their instructional practice is through a model of peer coaching (Arnau, 2004; Kohler et al. 1999).

Early research in the area of peer coaching describes how educators began to focus on the concept of collaboration through the implementation of learning communities and teacher inquiry as a means to increase the creativity and knowledge of teachers (Wald and Castleberry, 2000). It was hoped that the development of these activities would lead to an increase in collaboration among teachers, which would, in turn, increase student achievement. This community of learners has the potential to help adult learners "learn how to learn together" (Pollara, 2012). Peer coaching, when implemented as a means to increase the learning community in a school, has the potential to affect teacher practice and student achievement for marginalized, at risk learners, as is demonstrated by several studies that point to a decrease in discipline and special education referrals, as well as increases in district and standardized testing scores (Bay, Bryan, and O'Connor, 1994; Showers, 1990).

One challenge related to discussions about coaching is the multiple ways that the term has been used. Making a statement such as "coaching is a successful form of professional development" is like saying "teaching comprehension improves reading." There are different approaches to coaching and each one may have different outcomes. Although varied, they have commonalities, such as collaboration, dialogic conversation, and the universal goal of increasing student learning (Cornett and Knight, 2009).

Approaches to coaching are multiple, but, in general, they include the following models: Thinking is a central component of a cognitive coaching model. Content coaching stresses lesson design and teacher empowerment through questioning to attain a deeper understanding of content. Instructional coaching involves providing support to teachers so that they are able to

provide scientific, research-based practice to students. Literacy coaching involves supporting teachers in developing the reading and writing abilities of their students (Cornett & Knight, 2009). Finally, peer coaching involves professional colleagues working together to reflect, extend, and refine current teaching practice (Robbins, 1991).

Significance of the Study

While some research has analyzed the collaboration between coaching and teacher and student achievement, there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of the nature of coaching, specifically, those coaching interactions among peers, and what these peers consider as their focus and goals. Without this knowledge, studies that seek to find the links between coached and coaching teachers and student achievement are lacking in their clarity and definition of the nature of coaching relationships (Davis, 2011). Understanding the interactions that center on teachers' learning, focus, and goals for the outcome of coaching, is, therefore, highly important in providing a connection to coaching, learning, and student achievement.

In this chapter, I will define peer coaching and its unique role in professional development for teachers. I will elaborate on psychological and socio-linguistic frameworks inherent in peer coaching, and, finally, I will discuss the goals of the National Writing Project and the National Writing Project Summer Institute.

Peer Coaching Defined

Joyce and Showers (1980) hypothesized that implementing weekly sessions in which teachers collaborated on learning and were able to practice skills learned through this collaboration would be beneficial. The results of these studies showed that implementation of new content rose whether teachers or experts conducted the sessions. From this finding, research suggested that the implementation of peer coaching groups be established as a means of

providing professional development in order to positively affect student learning (Joyce & Showers, 1980). These coaching sessions evolved into what is currently known as peer coaching (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Peer coaching is a process in which partners or groups of similar interests come together to share knowledge, experience, passion, commitment, information, dialogue, and analysis of data and students in order to move instruction and practice forward (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012; Jang Syh-Jong & Sung Hsiu-Chuan, 2009; Scheeler, Congdon, & Stansbery, 2010; Waddell, 2005; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2007). Peer coaching can serve as a model that allows for a differentiated form of instructional supervision to support adult learning and development (Zepeda, 2004). Simply stated, "when two teachers observe each other, the one teaching is the "coach" and the one observing is the "coached" (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p. 15).

Primarily, teacher participation within the peer-coaching model needs to be voluntary (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Teachers, as adult learners, need to be empowered to make their own choices regarding their learning. Arnau, et al., (2004), reported that teachers were motivated to participate in this model because they wanted to learn and sought out their learning in predetermined areas. These teachers preferred the structure that the peer coaching model allowed as they were able to direct their own learning. Additionally, peer coaching is not hierarchical in nature, meaning that in order for it to be successful, it should be non-evaluative (Joyce & Showers, 1980). It is, therefore, important to understand that this type of collegial relationship relies on trust and assistance, rather than on mandates and authority.

Benefits of Peer Coaching

The literature on peer coaching makes it clear that there are benefits to being both the coach and the learner. Joyce and Showers (1982) talked about the concept of companionship as

a major function of the teaching process. They described companionship as making the training process technically easier, as well as making the quality of the experience better. Many teachers conduct their practice alone without collaboration and input from other teachers. In comparison, teachers who participate in a peer coaching relationship receive companionship from one another (Joyce & Showers, 1982). This sense of companionship can eliminate the feelings of isolation that can easily overtake teachers as they struggle with the daily challenges of teaching. This companionship can also be a means of validation of one's instructional practices, as well as a celebration of teacher and student success. Additionally, peer coaching improves the probability of reflection on practice, and offers assurance when problematic situations arise (Waddell & Dunn, 2005).

Peer coaching can also serve to empower those individuals participating in the model. In their analysis of five training studies conducted in Dutch primary and secondary schools, it was concluded that peer coaching made a significant difference in professional growth and autonomy (Veenman & Dennessen, 2001). Peer coaching promotes reflection on practice and this reflection promotes self-awareness (Waddell & Dunn, 2005). According to Dunn (2003), it is empowering to know that one can "set and achieve performance goals at a level higher than those at which one is currently performing" (p. 1).

The Interdisciplinarity of Peer Coaching

The peer-coaching model is complex. To gain a comprehensive understanding of peer coaching, this study will employ an interdisciplinary approach to research. This approach involves an integration of insights from two or more disciplines for the purpose of producing new knowledge about a complex problem (Repko, Newell, and Szostak, 2012; Repko, 2008).

According to Repko (2008), this interdisciplinary research process is recommended for problems that:

- Are complex;
- Cannot be addressed by a single discipline;
- Boast scholarship in two or more disciplines;
- Are situated along disciplinary boundaries; and
- Address an important social concern.

The problem addressed by this study meets a number of these criteria and is suited to interdisciplinary research. Peer coaching can be found within multiple perspectives to include teacher education, psychology, socio-cultural, and socio-linguistic disciplines. Examining this topic through only one lens could lead to an incomplete understanding of the nature, interactions, trust, and teacher perceptions of peer-coaching as it relates to the research questions.

The literature on peer coaching as a model for professional development is plentiful. This model has the potential to help students benefit when their teachers learn, grow, and change (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Using this perspective to study peer coaching is therefore necessary and important in examining the ways that teachers can potentially learn from this particular model.

Psychological and socio-cultural perspectives can be found within the peer-coaching model. Through these perspectives, the concept of learning within the context of community appears in the works of John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky. This research views learning as a democratic process of shared problem solving.

One of Dewey's fundamental concepts is that experience is more than our intellectual account of it (John, 2007). Dewey believed that learning is an active process, and that the

individual learns through projects and real, guided experiences, in turn, fostering their capacity to contribute to society (Kaplan, 2008). This concept is central to the peer-coaching model in that it involves teachers learning together within the context of their classrooms. As teachers add to the knowledge they obtain at the college level (the intellectual level), they improve their instructional practice through real and guided experiences, better equipping them to teach students who are at risk for failure, improving the society within a school, and ultimately, society at large.

Similarly, the major theme of Vygotsky's (1978) theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a major role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky's framework centers on the theme that higher mental functioning in the individual has its origins in social activity (Wertsch, 1990). This sociocultural approach to learning can be defined in that every function in a child's development appears first on a social (interpsychological) level, and later, on an individual (intrapsychological) level (Wertsch, 1990).

For Dewey and Vygotsky, teachers serve as facilitators and mediators who coach and encourage students (and in the case of peer coaching, other teachers) to reach their own levels of understanding; this social interaction, inside and outside of the classroom, can serve to increase their knowledge base (Glassman, 2001).

In connection to learning as a social interaction, is the understanding that identities are flexible, fluid, and constantly changing (Gee, 2012). Identities can change as people acquire knowledge and collaboratively participate through interaction with other learners (Gee, 2000). It is now widely understood that teacher learning can be enhanced when it is situated within the context in which it will be needed, which is what makes peer coaching a potentially beneficial model for professional development.

Additionally, through a socio-linguistic perspective, Gee conducted work in the concept of discourse. In his work, discourse refers to how meaning works in extended stretches of talk and stories (Gee, 2012). Gee further described this as stretches of language that "hang together," that make sense to a community of people (Gee, 2012). In order to understand sense making in language, it is necessary to understand the ways that language is embedded within different social communities (Gee, 2012). This sense making is a necessary component in understanding the language of teacher interactions and collaboration within the context of the teaching and learning environment. This socio-linguistic perspective is in direct connection to educational research that has taken the adult learner into account and has found that effective professional development occurs over a period of time and within the context of a supportive learning community (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

Finally, the problem of this study is one of social concern. Improving the performance of teachers will ultimately improve the growth and learning of students (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In turning away from the need to improve teacher performance and collaboration, we are turning away from our future as a successful society. Exploring the nature of peer coaching and its interactions through multiple lenses will give this study credibility and offer greater insight as to its psychological, socio-cultural, socio-linguistic, and teacher education connections. In the next section, I elaborate on the site at which I conducted this study, as it related to the multiple perspectives described above.

The National Writing Project

The National Writing Project (NWP) is a relevant example of a supportive learning community. Heralded as the country's most successful and enduring professional-development organization for teachers of writing, its philosophy evolved from James Gray's simple and

profound idea that successful teachers make the best teachers of other teachers (Gray, 2000). The mission of the NWP is to focus the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of the nation's educators on sustained efforts to improve writing and learning for all learners (NWP website). The NWP professional community provides a powerful context for professional development and collaboration (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001; Elmore and Burney, 1999; Sykes, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Additionally, the National Commission on Writing named the National Writing Project as a national resource for best practices in the teaching of writing (2006).

The National Writing Project Summer Institute

NWP teacher consultants are required to complete a four-week summer institute. The belief among all involved in the summer institute is that writing is essential for learning in all of the content areas. The summer institute's participants are enrolled as Teacher Fellows and upon completion of the institute, become Teacher Consultants. The summer institute is conducted all day, Monday through Thursday, for four weeks. A variety of activities are structured within each day in order to help its participants learn from each other. These activities include: morning journals, video diaries, demonstration lessons from peers, writing and reading response groups, as well as author and illustrator visits. Every Thursday, each fellow shares a piece of writing that has been worked on both individually and with peers within their writing response groups. As the fellows write, read, share, and learn together, a bond seemingly forms, becoming stronger. This community of learners seems to evolve into a strong unit.

As this bond solidifies, it lends itself to questioning, validating, and learning among its participants in order to take teaching and practice to a higher level. Participating teachers are continuously guided through conversation, reading, research, and writing, to examine and

reexamine, reflect and re-reflect, respond and re-respond about their perceptions on the teaching of writing (Gray, 2000). James Gray's vision of teachers teaching teachers is observed within the daily activities that exist in the NWP summer institute.

Current literature reports on the types of coaching that are directed from co-director to participant and how to improve on these relationships. I have not found studies that report how trust is built within these interactions and what regard summer institute participants hold toward peer coaching as it relates to their instruction. In this study, I sought to understand the nature of peer coaching among teacher fellows enrolled in the summer institute as it relates to peer coaching interactions. By observing and analyzing these interactions, I sought to clarify the role of peer coaching at the summer institute as it related to trust, learning, and teacher perception of its relevance to their individual writing instruction.

This study can help this particular site reflect on its peer coaching practices, as well as help other sites to set up environments that encourage trust and interactions conducive to peer coaching. This study can also help all educators who must address professional development and the institutional constraints that often limit the degree to which professional development affects teaching practice (Coskie & Place, 2008). According to the 1996 National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, teacher expertise is the most significant factor in student success. This study examined the nature of peer coaching in relation to interactions, trust, and participants' perception of its importance to their professional development as teachers of writing.

The research questions include:

1. What types of peer coaching interactions are perceived as helpful to teachers at the NWP summer institute, and how does trust factor into these interactions?

a. How do the types of interactions among the summer institute participants lend themselves to peer coaching relationships?

b. How is trust established within these relationships?

2. What regard do teachers hold toward peer coaching as it relates to their instruction?

a. How do teachers perceive peer coaching as impacting their writing instruction?

b. What did teachers say they learned from their peer coaches regarding their writing instruction?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this review is to provide an overview of the literature on peer coaching in relation to its historical background and the changes it has undergone. In addition to its background, I will also review the peer-coaching model as a form of professional development within the context of schools regarding its characteristics, benefits, challenges, and competing perspectives. Finally, I will discuss the mission and goals of the National Writing Project (NWP) and its summer institute as they relate to peer coaching, along with my research questions.

HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the mid-1950's, it became evident that improvements to our educational system were necessary to move student achievement forward; a call to improve our society in comparison to others, as well as the realization that education is in the best interest of "all" learners, spurred national movements to improve education focused on academic quality and social equity. The federal monies that flooded these educational movements to improve schooling, especially those aimed at schools that were newly integrated, as well as uplifting a society that was falling behind other countries, were misused due to a lack of direction for education (Milam, 2010).

Research was needed to understand how adults learn new strategies and how schools disperse this information in order to ensure academic success. At the time, it was expected that teachers could attend an outside staff development, and interpret, analyze, and implement what was learned (Showers and Joyce, 1996). The way in which schools operated and were organized did not lend itself to this successful transition (Showers & Joyce, 1996); therefore, the blame was placed with teachers, rather than the organization or the training that was attended (Showers & Joyce, 1996). In the 1980's it became apparent that the implementation of solutions for school

organization and better-designed training were necessary for educational success. Continued research shed light on how adults learn to teach and teach to learn, and the blame was no longer placed solely on teachers (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Showers and Joyce hypothesized that coaching, following initial training, would result in greater transfer of skills than just training alone (Showers 1982, 1984). The initial development of the skill and the exploration that went along with this new learning was distinguished from the ongoing learning and follow-up that was needed for post-training, as teachers worked to transfer these skills to their practice (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

It was found that although other personnel, such as administrators or specialists, could coach; teachers were closer to one another and in a position to carry out most of the coaching functions (Joyce & Showers, 1982). By placing the major responsibility for coaching with peers, status and power differentials could be minimized (Showers, 1985). Through this practice, members of peer coaching groups exhibited greater long-term retention of new strategies and more appropriate use of new teaching models over time (Baker and Showers 1984). Coaching helped nearly all teachers implement new teaching strategies. Equally important, teachers who were introduced to the new models could coach one another, provided that the teachers continued to receive continual follow-up training. It was recommended that schools organize teachers into peer coaching teams and set up the environment so that teachers could work together to gain the skill(s) needed to affect student learning (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

In the 1990's, the research on peer coaching changed from studies on individual teachers and small groups to voluntary whole faculties. Considerations for this model included collaboration, determining student needs, selection of appropriate content, and helping faculty to design training and assess its impact on students. Learning as a social organization became a

consideration as well as the need for whole faculties to buy into the model of peer coaching and utilize a collaborative, problem-solving approach (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

In connection to learning as a social organization, it is now understood that identities are flexible, fluid, and constantly changing (Gee, 2000). Identities can change as people acquire knowledge and collaboratively participate through interactions with other learners (Gee, 2000). Professional learning as a social construction has been acknowledged as a means in which educators can rely on one another as experts and supporters in their work to implement new strategies and promising practices for instruction (Syh-Jong & Hsiu-Chuan, 2009; Bowman and McCormick, 2007; Bullough, 2007).

Although many researchers use similar terms for coaching models, the definitions are rarely the same; therefore, attending to their underlying purposes and desired outcomes will help distinguish these models from each other. Models can be sorted according to the type of interactions that are involved and their proposed goals. Poglinco et al., (2003) and Scallan (1987) identified peer, mentor, reciprocal, and technical coaching models.

Peer coaching is typically defined as two or more colleagues with similar experiences collaborating to improve knowledge and skills (Poglinco et al., 2003). Scallan combines collegial and peer coaching, while Poglinco et al. (2003) make the distinction that collegial coaching focuses more on conversation and reflection. Garmston (1987) places cognitive coaching, "strategies designed to enhance teachers' perceptions, thinking, and instructional decisions," within this category (p. 20).

Mentor coaching typically involves an experienced teacher as coach and a

beginning teacher as the coached (Poglinco et al., 2003; Scallan, 1987). This type of coaching is more often related to studies specific to beginning teachers, while studies that focus on coaching experienced teachers tends to utilize peer, technical, or collegial models.

According to Ackland (1991) reciprocal peer coaching involves teachers alternately observing one another teach and then providing accurate and non-evaluative feedback to one another immediately after the observation takes place. Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, and Bolhuis (2009), discussed reciprocal peer coaching as a process in which teachers must regularly discuss their teaching practice with one another, experiment with a variety of instructional practices, and provide feedback regarding observations of each other's classrooms.

Frameworks may combine several models. For example, a given framework may propose technical coaching to implement an initiative, and then shift to a more collegial coaching model as the implementation progresses. This framework is similar to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development in which what one can perform collaboratively or with assistance today, one can perform independently and competently tomorrow (Moll, 1992). In other words, the zone makes possible "performance before competence" (Cazden, 1981).

In addition to these types of coaching, distinguishing between consultative and confrontative coaching can assist the coach in providing feedback (Veenman and Denessen, 2001). Peer coaches utilize consultative coaching when the teacher being coached is the initiator in the coaching process. This teacher asks questions or requests feedback from their peer. This type of coaching supplements the teacher's motivation toward self-improvement in that they seek out their coach's advice (Veenman & Denessen, 2001).

Peer coaches utilize confrontative coaching when the coach, as an observer, points out the coached teachers' strengths as well as areas that need to be addressed and improved. The coach acts as the initiator of the conference and seeks to help the coached teacher improve a particular area of their teaching practice. In both cases, the process is characteristic of a partnership with improvement in performance as the ultimate goal (Veenman & Denessen, 2001).

In summary, Darling-Hammond (as cited in Collier, 2011) suggests that teachers need to discover ways of collaborating and problem solving in order to improve teacher practice. In order to be effective, professional development needs to be sustained over time, focused on academics and connected to teacher practice (Wei, Darling-Hammond, and Adamson, 2010). This literature review will focus on peer coaching as one means of this type of collaboration and professional development.

DEFINING PEER COACHING

Formally defined, peer coaching is a process in which partners or groups of similar interests come together to share knowledge, experience, passion, commitment, information, dialogue, and analysis of data and students in order to move instruction and practice forward (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012; Scheeler, Congdon, & Stansbery, 2010; Jang Syh-Jong & Sung Hsiu-Chuan, 2009; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2007; Waddell, 2005).

Peer coaching can serve as a model that allows for a differentiated form of instructional supervision to support adult learning and development (Zepeda, 2004). According to Showers & Joyce (1996) "when two teachers observe each other, the one teaching is the "coach" and the one observing is the "coached" (p.15).

Although peer coaching is a promising practice, it is important to understand that it will

not automatically ensure success because of its mere inclusion within an organization as a vehicle for change. The model requires that certain characteristics, principles and logistics be taken into thoughtful consideration and conducted with fidelity (Ackland, 1991).

Characteristics

Learning in context

Collaboration within grade level teams and with other teachers is imperative to learning the operations and curriculum of the school system. Merriam (2008) expressed the importance of collaboration. Merriam (2008) proposed that linking the individual's learning process to his or her context ensures a richer understanding of learning in adulthood. Peer coaching is one approach to professional growth, building on the use of a helping relationship with the purpose of promoting professional development in the workplace (Parker, Hall, and Kram, 2008). Current trends in professional development focus on the teacher as the learner, suggesting that professional development must be purposeful and linked to the teacher's perception of his or her needs (Karagiorgi, Kalogirou, Theodosiou, Theophanous, and Kendaeou, 2008; Thibodeau, 2008). This type of adult learning has also been linked to nursing, sports coaching, and business (Thorn, McLeod, & Goldsmith, 2007; Waddell & Dunn, 2005; Joyce & Showers, 1982).

Teacher Choice

Teachers, as adult learners, need to be empowered to make their own choices regarding their learning; therefore, teacher participation should be voluntary (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012; Murray and Mazur, 2009; Thurston and Weaver, 2008; Arnau et al., 2004; Higgins and Leat, 1997; Showers & Joyce 1996; Brookfield, 1986). Results of several studies found that teachers were motivated to participate in a peer-coaching model when they volunteered for it rather than were mandated to take part in it.

In a study of fourteen veteran teachers and peer coaching, Arnau, et al., (2004) reported that secondary school teachers were motivated to participate in this model because they wanted to learn and sought out their learning in predetermined areas. Additionally, these teachers preferred the structure that the peer coaching model allowed as they were able to direct their own learning. Furthermore, teachers in this study were able to select their own coach. Arnau et al., (2004), suggested that simply pairing up teachers as peer coaches with a certain level of perceived knowledge was not effective. Organizing coaching relationships in this way may not be conducive to developing the relationships and trust required for one to take the advice and feedback of another. Related to this principal, Arnau, et al., (2004), reported that teachers felt comfortable when a peer of their own choice was observing them. These teachers reported that peer choice was a major incentive for them and that it assisted in a smooth transition to a successful working relationship.

In their study of students in a university coaching class, Jewett & MacPhee (2012) found that when teachers were given choice in selecting their coaching partner, relationships were mutually beneficial. It was found that when teachers identified a coaching partner with whom they felt they could collaborate; they attended to their partner's needs and interests. Teachers were found to honor the need to collaborate, engage in dialogue related to their practice, analyze test data, and reflect with one another (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012).

Joyce and Showers (1996), in their earlier studies worked with individual teachers and/or small groups within schools. Their next stage of peer coaching involved studying faculties that volunteered as a whole. One of their suggested principles of peer coaching stated "all teachers must agree to be members of peer coaching study teams" (p. 14). Through voluntary participation, they found that teachers were engaged in collaboration that involved determining

student need, selection of appropriate content, designing training, and assessing student impact. In working with whole faculties, the researchers found voluntary participation was important in establishing common ground in order to address their goals (Joyce & Showers, 1996).

Mutual Respect

Closely related to teacher choice is the need for teachers to have a mutual respect for each other as they work within a peer-coaching model (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012; Zwart et al., 2009a; Waddell & Dunn, 2005;Arnau, et al., 2004). Teachers may be reluctant to offer help to one another for fear of 'stepping on one's toes,' or violating privacy and equality norms (Smylie, 1989).

Peer coaching partners must have a trusting relationship in order to provide effective feedback that minimizes defensiveness (Waddell & Dunn, 2005). In a study of peer coaching among teachers, Lam, Yim, and Lam (2002) found that it was the trusting relationship among the teachers that relieved their anxiety. In their study of two schools, the researchers strived to secure peer coaching as a means of staff development while trying to establish genuine collegiality among its faculty, as well as trying to ward off impositions from administration.

Jewett and MacPhee (2012), suggested that peer coaches need to listen carefully, being mindful of the sensitivity that is required in attending to their partner's needs and perspectives (Jewett & McPhee, 2012). In working with university students enrolled in a coaching course, they found that peer coaches had to choose their words carefully in order to be effective communicators (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012). In one participant's words, "we think hard, have difficult conversations and respect each other enough to challenge each other" (Jewett & McPhee, 2012, p. 108).

Trust and safety must be established at the outset of the process (Zwart et al., 2009a; Arnau et al., 2004). Establishing trust takes time and requires both partners to be honest with themselves as well as with their peers (Arnau et al., 2004;). In a study involving secondary veteran teachers in a coaching program, Arnau et al., (2004) reported that about half of the teachers noted greater trust among peer coaches. They reported open, caring opportunities that allowed for continued growth. This study also indicated that relationship building enhanced the trust needed for successful peer coaching relationships. Additionally, these results indicated that in peer coaching relationships that extended beyond one school year, trust in the relationship continued for all fourteen participants. One pair reported that the trust in their relationship continued in spite of the fact that the second year proved more difficult because of one partner's health issues. Through the peer coaching relationship, teachers may form long lasting collegial relationships (Arnau et al, 2004).

Collaboration

When teachers collaborate, they can take on new identities that allow them to gain additional knowledge through interactions from other teachers (Gee, 2000). Teacher collaboration on matters of instruction has been linked to positive changes in teacher practices, and leads to high expectations for students (Thibodeau, 2008). Results of several studies indicate that teachers learn from each other as they gain knowledge from colleagues' experiences with teaching methods, exchanging ideas, and coaching one another (Danielson, 2009).

In a study conducted by Arnau et al. (2004), veteran teachers who voluntarily participated in a peer coaching program were found to have increased their conversations about teaching and learning. Teachers in this study valued the collaboration and opportunity to learn from one another. The implementation of this program encouraged

teachers to plan and work together while talking about what they were doing (Lieberman, 1995).

Murray et al. (2009) conducted a study of peer coaching in six schools in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Peer coaching was analyzed through the Mentored Implementation Program developed in the Appalachian Mathematics and Science Partnership. Principal findings revealed that the perceived primary benefit of peer coaching was the opportunity to share ideas, strategies, and teaching techniques with peer partners. Although teachers' responses were favorable regarding interaction and communication with other professionals, it was not clearly found that these interactions were truly collaborative. In analyzing post-observation conferences among its participants, the authors characterized these discussions as lacking analysis and depth (Murray et al., 2009).

Bruce and Ross (2008) conducted a study involving teachers in grades three and six. Teachers participated in a brief but intensive professional development program over six months. The program focused on effective mathematics teaching strategies and peer coaching opportunities. Teachers reported the importance of receiving information about their success through peer interaction (Bruce & Ross, 2008). Additionally, a reflexive and reciprocal growth process was well illustrated in the paired interviews. Through this process, it was found that motivation to take risks using innovative mathematics teaching strategies increased because teachers sought and received support from each other (Bruce & Ross, 2008).

Collaboration can be an important and necessary characteristic to a peer-coaching model. Finding a peer to share ideas, experiences, and questions can help teachers become co-learners and models for other teachers. In collaborating with one another, teachers can work as partners

and co-inquiers of their learning (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012).

Benefits

At this time, studies reporting the benefits of peer coaching are anecdotal in nature. Although success stories continue to surface, empirical data supporting claims of its effectiveness are lacking, especially in regards to the relationship of peer coaching and student learning (Murray et al., 2009). For example, Sparks and Bruder (1987) worked to develop a peer coaching program in two elementary schools as a means of increasing collegiality and teacher effectiveness. The study also examined teachers' reactions to peer coaching. The findings reported that although 70% of teachers claimed that peer coaching improved student achievement, they offered little supportive data to support the statement. Although lacking in quantity, some research studies in peer coaching have reported a variety of benefits: motivation, trust, collaboration, student achievement, and teacher perception of its usefulness in both pre-service and in-service contexts.

Motivation

In their analysis of veteran teachers voluntarily participating in a peer coaching program, Arnau et al., (2004) found that as a result of peer coaching, teachers reported a sense of motivation to direct their own learning. Teachers in the study also reported being more motivated to work toward gains that they determined to be meaningful. Teachers also were willing to put in more work in order to get meaningful feedback that specifically targeted strengths and weaknesses (Arnau, et al., 2004).

In their analysis of 28 secondary teachers, (14 coaching dyads), Zwart, et al., (2009) studied five categories of characteristics of a reciprocal peer coaching context in relation to student learning. Findings reported that teachers learn when they are intrinsically motivated to

participate in professional development; when they feel pressured to implement new practices for peers who observe them; and when they feel safe to talk about their experiences with a group of colleagues that they trust (Zwart et al., 2009). This type of involvement takes time, planning, and collaboration. Teachers who are intrinsically motivated to improve their teaching will most likely be inclined to take part in this type of professional development (Zwart, et al., 2009).

In a description of seventeen high school teachers voluntarily participating in a peer coaching program, Slater and Simmons (2001) found that teachers reported improving techniques and overcoming feelings of isolation. Teachers also expressed a newfound awareness of their strengths and an acceptance of new ideas and collaboration. Motivation for participation in this program was evident in teacher comments that described future plans in peer coaching for the following school year. Survey results indicated motivation for learning and experimenting with new techniques (Slater & Simmons, 2001).

Collaboration

Darling-Hammond as cited in Collier (2011), noted that high-performing schools in Europe and Asia have three to four times more collaborating time than teachers in the United States. She suggested that teachers in this country need to find ways to collaborate, problem solve, and improve teacher practice.

Jewett & MacPhee (2012) suggested that peer coaching is one way to form communities of practice. In their description of the peer coaching among teachers in a coaching course, they found that teachers began to break down some of the barriers in teaching as an isolated practice. They discriminated between parallel and complementary learning opportunities.

Through parallel learning, teachers engage in similar activities, working shoulder to shoulder for the good of their students, yet are not necessarily influenced by one another. Their paths rarely, if ever, cross; therefore, collaboration is nonexistent (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012).

Complementary learning opportunities are different in that time and space are constructed in order for teachers to engage in activities that can influence one another's teaching practices. Jewett & MacPhee (2012) reported that these spaces for collaboration within the peer coaching experiences of the teachers in their course resulted in a construction of knowledge that was "negotiated, rather than imposed" (p. 109).

Lieberman (1995), made a case for teacher collaboration as a form of professional development. Lieberman wrote that what teachers want for their students – learning opportunities that engage learners in experiencing, creating, and solving real world problems - is denied to teachers when they are the learners. Lieberman discussed a variety of practices inside and outside of the school setting that support teacher development. One of these practices involved building new roles through the use of a peer coach. According to Lieberman, implementing a peer-coaching program helped improve professional communities by reducing teacher isolation and encouraged planning and working together (1995).

Similarly, teacher preparation in a peer-coaching program may assist in moving pre-service teachers into their in-service careers as collaborators (Goker, 2006). According to Goker (2006), a teacher preparation program should have a vision that teacher learning operates on a continuum, setting up pre-service teachers for future learning through collaboration. This collaboration is valued and often necessary in effective schooling and can foster expert instruction (Goker, 2006).

In a related study, participants expressed an acceptance to new ideas through the collaboration that the peer-coaching model provided (Slater & Simmons, 2001). Seventeen teachers voluntarily participated in a peer-coaching program in a south Texas high school. Results from teacher interview questions, a survey, and a program evaluation indicated that teachers routinely discussed issues of methodology with their teams as well as colleagues from outside of their teams. The researchers stated that this finding was not entirely the result of the program, since survey results before the program was implemented indicated that a positive attitude toward communication was already in place for this faculty. Participants expressed commitment to meet more with one another in the future (Slater & Simmons, 2001).

Usefulness in Promoting Change

When participating in a peer-coaching model, studies have reported teachers' perception of its usefulness for their practice. Peer coaching is a part of reflective practice and an important means for instituting collaborative efforts. It warrants consideration as a potentially serviceable solution for improving teacher effectiveness when implemented both in pre-service and in-service contexts. Some studies in peer coaching have examined its usefulness for promoting change in teachers' pedagogical practices and expertise in accommodating for the needs of both general and special education classrooms (Goker, 2006; Jenkins, Hamrick, and Todorovich, 2002; Slater & Simmons, 2001; Bowman and McCormick, 2000; Kohler, 1999; Mallette, Maheady, and Harper, 1999; Hasbrouck, 1997; Morgan, Menlove, and Salzberg, 1994; Pierce and Miller, 1994; Munro and Elliott, 1987).

In-Service Teachers. Kohler et al., (1999) analyzed the effects of a peer coaching procedure. Four teachers were asked to participate in this study by the director of instruction and curriculum and signed informed consent letters verifying their voluntary participation in the

study. A multiple-baseline design was used to compare three conditions. The four teachers worked independently on an instructional innovation during the initial baseline phase. During the second phase, teachers worked with a peer coach on the same task. A third phase involved working independently in a final maintenance condition. Findings indicated few changes during the initial phase; however, teachers focused on different aspects of their instruction during peer coaching and made refinements fitting their areas of concentration. Many of the changes that were reported during the peer-coaching phase were sustained in the final maintenance phase (Kohler et al., 1999).

Veenman & Dennessen (2001) analyzed five training studies in which educators ranging from school principals to secondary school teachers voluntarily participated in a peer coaching training program. Coached teachers provided pre and posttest ratings for the TSCS scale of Appreciation of the Coaching Skills. These ratings suggested that teachers generally perceived coaching conferences as important to improving their instructional practice. The largest treatment effect in relation to this feedback was found in the sample of secondary school teachers. Veenman & Dennessen (2001) reported that a possible explanation for this finding was that the trainers conducting the coaching program met frequently with the school's management team to tailor the coaching training with the needs of the school. Additionally, the trainers were involved in a staff development program whose aim was to increase students' self-study skills. This finding is in line with Joyce & Showers (1995) explanation that teachers will learn to use new skills when extensive coaching is attached to a school's staff development.

Zwart et al., (2009), studied the role of five categories of characteristics of a reciprocal peer coaching context in relation to teacher learning. The five categories analyzed included the role of observation and experimenting, the roles of perceived quality of the coach, understanding

learning to be social in nature, intrinsically motivated teachers, and disparity in the coaching partners. Self-reports and student perceptions were used to measure teacher learning. Twenty-eight high school teachers were invited to participate on a voluntary basis in the peer-coaching project. The teachers were given suggestions on forming coaching dyads by project coordinators. Findings suggested that the five categories of peer coaching characteristics exerted a moderate effect on teacher learning. The finding that related most closely to teacher change showed that teachers more readily experimented with new teaching techniques when they knew they were going to be observed by a peer (Zwart, et.al, 2009). These teachers also displayed greater changes in their behavior according to their students who also reported that they felt they had learned more for themselves (Zwart, et al., 2009). The researchers pointed out that an important question to ask is whether a reciprocal peer-coaching program can influence the learning of teachers. They caution that such change is "known to be gradual and difficult" (p. 254).

Pre-Service Teachers. Researchers, having been inspired by the results of peer coaching with in-service teachers, began adopting peer coaching in pre-service teacher education since the early 1980's (Englert and Sugai, 1983). As a strategy, it has been implemented in field experiences for pre service teachers (Lu, 2009, Lu, 2007; McAllister & Neubert, 1995; Morgan & Menlove, 1994).

Peer coaching as a strategy for in-service teachers has led to studies reporting its effectiveness among pre-service teacher education programs. In the area of pre-service teacher education, it was found that peer coaching facilitated learning in the context of the classroom and fostered practicum as a site for teacher education (Lu, 2010).

In a study that analyzed eleven pairs of pre-service special educators, Hasbrouck (1997) utilized the Scale for Coaching Instructional Effectiveness (SCIE) to determine improvement in teaching skills such as organization, instruction, and classroom management. After observing a demonstration of a mediated form of peer coaching, pairs of students provided coaching to one another as they designed and implemented lessons for a four-week student program. Results indicated that pre-service teachers improved their inter rater reliability across three observations. Additionally, it was found that pre-service teachers enhanced their teaching skills, self-confidence, and professionalism as a result of utilizing the SCIE (Hasbrouck, 1997).

In their study of three dyads of pre-service teachers, Mallette et al., (1999), systematically trained participants in the use of the Peabody Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS). Participants coached one another as they tutored students with special needs during a four-week program. Mallette et al., (1999) utilized fidelity of treatment records and surveys in reporting an increase in frequency with which participants engaged in relevant coaching interactions. Additionally, this study reported improved accuracy in implementing the PALS. Most importantly, all three tutees demonstrated improvements in daily reading comprehension as a result of participants' improved accuracy of reciprocal peer coaching (Mallette et al., 1999).

Bowman & McCormick (2000) compared the clarity skills, pedagogical reasoning, and attitudes toward field experiences of pre-service teachers trained in peer coaching and those receiving traditional university supervision. Using pre and post data that included videotaped lessons, audiotaped conferences, and anonymous surveys, results indicated statistical significance in favor of the peer coaching condition. Bowman and McCormick (2000) reported that participants demonstrated the ability to scaffold and be scaffolded by their coaching partner. In addition to a greater amount of collaboration, peer-coaching dyads achieved greater adeptness

in targeted objectives as compared to participants in the control group (Bowman & McCormick, 2000).

Jenkins and Veal (2002) studied pre-service teachers' roles of teacher and coach and how these roles contributed to knowledge development over the course of an elementary field-based physical education methods course. Data collected included observations, post lesson conferences, and daily written reports. Findings indicated that pedagogical content knowledge developed differently in the roles of teacher and coach. Teacher growth initially resulted from the interaction of students and pedagogy and later from subject matter, environmental context, and general pedagogical knowledge. Additionally, Jenkins and Veal found that peer coaching enabled coaches to focus on student learning rather than on classroom management skills (Jenkins & Veal, 2002). This is important for teacher education in that most novice teachers tend to focus on issues related to behavior and classroom management, as opposed to student learning and achievement (Jenkins & Veal, 2002).

Achievement

Some studies on peer coaching have demonstrated increases in student achievement through its implementation. Kohler (1999) analyzed a peer coaching procedure across three phases of a multiple baseline design. The researchers examined peer coaching in relation to teacher and student outcomes. Researchers coded students' active engagement and academic talk. According to the student outcomes, students' talk with a partner was highly reciprocal in nature. In comparing student talk across mini-lessons, reciprocal learning, and closure, student talk increased considerably during reciprocal learning. Additionally, several students demonstrated corollary improvements in their social interaction skills.

Zwart et al., (2009) as described in an earlier section, analyzed the role of characteristics of a reciprocal peer-coaching context in relation to teacher learning. The main findings of this study reported that teachers learn when they are intrinsically motivated to take part in professional development, when they feel pressured to experiment with new methods, and when they are able to discuss experiences in a trusting environment. In conjunction with experimentation of methods, the data collected included student perception of teacher behavior. This measure was adopted in order to determine if the teachers stimulated active and self-regulated student learning to a greater extent following participation in the reciprocal peer coaching intervention. The students responded to items by using a five point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (this teacher never shows this behavior) to 5 (this teacher always shows this behavior). Students reported that teachers who experimented with new teaching strategies during peer observations displayed greater changes in their behavior and also reported learning more themselves as a result.

Showers (1984) investigated the effects of peer coaching in classroom application of new teaching techniques. Participants included 21 teachers and 6 peer coaches in two school districts. Data included observations, tests, teachers' plans, and interviews. Major findings reported that the students of coached teachers performed better on a measure of concept attainment when compared with students of uncoached teachers.

In a discussion of peer coaching, Ackland (1991) recommended that instructional practice be connected to student outcomes and teacher change. Kohler et al., (1997), found that although teachers made few changes in their approaches during the baseline condition, they focused on different aspects of their approach during peer coaching and made refinements that fit their areas of concentration. Additionally, many of the changes instituted during coaching were sustained in

follow-up phases; consequently, student talk with a partner was highly reciprocal in nature (Kohler, et al., 1997).

Companionship

Joyce and Showers (1982) discussed the provision of companionship as a major function of the teaching process. According to Joyce & Showers (1982), companionship can provide the reassurance that problems arising during teaching are normal. They describe companionship as not only making the training process easier, but also helpful in making the experience more enjoyable by taking away the isolation that is characteristic of the teaching field (Joyce & Showers, 1982).

Jewett & MacPhee (2012) in their study of students in a university coaching class found that peers felt a sense of confidence as they worked together to solve problems, discussed their teaching, and shared their joys and difficulties related to teaching. This confidence can instill new understandings about coaching and professional development (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012). It is also this sense of self-confidence that can allow teachers to break down the barriers of isolation by opening their doors to questions and support. Jewett & MacPhee (2012) found that as students sought each other, they became more collaborative and showed an enjoyment for working to improve their teaching practice.

In a related study of five peer coaching dyads of tenured, female, academics, Cox (2012), examined the establishment and maintenance of peer coaching (Cox, 2012). Cox conducted joint interviews with each coaching dyad to promote co-construction of responses. Findings suggested that trust was further strengthened by a sense of confidentiality and the capacity of peers to make themselves appear vulnerable (Cox, 2012). Cox (2012) stated that opening oneself up to vulnerability leads to the

confidence to share future plans and reveal values, thus leading to productivity in relation to achieving goals.

Empowerment

Empowerment is another benefit of peer coaching (Veenman & Denessen, 2001). In their analysis of five training studies conducted in Dutch primary and secondary schools, Veenman & Denessen (2001), found that peer coaching made a significant difference in professional growth and autonomy. This development for autonomy strengthened teachers' ability to reflect on the effectiveness of their instruction and create plans to address improvement of practice (Veenman & Dennessen, 2001).

A study by Marks and Seashore Louis (1997) defined empowerment as "an educational reform initiative that often accompanies policies to increase decision making authority and accountability at the school level" (p. 245). Results of their study reported that empowerment positively influenced teachers' efforts to improve practice and the belief that student achievement is a result of teaching effort and collaboration with other teachers about effective teaching (Marks & Seashore Louis, 1997).

Challenges to Peer Coaching

Close partnerships between colleagues are an important component in establishing a peer-coaching model in schools (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2002). In these environments, collaboration and trust between individuals must be strong in order to enable this type of professional development to flourish (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). So that trust can be developed and maintained, administration and management teams should consider existing relationships and facilitate closer working relationships (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). Other potential challenges to the peer-coaching model involve the acquisition of knowledge and training,

engaging staff commitment for this type of collaboration, time constraints, and accurate identification of what is needed for individual schools (Rhodes & Beniecke, 2002). Additionally, professional developers as well as administrators should discuss logistics, initiatives, and class coverage in order to custom-design their own peer-coaching model (Ackland, 1991).

Knowledge and Training

Currently there is a small amount of information related to standards involving the skill and training of staff responsible for helping colleagues learn (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). This information needs to be addressed if schools hope to utilize a peer-coaching model as a viable form of professional development for their staffs (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). Although there is more information on how schools utilize coaches as mentors to newly qualified teachers (Bleach, 2000; Hayes, 2000), there is little training to guide the work of coaches as they work with more experienced teachers within schools (Harrison, 2001).

Thompson (2001), surveyed teachers following a performance threshold assessment and found that one-third of respondents did not identify their team leader as a coach who could help them in developing their skills. Additionally, one fifth of respondents felt that their team leader did not take an interest in their individual professional development. Thompson (2001) states that these responses are important because team leaders, whether subject to performance standards or not, are responsible to help assist teachers and raise their performance.

Lu (2010), in a review of eight studies of peer coaching, examined its feasibility and challenges in pre-service education. Although Lu (2010) found that peer coaching appeared to have unique advantages and held value for pre-service teacher education, Lu elaborated on barriers such as a lack of trained individuals. According to Lu (2010) results indicated that, with

the exception of one, most programs studied provided student teachers with training before the peer coaching model was implemented, but duration of this training varied for each program. Additionally, the variety of tools for observation and feedback, such as audiotape (Mallette et al., 1999), videotape (Bowman & McCormick, 2000; Hasbrouck, 1997), and ear bugs (Fry and Hin, 2006), required different amounts of training. Lu (2010), stated that for most of the studies reviewed, training involved techniques for coaches that addressed goal identification, data collection, and data presentation (Fry and Hin, 2006; Gemmell, 2003; Jenkins et al., 2002; Kurtts & Levin, 2000).

Additionally, student teacher experience in fieldwork was another factor that determined amount of training. Ovens (2004) studied twelve fourth year students with a range of practicum experience. Based on this experience, Ovens (2004) did not provide training on the assumption that participants were familiar with the school culture, had basic teaching competencies, and were motivated to coach each other. It was found that participants felt that they were lacking in skill to analyze lessons. The results of this study demonstrated that training can help to alleviate problems and lead to the success of the peer-coaching model (Lu, 2010).

Time Constraints

Although the dialogue of coaching can happen naturally among teachers (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012), finding this common ground can prove to be an obstacle. Administration and school management teams should be aware of school time constraints and the need to create and allow for sufficient time for peer coaches to successfully implement their roles (Thompson, 2001; Rhodes and Houghton-Hill, 2000). Before a peer coaching program is implemented, a more formal, in-depth approach to this model will require school leaders to carefully consider logistics (Ackland, 1991).

A lack of common planning time for school-based professional development can result in faculty distancing themselves from efforts to improve student learning (Cranston, 2009; Kaplan, 2008; Hindin, Morrocco, Mott, and Aguilar, 2007). This lack of meaningful teacher interaction inhibits the collaboration and sharing of effective teaching practices (Doolittle, Sudeck, and Rattigan, 2008). Researchers agree that this type of professional development involves time to collaborate (Servage, 2009; Wells, 2008; Slavit, 2007).

Kurtts and Levin (2000), in their study of twenty-seven undergraduate elementary education majors, found that pre-service teachers gained an increased understanding of the need to develop a reflective stance on their teaching. Additionally, they found that participants realized the benefits of collaboration and seeking support from peers. Although positive outcomes for this study were described, the authors noted that pre-service teachers' had concerns regarding peer coaching that centered on scheduling, especially when school activities conflicted with scheduled coached lessons.

Ovens (2004) conducted a study in which twelve final-year physical education students participated in an alternative practicum that utilized a peer-coaching model. Analysis of the students' perspectives showed that they felt the alternative provided a purpose to the practicum, increased the level of theorizing and thinking they did about their teaching, gave them more autonomy over decision making, and provided quality supervision and feedback. However, the students continued to have problems related to work load, poorly organized programs, and the short time in schools. In conclusion, the study demonstrated that peer coaching and action research can provide a meaningful and productive practicum experience for students. The researchers provided recommendations regarding the organization of such an approach.

Engaging Staff Commitment

The school management team is a vital component of a coaching program. (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). Administrators have to be able to convince their staffs that this type of professional development is beneficial and involves a management style of coaching and peer networking (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002).

According to Higgins and Leat (1997), it is important to understand that people are not as likely to be receptive of this type of professional development if they feel they are being manipulated. For example, if teachers believe that coaches work with them to address only weaknesses, then feelings of negativity will most likely prevail regarding this mode of professional development. According to Rhodes & Beneicke (2002), when these feelings take place, teachers will not perceive coaching as a "collegial drive to support the learning of all teachers" (p. 304).

Additionally, Arnau et al., (2004) in their study of veteran teachers participating in a voluntary peer-coaching program stressed that trust can be fostered by principals who serve as facilitators, rather than directors of a program. The findings of this study demonstrated that half of the teachers who participated noted greater trust among peer coaches. This increase in trust was mostly due to learning situations that involved teacher choice in participation and selection of a peer coach (Arnau et al., 2004). The authors discuss the need for principals to present this form of professional development as voluntary and guided by adult learning principles (Arnau et al., 2004).

Finally, principals must work to establish new norms that reward collegial planning, public teaching, constructive feedback, and experimentation (Showers, 1985).
The unique needs of a faculty need to be taken into consideration when embarking on implementing peer coaching as a mode of professional development (Ackland, 1991). Knowing

and understanding the individuality and needs of a staff is therefore a key component to the peer-coaching model's success (Rhodes & Bieneckie, 2002).

Competing Perspectives

Omitting Verbal Feedback

Competing perspectives in peer coaching research involve whether to implement feedback or not. Joyce and Showers have been proponents for the omission of feedback because of the model becoming more supervisory rather than collegial. Omission of feedback is a principle of Joyce and Showers (1996) approach to peer coaching. They validate this for their approach because they feel that the primary goal of peer coaching teams is to develop curriculum and instruction based on shared goals (Joyce & Showers, 1996). In talking with teachers about feedback, teachers admitted that that they found themselves providing feedback that contained "supervisory, evaluative comments" (Joyce & Showers, 1996, p. 15), in spite of trying to avoid them. Joyce & Showers (1996) state that this type of feedback was not meeting their original intention for collegial professional development. Teachers found themselves expecting "first, the good news, then the bad" (Joyce & Showers, 1996, p. 15), based on their past experiences with administrative supervision; therefore, when teachers try to give one another feedback, the collaboration tends to disintegrate (Showers & Joyce, 1996). It was found that the omission of feedback did not depress implementation or student growth and so it was eliminated from their model (Joyce & Showers, 1996, 2002).

Utilizing Verbal Feedback

Another perspective is that verbal feedback that is non-evaluative can effect change in practice (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012; Waddell & Dunn, 2005; Arnau et al., 2004; Veenman & Dennessen, 2001). Jewett & MacPhee (2012), as discussed in an earlier section, found that

teachers first needed to listen to their peer in order to decide what they felt needed to be addressed to move their peer forward in their instruction. Teachers in this study reported that this was not easy to do and required self-restraint. In one participant's words, ""I had never thought about the fact that coaches, like classroom teachers, must choose their words carefully in order to be effective communicators." This kind of restraint became a common theme among participants as they took on the role of coaching each other (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012).

Waddell and Dunn (2005), in their article on peer coaching as a model in nursing staff development, discuss the importance of non-evaluative feedback. The authors state that feedback highlights desirable behaviors and praises competence. Additionally, the coach can identify needed improvements using a positive approach. This type of feedback is demonstrated in the following example of a peer coach working with a colleague on clinical breast examination skills: "I noticed that you did an excellent job of checking the order for the chemotherapy before you prepared the solution for injection. Be just as thorough in double-checking the patient's identity before administration" (Waddell & Dunn, 2005, p. 85).

Arnau et al., (2004), as discussed in an earlier section, pointed out that more than half of the teachers in their study reported being motivated by meaningful feedback. In the words of one participant: "It helps me to feel like there are people that I can ask questions to that will give me helpful information, not just pats on the back." (Arnau, et al., 2004, p. 32). Although teachers reported feeling motivated because they received affirmation for the work they did in their classrooms, they also reported wanting their coach to provide feedback on what could be worked on, allowing for what they felt was the purpose of this model, "giving you really specific feedback" (Arnau et al., 2004, p. 33).

Veenman & Denneseen (2001), as discussed in a previous section, state that the

characteristics of effective feedback are that "it be timely, sufficient, concrete, specific and limited to a small number of performance problems" (p. 410). In their analysis of five training studies, the large effect size for the scale feedback in the sample of secondary teachers was due to the fact that at pre-test, most of the teachers in both trained and untrained groups were not observed to give concrete feedback after classroom observations. At post-test, coaches in the trained group provided this type of feedback, while coaches in the untrained group still did not.

The National Writing Project

It has been suggested that the National Writing Project (NWP) is the country's most successful and enduring professional development organization for teachers of writing. The organization evolved from James Gray's simple and profound idea that "successful teachers make the best teachers of teachers" (Gray, 2000). Regarding teachers as the experts, the expectation of the NWP's summer institutes is that selected teachers will demonstrate for each other their most effective classroom practices in writing instruction. Peer coaching, therefore, lies at the heart of the NWP as one of their core principles and states that teachers learn best when they are taught by practicing teachers (Cox, 1999; Huber, 2001).

The National Writing Project's Beginnings

In 1974, John Gray established the beginnings of the NWP with teachers from the San Francisco Bay area schools, basing this work on the theories of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Bandura. Gray believed that teachers who were informed and inspired were the best to teach teachers about teaching writing (Kaplan, 2008). It was from this belief that Gray formed an alliance of professional development services for teachers and schools wanting to a) improve the teaching of writing, b) use writing as a tool to integrate the content areas, and c) create a community of experienced writing teachers who would teach other educators about promising practices in

writing instruction. This alliance of teachers sharing a common goal of improving writing instruction became the NWP's *teachers-teaching teachers* model of professional development (Gray, 2000).

The creation and sustainment of high-quality teachers of writing who are informed, committed, and inspired is the motivation for the creation of the NWP and the sole reason for continuing research, development, and implementation (Dyson & Freedman, 2003; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006).

Focus of the National Writing Project

The mission of the National Writing Project (NWP) focuses the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of U.S. educators on sustained efforts to improve writing and learning for all learners by empowering teachers to become advocates for the teaching of writing (Kaplan, 2008). Developing this core group of teachers from all levels of teaching is imperative in that it creates a collective body of educators who are passionate and committed to improving the teaching of writing for all young writers. The NWP envisions a future where everyone is an accomplished writer, engaged learner, and active participant in a multi-literacy, digital, interconnected world (http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/doc/about.csp). These multi-literacies are believed to be the signature means of communication in the 21st century. As new localized sites are added each year, its goal is to have a writing project site that is accessible to every U.S. educator.

The core principles of the NWP are as follows:

- Educators from kindergarten through the college level are agents of reform; Universities and schools invest in that reform through professional development;

- Writing should be taught and not assigned at every grade level. The NWP provides opportunities for teachers to work together to understand the writing process at it pertains to all levels;
- Writing is an art as well as a craft and its process should not be a mystery;
- Effective professional development provides knowledge in theory, research, and practice for teachers;
- A reflective and informed community of practice works to determine the most effective ways of teaching writing; and
- Well-informed teachers can be successful teachers of teachers and partners in research. These teacher-leaders are the greatest resource in reforming educational practices in writing.

  (http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/doc/about.csp).

The structure of the NWP is as follows:

- The NWP is a network of university-based sites spanning the United States. These sites serve teachers of all disciplines and all levels, from early childhood through university;
- The NWP works in partnership with institutions, organizations, and communities to develop and offer professional development programs for educators, and sustain leadership for educational improvement;
- The NWP is co-directed by university faculty and K-12 schools. Almost 200 local sites serve all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and The U.S. Virgin Islands. The NWP now includes two associated international sites to include the Malta Writing Programme and The WrITE Project in Hong Kong; and

- Additionally, various NWP sites may conduct programs for youth, parents, community members, and administrators (http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/doc/about.csp).

The National Writing Project's Model

The model of the NWP involves developing a collective body of leadership from local teachers who participate in invitational summer institutes to become NWP teacher consultants who are able to provide training in writing instruction. This training could be customized in-service programs for schools as well as continuing education and research opportunities for teachers. Writing programs for young writers, parents, community members, and administrators are additional forms of support that are sponsored by the NWP. "The intent of the NWP is to extend the dialogue about best pedagogical practices, to become all-inclusive, and to be first and foremost, teacher-generated" (Gray, 2000). Another core belief of the NWP is that when elementary and secondary teachers examine their own teaching practices, they are more likely to model promising practices in writing instruction while at the same time, providing inspiration to those with whom they are working.

Orientations for the Teaching of Writing

The tradition and framework of the NWP for the teaching of writing guides teachers to make decisions about their work, and reflecting upon that work in order to improve instruction (Whitney and Friedrich, 2013). In this qualitative study, Whitney & Friedrick (2013), analyzed interview data from NWP teacher-consultants whose involvement in NWP began between 1974 and 1994. It was found that this guidance involved a series of orientations that helped teachers to define and refine their beliefs about writing instruction. First, teachers clarified or revised their sense of purposes for writing as a tool for learning and developing ideas. Next, teachers

reflected on their writing processes in order to scaffold students writing practices. Finally, teachers linked their teaching of writing to that of their own personal experiences as writers. According to Whitney and Friedrich, these orientations are a set of beliefs that influence teacher practice among the purposes, nature, and teaching and learning of writing (2013). Whitney and Friedrich suggested that this type of professional development should be looked at as a decades-long series of encounters with ideas and strategies, rather than as one of linearity and concrete impact. Examining it through this lens can help the field envision how teachers and organizations such as the NWP, can bring continuity to the changes that occur in the area of writing.

In connection to these changes, Richard Sterling, former executive director of the NWP, stated "writing has now become even more important than it was years ago" (as cited in Freeman, 2007). Technological changes that make writing more crucial for everyone should be viewed as a means of helping teachers. Technological innovations such as text messaging, website creations, blogs, and social networking have served to increase the number of young people who are engaged in writing for real purposes. The challenge, he said, is to make the school environment as challenging and engaging as the non-school options for creative expression through writing. In order to meet these challenges, Sterling identified three important principles that should guide and reform the teaching of writing.

First, teachers of writing should also write, according to Sterling. The NWP approaches this principle through its practice of including personal writing as a daily component of its summer institutes. Teachers are able to apply the research-based, effective practices they learn at the summer institute to their own personal writing. This practice can help teachers to see the value of implementing daily writing with their students.

Second, Sterling recommends that teachers use a broad range of techniques in the teaching of writing. The NWP has always discouraged the one-size-fits-all mentality, and views every student and teacher as an individual. Helping teachers to understand that students have different processes for writing can assist them in encouraging their students to use what works for them in order to express themselves.

Finally, students need to be encouraged to write frequently and for different purposes. Additionally, collecting one's work for possible uses in the future should become a habit. In alignment with this principle, the NWP has always encouraged its teachers to collect and add pieces for their own personal writing, knowledge of a variety of writing processes, and ideas and strategies for their classrooms.

The National Writing Project's Summer Institutes

According to Kaplan (2008), there are several ways that the NWP's summer institutes foster the development of professional writing communities. First, listening to each other is important. The environment that the summer institute provides enables its participants to speak openly about their successes and challenges in teaching young people to write. Often, these talks involve frustrations with state mandated testing and curriculums that place product over process. Second, the participants of the summer institute are validated in their frustrations and challenges. These concerns are recognized as participants come to realize that other educators experience similar challenges related to writing. Through the dialogue and research during the course of the summer institute, teachers learn that these challenges can be met with research-based teaching strategies that are not only engaging, but evolve along with constantly changing societies. According to Kaplan, this new learning is in alignment with the idea of process over product, helping to foster the idea of writing as a lifelong activity rather than one that satisfies the writing

goals for state testing (2008).

Finally, the summer institute serves to inspire its participants (Kaplan, 2008). Teachers are invited to take what they inherently understand about teaching writing and take these understandings to a higher level. Teachers are encouraged to share this perceived knowledge about teaching writing within the context of informed research about teaching composition to young people. It is hoped that the time that participants are given to research promising practices for the teaching of writing will motivate them to become informed and critical teachers of writing (Kaplan, 2008). The summer institute encourages teachers to rely on its community of learners who serve to nurture each other as they continue to examine and evaluate writing practices that motivate students to become better writers (Kaplan, 2008).

As an example of the staying power of teachers trained in the practices of the NWP, a study conducted by Milner et al. (2009) compared North Carolina teachers who were trained in the summer institutes with those who were not trained. The results demonstrated that trained teachers had a higher attrition rate as opposed to those that were not trained. The authors found evidence of writing project teachers' longevity in that all of North Carolina's cohorts from 1998 – 2004 remained in teaching longer than those teachers who were not trained. This difference was important in that it separated them from their peers. The authors attributed this difference to the NWP's summer institute, claiming that trained teachers had a staying power and professionalism that untrained teachers did not possess (Milner et al., 2009).

A Day in the Life of the Summer Institute

The summer institute is conducted all day, Monday through Friday, for four weeks. A variety of activities are structured within each day: morning journals, video diaries serving as ongoing documentation, demonstration lessons from peers, writing groups, reading groups, and

author and illustrator visits. The last day of the week is one of the most powerful days in that each fellow shares a piece of writing that has been written, both individually and within writing groups. As the fellows write, read, share, and learn together, a bond is formed, and becomes stronger throughout the institute. As the days turn into weeks, the community of learners evolves into a strong unit.

This bond enables the now close community to question, validate, and learn from each other in order to raise teaching practice to a higher level. Participating teachers are continually asked, through conversation, reading, research, and writing, to examine and reexamine, reflect and re-reflect, respond and re-respond on their own assumptions about the teaching of writing (Gray, 2000). Examples of this reflective process include the following guiding questions: How can a particular lesson be adapted for English Language learners? How would a demonstration lesson work for all levels (Kindergarten through university level)? What global connections can be made so that children can see how the world can be brought into their learning? How should technology be effectively used to assist in the implementation of the writing content? And finally, why is this lesson important in the big picture of literacy? Through daily discussions, participants are urged to reflect on their own practices and beliefs.

Professional Roles Beyond the Summer Institute

Upon completion of the summer institute, teacher fellows become teacher consultants. For many teachers, the summer institute often represents the first time a teacher has gone public with his or her practice, worked in a writing group, or shared and critiqued writing (Lieberman and Wood, 2003). The final expectation for each new teacher consultant is to present their original demonstration lesson at the site's annual conference. At this point, the level of involvement becomes a personal choice for each teacher consultant. Some teacher consultants

who wish to remain involved have gone on to present at summer workshops in which they are able to hone their skills as staff developers. Others volunteer to help with various projects that provide literacy connections between school and home.

As teacher consultants, the opportunities to work and lead within the organization are abundant. The ideas behind all of these projects are united by the mission of the National Writing Project – to level the playing field and create a sense of urgency to promote social justice for children and their families. Through encouraging and modeling social justice for its teachers, children, and their families, it becomes apparent that what each teacher consultant brings to the organization is accepted, validated, and considered to be a vehicle to knowledge in writing for all.

The Focus of this Study

This study explored the peer coaching interactions within a NWP summer institute. I observed peer coaching that included interactions between fellows (classroom teachers in training), teacher consultants, co-directors, and the director. This study explored these interactions and influences from the perspective of the teacher fellow. To date, studies of peer coaching at NWP summer institutes have focused on the coaching that directors and co-directors provide to teacher fellows in conjunction with their demonstration lessons. I have not found studies that focus on peer coaching interactions among teacher fellows at summer institutes. My observations of peer coaching interactions in relation to trust, teacher learning, and perceived impact of coaching to student achievement is necessary and vital to understanding the inner workings of this specific type of professional development within summer institutes. Gaining a better understanding of peer interactions from the perspective of teacher fellows could assist this summer institute, as well as other institutes and schools, in planning and organizing the

environment to maximize the potential of peer coaching as a form of professional development.

The research questions in this study include:

1. What types of peer coaching interactions are perceived as helpful to teachers at the NWP summer institute, and how does trust factor into these interactions?
    a. How do the types of interactions among the summer institute participants lend themselves to peer coaching relationships?
    b. How is trust established within these relationships?
2. What regard do teachers hold toward peer coaching as it relates to their instruction?
    a. How do teachers perceive peer coaching as impacting their writing instruction?
    b. What did teachers say they learned from their peer coaches regarding their writing instruction?

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

In this chapter, I will first provide a brief overview of the methodology of the study. I will then discuss the epistemological assumptions that guided my choices for the research design and the methodology. I will next describe the site and the participants. I will then provide the procedures for data collection that I employed, including the type of data that was collected. I will then describe the procedures for data analysis and the processes that I carried out to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of this study.

The purpose of this study was to gather information about the nature of peer coaching at a National Writing Project summer institute. My objective was to conduct research within the context of this institute as a way to improve the understanding of peer coaching interactions and participant perception of the impact of this coaching to writing instruction and personal learning. With that purpose in mind, my intent was to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of peer coaching interactions are perceived as helpful to teachers at the NWP summer institute, and how does trust factor into these interactions?
    a. How do the types of interactions among the summer institute participants lend themselves to peer coaching relationships?
    b. How is trust established within these relationships?
2. What regard do teachers hold toward peer coaching as it relates to their instruction?
    a. How do teachers perceive peer coaching as impacting their writing instruction?
    b. What did teachers say they learned from their peer coaches regarding their writing instruction?

My intent was to refrain from what I thought I should discover. I wanted to remain open to learning and discovering answers to my research questions, as this study evolved.

In order to best understand the nature of peer coaching, this study was naturalistic, since the data was collected at the site where participants were in their natural setting; in this case, a National Writing Project summer institute (Creswell, 2009). As in most qualitative investigations, the process had open-ended questions and involved evolving procedures. I collected data through ongoing participant interviews; small and large group coaching sessions in connection to participants' personal writing, teaching of writing, and digital journal entries. I recorded and transcribed interviews and coaching sessions. I collected data from three individual case studies followed by a cross-case analysis. As the researcher, my capacity was one of participant-observer in which I will elaborate on in a later section of this chapter. I collected the data and inductively analyzed and developed it to form conceptual categories and themes that I later used to support existing theoretical assumptions (Merriam, 1998).

The Research Paradigm

Knowledge is not something that is simply taken in; it is created, given meaning, and adapted within multiple social constructions (Schwandt, 2000). In order to explore the nature of peer coaching, its role in learning, and the interactions between selected participants of a NWP's summer institute, I used a constructivist paradigm to carry out these explorations. My assumption as a researcher within this paradigm is that people socially construct knowledge (Mertens, 2010). As the researcher, my goal was to understand my participants' lived experiences from their point of view (Schwandt, 2000). My intent was to allow concepts of importance in this study to emerge as the participants constructed them, and not as I have conceptualized them for myself.

Through the interactive process of social constructivism, human beings learn by interacting with each other within a culture (Creswell, 2009). It is through this paradigm that I opted for a more personal, interactive mode of data collection. Knowing my participants on a personal level assisted me in constructing my interpretations of how they understood the nature of coaching within the context of the summer institute. These interpretations helped me to clarify how these peers learned within coaching interactions. Clarifying this understanding can allow for adaptation by educators in order to further construct their own meaning of peer coaching within a group whose focus is to further their knowledge in the teaching of writing.

I supported the validity of my claims through the use of multiple sources of data, as well as the multiple methods I used to collect data. Consequently, I sought the perceptions of a variety of people in order to obtain an understanding from a variety of perspectives. This allowed me to obtain a balanced representation of views related to my participants' construction of meaning (Mertens, 2010). This balance helped me to apply my findings to the general population of the participants represented within the summer institute. Additionally, multiple examples of direct quotations from my focal participants supported my inferences and claims as I worked to further construct my knowledge of the nature of coaching (Mertens, 2010).

Approaching my research questions through a constructivist approach situated this study in its context and recognized that only those involved (those who coach and those who are coached) were able to offer insights into the nature of the experience (Creswell, 1998). From an ontological perspective, the reality of coaching lies outside the perception of any single individual and can be identified only through an analysis of the interactions and perceptions of those who participate (Creswell, 1998).

Data Collection

Context

The NWP invitational summer institute is a university-based collaboration between local universities, the National Writing Project, and local area schools. Local writing projects are defined by their dedication to improving writing instruction for all learners, but especially for English Language Learners and children of poverty. This philosophy comes from the National Writing Project's (NWP) core belief that well-informed and effective teachers can be successful teachers of other teachers, and that these teacher-leaders are the greatest resource for educational reform.

The summer institute participants are made up of fellows (university students), teacher consultants (former fellows), and director and co-directors. A different group of fellows gathers each summer to attend its four-week, one hundred twelve hour institute at a local university. Most fellows attending the summer institute are pursuing a master's or doctorate degree; however, some may be local non-degree seeking teachers desiring to improve their practice in the area of writing.

Non-Focal Participants

The participants for this study included both focal and non-focal participants. Initially, I provided all non-focal participants (fellows, co-directors, and director) with a verbal consent script on the first day of instruction. This script explained the study and the various ways that non-focal participants would possibly be involved during the summer institute. I informed the non-focal participants of the various daily, whole group activities, such as written and shared reflections on morning journal topics, feedback from support groups for personal writing, and whole group feedback following demonstration lessons that were focused on writing instruction. These activities involved coaching interactions that included non-focal participants; however,

these interactions proved to be useful for this study. Whole group feedback was essential to understanding the nature of coaching within the dynamic of this learning environment. Additionally, digital logs regarding the morning journal topics and feedback after demonstration lessons, assisted me in understanding the interpretations, suggestions, and meanings that were constructed within the larger group, and how these meanings applied to my focal participants.

Focal Participants

After I read the consent script for non-focal participants, I distributed a paper on which fellows could express their interest in becoming a focal participant. I later focused on these fellows to purposively select focal participants using specific criteria and student applications for the summer institute. On the second day of instruction, I obtained informed consent of selected focal participants by reviewing a form letter for verbal recruitment and consent form. Focal participants were allowed time to voice their questions and/or concerns related to the study.

I used purposive sampling through selective criteria for choosing the three focal participants for the case studies. Creswell (2006) provides general guidelines for sample size according to several research traditions. With case studies, Creswell suggests selecting three to five participants. Merriam (1995) suggests selecting several "cases" based on relevant criteria; therefore, three focal participants were selected based on these criteria. Thought-provoking criteria for selection of participants included,

- teaching experience;
- grade level(s) currently teaching or taught;
- level of education;
- attitude toward writing;
- motivation for attending the summer institute;

- prior experience as a coach;
- prior experience in having been coached;
- teacher of writing;
- experience in teaching ELL's;

This variety in criteria allowed me to recruit participants who encapsulated "uniqueness." Purposefully selecting participants based on these criteria guaranteed the diverse and unique qualities of my focal participants in order to obtain a good representation of the general population of the summer institute. This allowed me to better generalize my findings across this particular population.

Focal Participant 1

Gene was a Marine reservist and an experienced educator at the secondary level. At the time of this study, Gene had ten years of experience and planned to teach at a new school in the fall in which he would be teaching eighth grade English and debate. Gene had informal experiences in peer coaching and felt that learning from others was important in continuing to grow as an educator. As a doctoral student, his goals included researching writing instruction and assessment. He plans to teach at the post-secondary level after achieving his doctorate. Gene added a different dimension to this study in that his deep ties to family and the Marine Corps added to his personal writing during the summer institute. He was an experienced teacher and writer who came to the summer institute seeking inspiration, knowledge, and collaboration. A dedicated teacher, he presented himself as wanting to instill camaraderie and motivation for reading and writing to his students.

Focal Participant 2

Sassparilla immigrated from Mexico to the United States as a teenager. At the time of this study she had six years of bilingual teaching experience at the elementary level. She planned to teach fourth grade to bilingual students in the fall at a Title 1 school. After receiving her Bachelor's degree, she received a Master's degree in Library Science, and had recently received a second Master's degree in Educational Administration. Sassparilla had both formal and informal experiences in coaching. She served as a writing tutor at the college level as she was pursuing her Bachelor's degree. Additionally, she was involved in coaching experiences with peers at her grade level, attending the summer institute with one of these peers. I observed her to be a teacher who advocated for bilingual students, as well as English Language Learners. Her seemingly rich experiences of moving around to different areas of Mexico, immigrating to the United States, encouraged by a family that stressed culture and heritage as an important link to their lives, is what gave her a unique perspective on life; consequently, providing her with a type of background knowledge for writing and interacting with others at the summer institute.

Focal Participant 3

Marie was a single mother with close-knit ties to her family and culture. At the time of this study, she had two years of experience as an educator, one year at the fifth grade level, and one year at the second grade level. She planned to teach second grade at this same campus in the fall. Strongly encouraged by her parents to achieve a higher education, she decided to pursue a Master's degree. Her future plans involve pursuing a doctorate in education. Marie's experiences in coaching were initially organized by her principal when he paired her with her fifth grade level team leader. This mentor, as well as the other teachers on her grade level, guided and supported her through her first year of teaching. Marie reported that when she moved to another grade level, these peers were still available to help her and continued to

encourage her growth as an educator. Seemingly concerned with student advocacy, she appeared to be committed and passionate in her quest to improve both her writing instruction and personal writing. She hoped that the summer institute would help to instill in her a love for writing that she could take back to her students. As a modern woman holding onto her family's traditions and beliefs, Marie's experiences added to this study because of her unique perspective on education, family, and cultural background.

Data Sources

I used a variety of data sources for this study, including interviews and video- recorded observations of interactions between focal participants and their peer coaches. I briefly summarize each in the following sections. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the data sources and the way they related to my research questions (See Appendix A).

Interviews

The primary source of data for this study was individual interviews. Merriam (1998) described interviews as necessary when behavior, feelings, or the ways people interpret the world around them cannot be observed by the researcher. Additionally, Merriam (1998) described interviews as the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals. Interviewing focal participants allowed me to understand how they interpreted the peer interactions within the context of the summer institute. I conducted in-depth, audiotaped interviews with the three focal participants during the second and fourth weeks of the summer institute. It was my intent that conducting the interviews during these times would enable me to capture focal participants' evolving understandings of the coaching interactions during the four weeks of the institute.

The interview process followed a semi-structured format (Merriam, 1998) and was

guided by predetermined questions. The types of questions included, but were not limited to, experience/behavior, opinion, knowledge, feeling and probing questions. Figure 2 illustrates my semi-structured interview questions (See Appendix B). As suggested by Hays and Singh (2012), I asked follow-up questions to further engage focal participants in order to get a complete understanding of their knowledge and perception of the nature of coaching within the summer institute. Based on the participants' knowledge and experiences, more follow-up questions were asked in some interviews than in others. All participants were given the chance to review their respective transcripts and case studies as a way to establish trustworthiness. According to Hays and Singh (2012), this method accurately portrays participants' intended meaning.

Video-Recorded Observations

MacQuerrie in Mills, Durepose, and Wiebe (2010) state that case studies use research methods that involve the use of video to portray a certain aspect of a research question. According to MacQuerrie (2010) video-recorded images may serve as a means of facilitating communication regarding participant experiences. Videotaped sessions included recording focal participants once before their scheduled demonstration lessons, once during their demonstration lesson feedback, and once during their small-group writing support. These videos were included as a data source in order to capture what was not observed through interviews and researcher notes.

Stimulated Recall (SR) was used as a means of eliciting participants' recall of what occurred during these sessions. Lyle (2003) defines SR as "an introspection procedure in which (normally) videotaped passages of behaviour are replayed to individuals to stimulate recall of their concurrent cognitive activity" (p. 861). This method holds considerable potential for studying teacher/ education behavior, and, in particular, naturalistic studies can benefit due to its

minimal intervention in the activity (Lyle, 2003).

I arranged to view the video-recordings with each participant as soon as possible after the coaching sessions. I posed structured, but relatively open-ended questions to the focal participants during the viewing of the video recordings (See Appendix C). Questions were designed to reflect the focus of the study (Martin, Martin, Meyer, and Slemon,1986; Fernandez-Balboa, 1991; Lee, Landin, Carter,1992; Byra & Sherman, 1993; Tjeerdsma, 1997). Examples of the types of questions that I used during these viewing sessions included: "What did you notice about…?"; "What are your thoughts?"; "How do you think this has helped you?" and "What more would you have liked to receive feedback on?" Explanations of each type of video recording are detailed in the following sections.

Pre-Conferences: Demonstration Lessons. As the focal participants prepared to teach their required ninety minute lesson to the whole group, they were given the opportunity to work with a teacher consultant, director, or co-director in order to clarify concerns, ask questions, or receive validation for what they intended to teach. This was normally implemented one time before the teacher fellow was required to formally present; however, it could have occurred several times, depending on the focal participant's perceived need for coaching.

I implemented video recording during the more formally scheduled preparatory coaching session, in order to observe the nature of the coaching during these interactions. Video recording was impractical for an impromptu coaching session; therefore, I took notes during these coaching interactions in order to capture the essence of all coaching sessions. The number of these sessions was dependent on the focal participant and what they felt they needed in terms of preparing for their demonstration lesson.

Whole Group Feedback following Demonstration Lessons. This feedback was video-recorded in order to capture nuances, as members of the summer institute provided feedback to the focal participant who had recently conducted his or her demonstration lesson. Feedback normally revolved around the focal participants strengths, adaptability of lesson to all levels of learning (early childhood through university level), addressing the needs of English language learners, global connections, and technology. It was highly important to capture this coaching on video, because these conversations were unique and structured after a focal participant had modeled his or her lesson. This feedback allowed the focal participant to reflect on his or her practice as they addressed questions and comments from the group.

Writing groups. I video-recorded and transcribed the interactions of writing groups in which four to five people coached each other, as focal participants worked to improve their own personal writing. The writing groups met two to three times per week. Focal participants were video-recorded once during these coaching sessions after the completion of the first week of the institute. This allowed time for relationship building within these groups.

Digital Log Entries

The last source of data was the digital log entries composed by all participants. These entries were written on a daily basis and required participants to reflect on daily morning journal topics and to provide written feedback to each other regarding their demonstration lessons.

I assigned daily morning journal topics based on peer coaching twice during the summer institute. This allowed me to analyze the focal participants' evolving understandings of peer coaching regarding their perception of its impact to their writing instruction, as well as what they felt they learned from their peers. Topic number one posed the following question: What does

peer coaching mean to you? Topic number two posed the following question: What do you feel you have learned most from your peers?

I considered written feedback for each demonstration lesson a valuable source of data. Although I collected oral feedback from the whole group, it was important to include these digital entries because they had the potential to be just as insightful as data from the video recordings. Some participants may have felt more comfortable voicing their feedback within the privacy that the digital mode could provide versus providing oral feedback in a large group. I analyzed these digital entries in order to gain an additional understanding of how the focal participants processed their learning during the summer institute. They proved to be valuable and informative.

DATA ANALYSIS

I addressed the research questions for this study, through two stages of analysis: within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. According to Merriam (1998), a case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single, bounded unit" (Kindle Location, 2322). I reviewed the data that was pertinent to each participant in order to learn as much about the contextual variables that might have a bearing on their individual cases (Merriam, 1998). Examining each case individually for its complexities, as well as its dynamics, was necessary in order to discover the patterns that enabled me to generalize across cases (Merriam, 1998).

After individual cases were analyzed and coded, I conducted a cross-case analysis of the three case studies. In employing a cross-case analysis, within-case analyses are first treated as comprehensive cases in and of themselves (Merriam, 1998). After constructing general conclusions for each case, I analyzed the data for patterns and meanings across the cases in order to develop more powerful explanations (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Interviews and video-recordings were audio-recorded and transcribed using a denaturalized technique, and entered into a word processing program. Much of the literature that has examined this technique has drawn on the seminal work of Ochs (1979), in which she both proposed and demonstrated that transcription is theoretical in nature. Although Ochs wrote from the perspective of child language studies, her work addresses the need to carefully consider one's choices regarding transcription, based on the individual goals of individual studies (Davidson, 2009). Ochs' central claim that "Transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions" (p. 44) still stands as unrefuted (Duranti, 2007).

The use of denaturalization transcription practices grows out of the interest in the informational content of speech (MacLean, Meyer, and Estable, 2004). In utilizing this approach, I attempted a verbatim depiction of speech. Through working toward this full and faithful transcription, I was less concerned with accents or involuntary vocalization than the accuracy concerning the substance of the interview – the meanings and perceptions that occur during a conversation (Oliver, Serovich, and Mason, 2005). As I attempted to construct meaning from the data, this practice for transcription was most aligned to this study's theoretical goals.

To analyze the participant interviews, I prepared the transcripts by employing clause, phrase, and sentence as the units of analysis when appropriate. Hays & Singh (2012) suggest that with written text, it is important to decide whether to code by word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph. They state that the unit of analysis that is coded is a personal preference of the researcher. In coding my transcripts, it quickly became apparent that I needed to code at different levels based on information in the data that I interpreted to be of importance to this study.

A clause is defined as a group of words that includes a subject and a verb. Clauses can be dependent or independent. According to Gee (2012), "speech aims at a series of short clauses as ideal idea units" (p. 128). An idea unit is defined as a single focus of consciousness (Chafe, 1980). The majority of idea units are single clauses with one piece of new information towards the end of the clause (Gee, 2012). The following piece of data is an example that I analyzed at the clause level: "To see if it fits in to how you already try and write."

In going through the data, at times it was appropriate to code at the phrase level. A phrase is distinguished from a clause because it does not contain a subject and a verb (e.g., *in the evening*, *eating at the table*). In these cases, I separated content by phrase. At times, phrases in my data were able to stand alone as I discovered it revealed pertinent information to this study (Merriam, 1998). The following piece of data is an example that I analyzed at the phrase level: "with the cards."

At other times during my analysis, it was appropriate to code at the sentence level. In some pieces of data, relevant information to this study was not revealed at the clause or phrase level; rather, it was revealed in a sentence format. The following piece of data is an example that I analyzed at the sentence level: "But then why would you want to write like somebody else anyway?"

After dividing the data into these units, I began the initial coding process by employing a constant comparative analysis. The constant comparison method of data analysis was employed to deconstruct the collected data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Corbin & Strauss (2008), explain that, with the constant comparison approach, "each incident in the data is compared with other incidents for similarities and differences" (p. 73).

After the transcripts (interview and video) were transcribed, I implemented open coding at

the participant level (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I noted comments, observations, and/or notations in the margins next to parts of the data that were relevant to the study (See Appendix D). Because of the large amount of data that I gathered, I kept a running list of these groupings in a codebook as a way to define and organize the codes that emerged when analyzing the transcripts (Neuendorff, 2011; White & Marsh, 2006). As I reviewed the next transcript, I analyzed it in exactly the same way as the first transcript. I then reviewed the list of codes that I developed from the first transcript, to see if they were present in this second set of data. The notes and comments that I obtained from this second set of data were compared with the notes and comments from the first transcript or set of data. I combined these two lists into one list of concepts that constituted an outline reflecting the patterns in the individual case studies (See Appendix E). As I went through the remainder of each participant's transcripts I constantly reviewed and compared assigned codes to these initial transcripts. When I revised the codes, I made the corresponding changes to data that had been previously recorded and notated these changes in the codebook.

Once I had completed the initial coding of transcripts, I grouped similar data together. I noted each individual code and then analyzed the codes for similarities and differences. After grouping the codes in this manner, I conducted another review, noting this grouping. I repeated these reviews until I felt that the codes were represented in the group to which they belonged. This continuous comparison of the various groupings of data evolved into the formation of categories (See Appendix F). According to Merriam (1998), "units of data - bits of information - are literally sorted into groupings that have something in common" (Kindle Location 2160-2161).

At this point, I analyzed the categories to develop conclusions and insights about the individual case studies. Examining the categories of each case study was imperative to generalizing the findings and understanding their importance as they related to peer coaching. Through this synthesis, conclusions about the nature of peer coaching emerged and assisted me in forming a holistic view of the types of interactions and insights that were described by each participant (See Appendix G).

According to Merriam (1998) a qualitative, inductive, multi-case study seeks to build abstractions across cases. Once the individual case studies were analyzed, I reviewed the data across cases to discover the processes and outcomes that presented themselves across these individual cases. The constant comparison method was used again in order to compare categories across data sources for generating findings and conclusions related to the multiple cases. Cross-coding and analysis was used as a way to assist in searching for categories and themes between the multiple data sources. This cross-case analysis assisted me in the examination of similarities, differences and themes related to participants' understandings and meanings of peer coaching. Comparing the individual case studies against each other helped me to discover patterns that emerged from this data.

STRATEGIES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

Researcher Reflexivity

It was highly important for me to engage in reflexive practices throughout this study because of my past experiences and familiarity with the research setting. My personal biases, education, and professional experiences have implications for the analysis of the data. My past experiences as a teacher fellow at the summer institute influence my beliefs about peer coaching

and writing instruction. The beliefs and values I held had the potential to obscure my interpretations of peer coaching at the summer institute (Merriam, 1998).

Additionally, as a reading specialist, I have my own coaching relationships, either as the "coach" or the "coached." My goal as a researcher was to set the understandings of my personal experiences aside. My intent was to explore the relationships of my focal participants to gain a deeper understanding of the various forms that their relationships could take in an effort to discover what was common between them. Studying and analyzing the data I gathered from these interactions assisted me in adding to my own understanding of coaching and helped me to better interpret the data. This knowledge allowed me to compare what I know about coaching interactions with the understandings that I constructed from my focal participants. This allowed me to better comprehend the general tendencies and understandings of the coaching relationships as they existed within the summer institute.

As a participant observer, I strived to be more than just "being there" to observe and experience that which I was trying to understand. According to Wolcott (1995), questions to ask oneself upon embarking on this type of fieldwork include the following: "Can whatever I want to study be 'seen' by a participant observer at all?" and, if so, "Am I well positioned to observe those phenomena?"

In answer to the first question, I was able to "see" what I wanted to study. The coaching interactions during the summer institute were numerous. As a participant observer, being part of this group allowed me to observe interactions between different groups of people in both formal and informal situations.

In response to question number two, I also felt that I was well positioned to observe its nature as a participant. As a researcher gaining access to the summer institute, my expectation

was to participate in a majority of the activities that involved sharing my writing, thoughts, reflections, and opinions. Through sharing, my desired outcome was one of collegial trust in which I was better able to observe the interactions that addressed my research questions. It was my belief that "immersing" myself as a participant would enable me to better observe these peer interactions.

The third question Wolcott calls attention to is "What are my own capabilities for participating and observing in this situation?" I believe that my consistent attendance and participation in a majority of the institute's activities gave me credibility as a serious researcher and participant who believed in the mission and goals of the NWP.

As the researcher, I needed to compare what I believed I thought I would see, to what I actually saw in order to remain as objective as I could be. I controlled for these potential biases through the use of a reflexive journal (Erlandsen et al., 1993). This reflexive journal served to record my thoughts about how the research process affected my construction of meaning (Hays & Singh, 2012). This electronic record served to remind me about why I talked to various people and coded data in a particular way. Additionally, I used this journal to document my reactions to participants and data analysis, and notated my own personal and professional biases regarding what I observed on a daily basis. Tracking my thoughts of what I believed focal participants should elaborate on was necessary in providing insight into my own processes as an observer (Wolcott, 1995). Constantly reviewing these expectations in comparison to what was actually seen helped me to refocus my attention to what was actually going on. This reflection helped me to see my premature evaluations and kept me on constant alert in order to keep the "shoulds" and "coulds" separate from what I observed.

Additionally, I wanted to constantly assess what I was doing, what I was observing, and what I was recording. Looking at the information that I needed to report, rather than the information I felt I should gather, I constantly asked myself, "Do I intend to use this information, and if so, how do I intend to use it?"

Thick Description

Directly quoting from the interviews assisted me in answering the research questions and allowed for thick description. Extensively and carefully describing the time, place, context, and culture of the summer institute allows readers to make judgments about the applicability of the findings to their own situations (Mertens, 2010).

Member Checks

Involving my focal participants in the research process helped me to accurately portray their intended meanings when analyzing their data for categories and overall themes (Hays & Singh, 2012). I used this strategy to ensure that my understandings were consistent with the focal participants' intentions, as I analyzed and interpreted their data. This input assisted me in establishing consensus for understanding and defining the coding categories to help serve as a framework for analyzing the data. For this study, I gave my focal participants the choice of reviewing their transcripts and case studies in order to confirm authentic representation of their thoughts, understandings and insights of peer coaching. Focal participants were then able to raise questions and communicate their agreement or disagreement regarding what I had written. From their questions and suggestions I was able to make adjustments to my interpretations accordingly. I then provided focal participants with these changes in order to establish consensus for the information that pertained to each one.

Peer Debriefing

It was highly important as the researcher that I recognized my influence on the interpretation of the data. As a way to strengthen the credibility of this study, an uninvested, non-stakeholder was utilized. This strategy known as peer debriefing (Patton, 2002), allowed for an additional check on the analysis of the data. The external observer who acted in this capacity is currently a doctoral candidate and has in-depth knowledge of the NWP summer institute, having been a teacher fellow several years ago. Having no personal connection to this summer's institute, this person assisted me in keeping my own knowledge of the peer coaching aspect unbiased. She also served as a means of challenging and/or confirming my findings.

Triangulation of Data Methods

I employed multiple forms of evidence within this study to support and better describe the findings (Hays & Singh, 2012). In considering the forms of triangulation that were most relevant for establishing this study's rigor, triangulation of data sources, unit of analysis, data methods, and theoretical perspectives were used to strengthen its credibility. I triangulated data sources by including several focal participant voices throughout this study (Hays & Singh, 2012). I selected participants based on their diverse and unique qualities in order to obtain a good representation of the general population of the summer institute. Additionally, I triangulated by means of *unit of analysis.* According to Hays & Singh, (2012), "a unit of analysis, refers to individuals, settings, events, and processes" (p. 210). For this study, I selected three cases in order to research the complexity of the overall themes that emerged from the data. I also triangulated the data methods by including interviews, observations, and digital journal entries in order to obtain as clear a picture as possible of the coaching understandings and interactions. Finally, I utilized a triangulation of theoretical perspectives involved integrating the theories of teacher education, psychological and socio-linguistic perspectives. According to Janesick (1994), this strategy

relies on the use of multiple theories – at times across professional disciplines.

Limitations

The case study itself is a limitation because it does not allow for generalization to a larger population (Merriam, 1998); however, the use of case studies and cross-case analysis were most practical for this study's design and research questions. Additionally, the short duration of the summer institute may be considered a limitation in this study. Four weeks is a short time to study the nature of peer coaching, as relationship building takes time and is necessary in developing a trusting relationship (Arnau et al., 2004). Although it appeared that most participants, both focal and non-focal were able to create bonds with each other quickly, it is very likely that with more time, those relationships would have become closer, allowing for a more solid foundation on which to coach one another, thus allowing richer data to emerge.

Another limitation is my familiarity with focal participant two. This participant and I are colleagues and have worked on the same campus for the past three years. Although she is a classroom teacher and I am a reading specialist, our paths at work cross often and we have worked closely together on campus projects. Through this type of collaboration, we have become friends. In comparing her case study with the others, it is very possible that she felt more comfortable with me in making her true feelings regarding peer coaching known. In comparing her to the other focal participants, I may not have received as much pertinent data from them as I have from her.

Finally, although all participants discussed the importance of informal interactions as being just as important as the formal ones, I was unable to observe these types of interactions. In designing this study, I focused on the data collection that was originally set forth in the methodology section. This involved observing the formal interactions such as the writing groups

and coaching sessions in preparation of demonstration lessons. It also included interviews throughout the summer institute, thus my analysis came from what was found and reported through this data only. Future studies could analyze the informal interactions within a summer institute and how these types of interactions lead to trust as a factor in peer coaching. Future studies could also analyze how participants negotiate the space of perceived inequalities within their informal interactions.

The next chapter addresses the findings from the individual case studies. Each study addresses the focal participants' personal and professional background, as well as values and perceptions of the summer institute. Additionally I will discuss their writing identity, motivation for attending the summer institute, and what each participant learned from peer coaching.

CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDIES

Through my observations of one hundred twelve hours at a National Writing Project (NWP) summer institute, I came to understand it as a cool and calming environment…one that offered comfort and shelter from the humidity and temperature that is characteristic of a South Texas summer. I observed participants gathered around work tables, talking about the news, weather, and their families as they prepared for a day filled with learning about writing: writing for oneself, writing for others, and writing instruction.

Other participants could be seen talking among themselves as they partook of the breakfast buffet spread before them on what came to be known as the "kitchen table." The voices in this room spoke of nurturing, comfort, and warmth. From my experiences, it appeared to be a place where participants were invited to nourish both body and soul. These pleasantries reminded me of the conversations that happen around a kitchen table; participants joked, made lighthearted conversation, and informally discussed their teaching practice within these walls. Camaraderie, joy, and excitement were observably prevalent as the participants seemingly came to find this room a place of informal getaway – a place to refresh oneself from the intense instruction just a few feet away - a place where they could find good humor among friends. A place where they might easily grab the snacks and desserts that constantly teased and tempted.

In comparison to the laid back atmosphere in the kitchen, a busy but purposeful hum was evident in the nearby classroom as other participants prepared the technology for the morning presentations. A feeling of nervous tension filled the air as some prepared the reading and prompt for the morning's journal. Others performed a test run of their digital log – the documentation of the summer institute's highlights and happenings from the day before. Based on my observations, these digital logs served to inform others of the power of the daily

interactions and learning at the institute. Others were observed reviewing their power points, setting up books, and rehearsing their demonstration lessons – lessons that are supposed to showcase the best of each participant's writing instruction.

GENE

One of the earliest arrivals each day was Gene. He was usually first seen each morning in the kitchen, fixing his morning coffee. He arrived each day at the summer institute on his bicycle, which was always stored in a corner of the room, as if to signal his presence. His healthy lifestyle put me to shame as I rode in my air-conditioned vehicle to the summer institute. On the drive in each morning I found myself thinking of Gene biking the twelve miles from his home to the summer institute and back each sweltering afternoon. It was evident to me that his health and physical fitness were a vital part of his life, similar to what he spoke of as his need for professional growth as a means to "find ways to think and talk about writing" upon returning to his classroom in the fall.

Personal Background

Based on my initial interview, Gene is a thirty-nine year old white male, and has lived in Texas for most of his life. He has made San Antonio his home for six years. He is married and has three daughters. As a husband and father, he observably exuded warmth and joy for his "four ladies". Gene wrote stories about his wife and children that seemingly endeared him to all at the summer institute. His writing detailed the love and affection he has for his wife, whom he described as the one who has helped him to be the "best father he can be." In a piece he wrote for her titled "Letter to Brooke," he wrote:

> All the triumphs I have had as a father have all been from you, they are rooted in you. Without you to root me on, to guide me, get angry with me, and listen, I would be a failure of a father. I honor you and love you.

His love for his daughters was observably apparent as he sensitively wrote about them from the perspective of a father who noticed and understood their unique traits and characteristics. In the following journal entry, Gene wrote about his two oldest daughters:

> Cameron is below the 50th percentile in weight for her age. As the lightest weight on her cheerleading team, she is always the flyer. She does not like being the flyer, yet she braves the instability to be a team player. I spoke to her about living past fears, that I did not like jumping out of planes and saw no sense in jumping out of a plane that had nothing wrong with it, but I did it. She thought a while and figured out that looking back at something you did that you were afraid to do is much better looking back and wishing you had tried. My other daughter is much more dominant and is a bit of a tank. She just rolls through everything.

Based on this data, Gene's family seemed to be one of the greatest sources for his writing topics.

Professional Service in the Marine Corps

The Marines are an extension of who Gene is. As a Marine currently serving in the Marine Reserves, his pride in his fellow Marines was evident in his pieces in which he wrote about life in the Marine Corps: As he explained in a journal entry, "one only stays in the Marines because there is no bond like it." After spending the first weekend of the summer institute at drills, his journal entry from the following Monday described an experience in speaking to a group of soldiers about the bond that Marines have with one another:

> We all laughed as we recognized the common misery shared by all. I spoke briefly about having lice, fleas, dysentery during the invasion of Iraq. I mentioned to them that suffering is a precious thing, it brings us together. It is what makes us look at those who have not done so, and at times feel distrustful of them. Pain and hardship is a bond that they should always hold close to them.

In another of Gene's pieces, he wrote about the internal struggle he faced upon leaving his pregnant wife for Iraq. He felt that he **would** come back home, but as he says, "you just never know." Focusing on what he had to do in Iraq- "raiding houses, capturing gun caches, taking

people from their homes," was seemingly difficult in and of itself, but having to focus on these duties while struggling with concern for his wife's pregnancy back home, must have weighed very heavily on him. Surviving this time in Iraq required him to keep thoughts of his family at bay. Talking to his wife over the phone became a scenario of short, distant calls that he reported would have hurt him too much if the conversations had gone to a deeper level. As he described this time, "if I thought on it too much, I would have come undone."

Gene stated that the back of his bible lists all the Marines he knows; friends, as well as those who have served under him, who have been killed since the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is these types of experiences that seemingly allowed Gene to infuse that extra layer of depth into his writing – those personal connections that showed how he looked at things from his own very special perspective.

Education and Professional Teaching

Gene's interest in furthering his education was indicated on his application for the summer institute. He reported that he received his Bachelor's degree in English from a Christian university in 2000. He later received his Master's degree in Reading from a southern university in 2010. He originally began working toward his PhD in Language and Literacy Studies and is currently continuing this work at a southern university. His doctoral work is centered on writing instruction and assessment. In his initial interview, he discussed his future plans that involve teaching literacy at the post-secondary level to pre-service and in-service teachers who are interested in writing instruction and assessment.

Gene has been an educator for the past ten years. He first began working as a teacher at a southern academy where he taught English I, II, and III. After leaving the area, he began teaching at another southern secondary school. He worked as a 7th grade English teacher for four

years at this school before moving to the reading department where he taught 7th grade reading for one year.

In his final interview, Gene shared that his day as a teacher begins when his students walk into the classroom and read a poem that expresses an affirmation of how they should treat one another. As reported by Gene, he works constantly to set up a team environment where trust removes the "superficial barriers" that some middle school students seem to struggle with:

> And when that kid writes that story about peeing in his pants at school, it's not 'hee, hee, hee.' Everybody goes dude, I remember this guy that did that. And boy, when a middle-schooler shares [an] I peed in my pants story, you honor that kid and the other people go, you're right, man I peed in my pants too, but I didn't tell anybody. You know that sorta thing, and they're able to see. You hope that as a teacher], you're able to pull out those universals that every kid's gone through. They start to see that the kid that's the quarterback is just the same as the kid who does theatre arts.

During the time of the summer institute, Gene was preparing to teach 8th grade English and debate in a newly opened school. He spoke of returning to the teaching of writing. As he explained, "it fits more to my personality, I think a little bit more. I enjoy teaching writing much more than just sole reading classes." In his initial interview, Gene summed up the freedom involved in opening a new school when he explained,

> I get to make my world my own. [At my previous school] I did a lot more ducking and weaving around things. I was like "you're gonna put a wall up, well I'm gonna dig under that wall and I'm gonna do it another way where there's not gonna be many walls where we're at. If there's walls, they're ones that we create.

Through his application for the summer institute, Gene reported that he received a special award for his teaching, an award that is given from colleagues – an example of his influence and work with both students and teachers. He also helped to create a family "Write Night" for his campus - an informational night that served to bring together students and family members in

understanding both the writing process and writing assessments. Based on this data, taking on the task of helping to implement this initiative was an example of Gene's commitment to establishing the opportunity for families to form a partnership with the school and to make connections with others.

Additionally, Gene belongs to a number of professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), International Reading Association (IRA), Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (TCTELA), Kaapa Delta Pi (KDP), and American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Upon completion of this summer institute, Gene will continue his role as a teacher consultant for the NWP, having previously completed a summer institute at another university. His participation in the summer institute was an example of his commitment and belief in working with teachers and improving his writing practice.

Identity as a Writer

In his initial interview, Gene described himself as someone who did not take an interest in writing until his high school years. During this time, he was required to complete a variety of writing assignments and found that he had a talent for it. He enjoyed writing so much that during his junior year, he decided that he wanted to major in English in college. He described his senior-year composition class as one in which writing was a constant process where students were expected to write all of the time. According to Gene, research papers – in his words, the "big" assignments, were required to be twenty or more pages. It would seem that this technical writing made his transition to college life an easier one. In thinking back on how he viewed himself as a writer, he described himself as someone who made a lot of mistakes. He shared with me that his professors encouraged him to take advantage of the writing center to work on

the mechanics of his craft. In spite of this need for Gene to seek help, he said, "I was not afraid to write – I was not intimidated by it." This showed me that part of Gene's identity as a writer involved tenacity and a will to improve his own personal writing.

Gene started to see himself as "writing for the sake of writing" upon returning to college after being in the Marines for several years. This motivation and passion for writing came about when he was asked to become a member of the literary review team for his university's literary magazine. This position elevated his writing status in that, through this membership, he was required to enroll in specific classes with the university writer in residence. "They would give me books and say I want you to look at this guy, see what you think about it."

He reported that his Marine background caught the eyes of his professors in that it made him diverse, and would serve to provide his readers with a different perspective that varied from the norm at this particular university.

> They [professors] felt my experiences in life were different than all the other undergraduates. This was a Christian university and there were not other Marines there, and so they found that, they were like 'we want to hear what you say because it's different from what everybody else has to say'.

This was a "confidence boost" for Gene as he continued to write successfully in college.

Gene's background experiences were evident in his writing at the institute. One of the pieces that he produced recounted the death of his great-great-grandfather during the post-revolution era in Texas. Gene shared with his writing group that he had always wondered how his great-great-grandfather died, so he decided to create a fictional piece related to this experience. The narrative centered on his great-great-grandfather's death as he and his fellow men raided the Comanche in an attempt to get back what was taken from his great-great grandfather's people. Through the writing group discussion that followed Gene's reading of his

story, participants mentioned that Gene's background experiences in the Marines helped him to "show" his readers what it felt like to be in the midst of a battle. During a stimulated recall interview in which I reviewed some of what his peers had said to him in the writing group, Gene agreed with a peer:

> Pete was looking at those connections between what I knew; the idea of what it is to go into a fight knowing you're going to pick one, and somebody's not gonna be alive at the end of this thing, and how these experiences with fighting in the war in Iraq allowed me to "color" a good portion of this piece.

From technical and academic writing to narratives, Gene presented himself as a writer who believed in the importance of writing style, always with the audience in the forefront of his mind. His revision and editing reflected the importance he placed on writing pieces with a certain effect in mind for the reader. As he explained, "I use punctuation in certain ways; the way I use it in my writing signals the reader to stop for a second, or bring your voice up or down, slow it down." Gene said that this allowed his readers to formulate certain connections. These connections could be independently important in the understanding of his pieces as a whole.

Motivation for Participating in the Summer Institute

Gene, a current teacher consultant for another local writing project attended their summer institute in 2008. This site is one of more than two hundred sites of the National Writing Project across the country. It sponsors an invitational institute for teachers interested in demonstrating their classroom practices and learning from each other. It also fosters an environment of creative, innovative ideas for teaching writing, and provides opportunities to develop one's writing skills. Gene described this period of attendance at this summer institute as a time when he began writing as a writing teacher. The time he spent as a fellow here was when he found himself immersed in the writing process. This growth as a writer led to his writing on a regular basis.

After transferring from his previous college, Gene had the opportunity to enroll in the current summer institute. This opportunity allowed him to satisfy his program requirements to obtain a specified number of hours in his designated cognate of literacy.

In addition to the requirements for this doctoral program, Gene reported several other reasons for his interests in the summer institute. He was interested in learning within the community of students that were also enrolled in the summer institute. As a doctoral student of the director of this summer institute, Gene learned that this institute would involve people outside of the area of literacy for a more interdisciplinary make-up of students. He was eager to see what this particular summer institute entailed, and how the integration of students within different areas of teaching would apply to the development of writing within other content areas. Additionally, two colleagues from his doctoral cohort would be enrolling in the institute. Gene told me that this gave him a level of comfort in knowing that other people he knew well would be going through the institute alongside him. This surprised me because my impression of Gene was one of a strong, independent, individual who would be fine with the idea of attending a class in which he was unfamiliar with its participants. I suppose that no matter how independent one is, familiarity with another person can lead to feelings of comfort when meeting a new task.

As a person who was interested in future opportunities, Gene learned that participation in this summer institute could also bring about potential for dissertation-type opportunities. As mentioned previously, Gene's interests are in the area of writing instruction and assessment, as well as working with teachers to develop their classroom practice. One of the NWP's purposes, is to promote their new, as well as experienced teacher consultants, in the area of professional development through teacher in-service. Additionally, this local writing project had recently obtained a sizable grant through the Texas Education Agency that would enable its teaching

consultants to go into low-performing secondary schools in the San Antonio area to teach authentic writing, using best practices. Gene shared that this grant was in alignment with his professional goals, as it had the potential to assist area teachers in improving their current writing practices to help students use writing as a tool for learning and building content knowledge. Gene expressed great interest in the potential opportunities that this grant could provide for his future endeavors as a doctoral student.

On a personal level, Gene shared that he felt his writing skills had dulled over time. He described his writing as coming across through a "cold, detached format that seemed to hit mostly at facts." Gene told me that he felt he had "lost the ability to flavor what he wrote, which is, ironically, the opposite of what he has usually been accused." He reported that the academic writing that has prevailed through attending university classes, had "left him stale, as a writer." He felt that this type of writing, coupled with his last year of teaching a stale reading program, had made him "boring." He also shared that the lack of novel reading and months of reading history books and journal articles had taken him to a different dimension as a writer.

In his final interview, Gene shared that he missed the days of reading books from the Man Booker Prize List. His interests varied among the novels that are considered to be among the "great English novels." Others he would read and use as mentor texts for writing styles, such as the dialogue in *The Finkler Question* or the "odd pacing in *Wolf Hall* or *Bring up the Bodies*." He stated that from these texts, he was able to take all that was unique and play with them in order to adapt particular writing styles to his own situations. This "playing around with writing" allowed him to form his own identity, "at least for a few pages," and he reported that it was this type of "dabbling with writing" that kept him inspired. He came to the institute because he needed to be refreshed, and felt that his involvement would provide him with direction for what

he described as a much needed change from reading teacher to writing teacher at the middle school level. This account of Gene's motivation did not surprise me. I would expect this type of self-renewal from someone with the level of dedication to physical fitness as was described at the beginning of this case study.

Gene shared that being among other teachers that are positive and eager to write made him both glad and excited to attend this summer institute. As he stated in his own writing, "Before I walk out the door on July 3rd, I will be happy to have my old self back." Gene reported that attending this institute would help him to find ways to think and talk about writing when he returned to his classroom in the fall to continue his work with middle school students.

Previous Experiences with Coaching

Although he did not have experiences with coaching in a formal way, Gene reported that significant and influential people helped him to improve in different capacities of his life. Athletic coaches were important to his development as an athlete and coach. Additionally, a few mentors coached Gene in his service with the Marines. As Gene explained,

> The ones I had that were good, they showed me a way to think and approach my job that has always colored what I have…they gave it a flavor that extended them. By me still being in the military, they're still in the military, even though they're long retired.

Gene later elaborated on this statement by confirming that his past mentors would always be guiding his professional direction. He also shared that these are the coaches whom he learned from indirectly through observation, interactions, and questioning. Rather than responding with "get out of my way, kid!" and "I really don't have time for that!" they took him in and allowed him to learn from them.

Although lack of time to help others in any field can be a challenge, he described himself as hoping that he had never come across as not wanting to help another teacher. One thing that he found in working with teachers is that "you have to ask." Gene shared that when teachers are asked for help from another colleague, they are usually always happy to help. He comments, "People don't become teachers because they dislike helping people." I believe that Gene's perspective came from his desire to not only help teachers, but to assist them in elevating their writing practice in order to positively affect students' views about writing.

Gene commented about coaching relationships:

> You have to find someone. If you're that first year teacher or new teacher that spends your lunch in your classroom, and holes yourself away during your conference period, you're never going to find someone that's going to help you, because you have to get off your tail and realize that you aren't as great as you think you are, or you might realize that, but you're too prideful. You have to drop your pride and realize that people will help.

Valuing of the Summer Institute

Gene was clear on what he valued at the summer institute. Through our discussions, one of the most important things Gene valued at the summer institute was the positive talk about children and teaching. Based on my observations, the environment of the summer institute was conducive to these types of conversations, as most of the participants attended because they were genuinely interested in improving their practice.

Additionally, Gene valued humor and felt that "showing your humorous side" was an important part of seeing that "teachers aren't all boring." Based on my observations, it appeared that some of the stories written and discussed were sometimes personal, and it appeared that in order to share those stories, the participants had to trust each other. For Gene, trust in his peer coaches came about through humor. My observations were corroborated when Gene said,

> Nobody wants to be serious all the time. And that's the beauty of workshop type

> courses. Is people can have fun. And you can make learning something entertaining. You know, enjoyable. And that workshop with your peers creates that environment where it's gonna happen.

Gene also appreciated the promotion of deeper thinking from his peer coaches. In a stimulated recall interview regarding a session from a writing group, he commented on the power of listening to other writing pieces as a way to improve his writing,

> You know, you hear those parts and you go, alright, well, I think I'm gonna peel back just a little bit more of something, expose just a little bit and see how that nerve ending feels, and if it's alright, I'll take it back all the way. Or, you know, he used an interesting style there to make a point about something. I'm gonna try that.

In Gene's final interview, he discussed his learning at the institute as one of contemplation and adaptability, rather than simply copying somebody else's idea and taking it straight back to his own students. He found that he was encouraged to think about how he could take what was learned and make it his own in a way that would be most beneficial for his particular group of students.

In working with a group of peer coaches, Gene reported that he appreciated honest feedback. He felt that as a writer within a community of learners, honesty was an important ingredient in moving his writing development and skills forward. Although he felt validation was important, he did not believe in just saying, "Good job, you did great!" What he felt was needed was to truly listen to his peers' writing with an open mind and question why they created what they did. For example,

> You're not there to say good job, great job, great job, because maybe it did stink. Maybe there was something that just fell on its face. You should be able to tell them that: Here's what you did, this is kinda how it played out right here. Is that what you wanted? Let's try this. You're a coach. You help. You criticize sometimes. You prod along. But it all is things in there to be constructive.

Based on the data, providing constructive criticism was an important part of working with his peer coaches.

The summer institute provided its participants with peer coaching not only through its fellows, but also through co-directors and directors. These participants helped fellows with their required demonstration lessons. The demonstration lessons that are shared by individual fellows are meant to be the best of their teaching, and are used to showcase promising practices for others to learn from. Before each demonstration lesson is taught, fellows have the opportunity to conference with one of these coaches.

During his final interview, Gene admitted that in working with this coach on his demonstration lesson, he appreciated questioning over simple validation. Although he liked hearing what he did well, as he admitted that he has "a healthy ego," and believed that validation, to a certain degree, was fine, he shared that he liked being asked about his thoughts in relation to things he "hadn't thought of before for writing instruction." Gene was prompted to think not only about his writing, but also about his work with his students in the upcoming school year. For example, based on my observations, while working on his demonstration lesson (a lesson that involved using a variety of music to look at a prompt from different perspectives), his coach was able to help him see the possibilities of incorporating different genres in the delivery of his particular lesson.

Although he valued validation and questioning, it appeared to me that Gene was also conflicted with the need for direction. For example, he described part of his teaching persona as needing someone to "just tell me what to do and I'll do it." Gene believed this came from his gender and background as a Marine and he stated, "Now that I know what you want me to do, I can shoot in that direction and change it with the intent of what you want." This surprised me, as

Gene appeared to contradict himself. Earlier, he discussed his desire to take what he had learned and adapt it to his practice, portraying himself as a self-directed educator. I believe that Gene felt safe with initial direction and once he got it, he felt free to apply and modify it for his own instruction.

Further discussion of his interactions with his coach helped him understand just how important her input was to him. On the day of his demonstration lesson, his coach was not present. It was at that moment he realized how important it really was to have her there, and related to another peer coach (whose coach was also not present on the day he presented) when he said,

> You know when Pete talked about being the 'stranded baby duck'? the momma and baby duck, 'where is Joanna'? I knew that she had other things to do, but in a way, I would've liked to... And to have specifically the person you worked with before you set it up, 'here's what you should be looking at' which is what she does on this video and then at the end 'here's what I saw' kinda a one-on-one feedback.

Perceptions of the Summer Institute

Throughout the time of the summer institute, Gene was forthcoming in his perceptions of the organization. I define perceptions as Gene's interpretations of the environment and the activities there within (Schacter, 2011). He perceived the institute to be an environment in which a non-hierarchical structure existed. He felt that there was a level of commonality among its participants. Gene recognized the fellows (university students) as teachers, roughly of the same experience, who had the same goals as everyone else – to improve both their writing and their writing instruction with students. He felt that everybody had the desire to be there, with the common goal of wanting what was best in writing instruction for students. He felt this constructed the environment as one of equality. He also felt that even though the demographics

of the institute included fellows, co-directors, and the director, it still had the feel of being non-hierarchical. Gene felt that in order to participate as a community of learners, a non-hierarchical order had to be in place in order to encourage everyone to participate.

In talking about this environment in which peers could work together, he discussed his feelings in relation to the nonexistence of a hierarchy as a positive step in the direction of developing and fostering peer interactions,

> It [trust in peers] is never gonna happen if you're the expert and we're [the summer institute participants] the ones learning. It's never that, cause it's always gonna be that feeling of inferiority. And they'll never help one another. They're never gonna share with one another. Unless, through the designated class genius, you know everybody else just stays quiet because they're waiting to be told what to do. And I guess you could have that here. But that's not, that's not the way that it works.

In addition to the non-hierarchical structure, Gene recognized the importance of comfort, encouragement, and trust as a central part of the operation of the environment. Along with the comfort within the summer institute, he felt that the interactions among the participants were conducive to the development of a sense of trust among those participants. Whether discussing each other's writing in the formally designed writing groups (groups of four to five participants who act as peer writing coaches), receiving formal feedback from the whole group after delivering a demonstration lesson, or interacting with each other during lunch, Gene appeared to feel safe with his peers. Based on my observations, he did not appear to be intimidated when sharing his thoughts or his personal writing. He reported that he felt that his thoughts (either written or verbal) would be met with acceptance.

Gene discussed how the most basic act of affirmations in the group (the applause participants received after orally reading their writing pieces to the whole group) not only instilled self-validation but also, a sense of belonging among participants:

> It says we accept your story and it's good for us. And so that person goes alright, I'll share. Yeah. Joy will share again even though I know she's shy.
> So she's [saying to herself], I'll write something like this again because they told me it was ok.

Although the participants seemingly obtained a level of trust with each other, it still took time to establish. From Gene's perspective, he experienced this level of trust within a week after the initial meeting of the summer institute. Based on my observations, after about four or five, seven-hour days of working continually with the same group of people, it appeared that Gene was able to develop the types of relationships that fostered a sense of community. The initial impressions of people whom he thought had nothing in common with him were transformed into familiarity and commonality,

> Maybe that person you thought was a little bit "stuffy" ends up not being stuffy. And they're just, you know, someone that's just a riot. And the more that you share laughter and silliness and the body functions of people, the more you're able to do. You know, like, man, everybody's just like me. They just look different.

Gene perceived encouragement as an important component in developing this sense of community among the participants: "I think your main role as a peer is to support them and encourage a direction that they're going." In Gene's opinion,

> Everybody is always with writing, no matter where they are, from one second to the next; they're on a ledge. And they're making that decision to either back away and say they can't, or to step off. And you, as the peer, have to be that person that says, "it's ok to step off."

Based on the data, Gene felt that the summer institute was a place to take those kinds of risks.

Writing Instruction: What did Gene Learn?

Based on the data, Gene learned a number of ideas and strategies to move instruction

forward for students. His digital responses to peers demonstrated that he appreciated the lessons that were shared and he talked about doing more with them than just "copying" and implementing them in his own classroom. In creating lessons, Gene felt that the different perspectives from peers at the institute would "flavor future instruction [because] when I'm creating something I'm like 'oh, here's where I can incorporate a little of what Ann did, or here's some of how Pete may think about this." He described this incorporation as more than just taking the lesson and shaping it to fit his teaching, but more of a "rethinking" of why he would implement it in a certain way with his own students.

An indirect aspect of writing instruction that Gene reported taking from the summer institute is the cultural and attitudinal components that go into the preparation of establishing a community of writers. Gene shared that as he moves to a new middle school in the fall to work as a writing and debate teacher, he will take with him these aspects of the summer institute in order to assist him in orchestrating a writing community within the walls of his classroom. Based on my observations, opening this new school places Gene into a situation similar to the summer institute - working with strangers – students he has never met nor has a rapport with.

Through his digital logs, Gene wrote about some of his colleagues' demonstration lessons and the impact they had on his learning. For example, one of his institute colleagues, Marie, demonstrated how she incorporated the use of journaling in science, providing assistance to children through the use of writing frames (models of how to approach a response to text, for example). This gave Gene ideas on how to be more effective with journals. He reported that Maria's method of reviewing, modeling, scaffolding with writing frames, and independent writing through support were practices that he would consider adopting. He described her journaling techniques as "easily lending itself" to the abstract ideas of his English Language Arts

classroom.

Similarly, his colleague, Peter, demonstrated a way to help students see that their struggles are worthy of exploration in writing. This college-level demonstration on mentor texts (texts that serve to scaffold a writer) and life themes (narrative accounts in which an author describes challenges and how those challenges can be overcome), helped Gene learn that adding this element of overcoming obstacles to a narrative piece could serve as a mentor text to young writers. Gene elaborated, "The idea that there is an obstacle to be overcome is the hinge that makes everything else flex and move about together." He wrote in one of his logs that implementing this practice "will help greatly to create a humane, loving class that sees the value of each and every person's story." He realized that incorporating this type of lesson into his own classroom could be adapted when he wrote, "Now I just need to distill it into middle school words and pieces so that they can use this same sort of format."

Deena's lesson on Indelible Moments, (emotional moments in our lives that leave lasting impressions), was centered on strategies for teaching reflexive writing and literary analysis. In her lesson, Deena showed how writing tools such as a phone conversation memo or Big Chief pad can (in Gene's words), "help to make the idea of a writing moment more concrete for students." Furthermore, Gene wrote that he would "like to do so [utilize manipulatives] in the future." Additionally, during her demonstration lesson, Deena suggested that teachers could use Indelible Moments with works of literature and could then help students write poems based on the Moment's key words and phrases. Gene expressed an interest in implementing this activity with his middle-school ELA students. He wrote,

> This would be familiar to students, letting them feel comfortable so that they can approach what would normally be a daunting task with great confidence. This is what breaks down the barriers to thinking that someone is not a good writer. That they all have a moment in a work, that they think gets to the heart of the truth that

they are seeing.

Finally, Ann's demonstration lesson (math communication through textual representation) incorporated writing into the math classroom. This integrated lesson provided Gene with a "good vision of how it could look. and how a math teacher would be able to incorporate it into a daily, weekly, or monthly routine." In describing his past teaching experiences he remarked, "I have tried multiple times to get writing into math classes at the middle school level, but I am always looking for ways to incorporate this in a way that works." Gene felt that this lesson was both "practical and useful and not just a 'toss off' lesson that a math teacher would use so that they could say they met the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skill) that was required."

What Gene Learned Through Being Coached

In response to a morning journal prompt asking, "what do you feel you have learned at the institute?" Gene described himself as "always getting the most out of his profession when working with peers." Gene reported that the things that he felt were ineffective for his professional development were when "reading specialists or district personnel present something that they heard when they were at a conference." Although he said "it is always great to hear about new techniques or practices, it is not practical for me as a teacher." He wrote "it doesn't do me much good when I can't have that person tell us what works, what to look for, and how it fits into my own little world." Gene reported that his previous campus was one in which they [district personnel] would come into his school to see what the teachers were doing, and take this information to the other schools in the district. He talked about improving this system in the following way,

What I think would have been better would have been for those teachers at my

> campus to work with the other campuses that needed help so new or struggling teachers, whatever the category, could get practical instruction from those that actually execute the day-to-day lessons and see what works well.

Based on this data, Gene's feelings about this type of professional development are in alignment with the mission of the NWP – teachers teaching teachers. Additionally, his ideas of practicality – what works, and how it fits into his own practice are exactly what the whole group feedback addresses after each demonstration lesson.

Gene shared that he learned many different things from his peers at the summer institute. He told me that one of the things he felt helped him the most as a teacher was getting different ideas from other participants. Through these ideas, Gene was shown different perspectives – "the things he would never have thought of to create on his own."

Based on the data, Gene has always been one to notice other author's writing styles. In college, he would read a diverse range of novels that allowed him to "play around" with different styles and make them his own. Additionally, the journal articles and books that he has read for the doctoral program include his own annotations in which he admitted noting the writing style over the content itself – noticing how particular authors write. The summer institute has seemingly been no different for him. He reported that from his peers he has gained insight into individual writing processes and why they do what they do in their writing. He shared that this awareness of individual processes and styles has allowed him to learn from other people's writing styles and experiment with certain aspects of writing to adapt to his own if he thinks it will be of use in his writing pieces. Additionally, comparing himself to his peers in the institute made his goals seem more achievable for this period of his life as a writer.

As reported by Gene, all of this came about for him through observing and listening to what his peers did in their own writing, and deciding whether or not he could bring about the

same types of things through his writing.

Based on my observations, it is this type of sharing that reassured Gene in taking risks in his writing. Simply stated, he believed that his peers were there to "inch him a bit further" when he was unsure of taking his writing to a different level. Although Gene seemed to be a confident writer, it surprised me that he needed to compare himself to his peers in order to take risks in his writing.

Gene as the Coach

According to his initial interview, Gene's expectations of himself as a coach are exactly what he expected from his peers: honesty, open-mindedness, sharing his perspectives and writing style, and supporting and encouraging the promotion of deeper thinking during discussion about writing and writing instruction. This coaching was observed in Gene's interactions with a peer coach who was feeling particularly vulnerable about what he had recently shared in his writing. This peer coach remarked that he did not want to go so deep in his writing, that he wanted to stick to the funny, lighthearted stories that he was well known for. Gene readily stepped in and reminded this peer coach that these lighthearted stories can turn into deeper ones because they are all connected.

In supporting other fellows, Gene used validation when he felt it was called for. One of the fellows – a brand new teacher - presented a demonstration on using students' emotions as a vehicle to writing. In his response to her, he commented on her ability to see the importance in recognizing and validating students' emotions, not only as a way of motivating them to write, but also as a way to deal with their frustrations:

> I have really liked this use of writing as a way to slow down and think about the actions that a student can take that are more productive in a class. Finding a way to change up

> how they deal with what makes them grouchy, to get it off their chest is important. It took me a long time to figure that one out and you have it down already. Bravo!

I believe Gene's responded in this way because he sensed this novice teacher's anxiety and lack of confidence in her own teaching abilities. It seemed that when he felt praise was warranted, he was comfortable in providing it in a focused and directed way.

In another response to a fellow who wondered how to better explain writing to her fourth grade students, he responded,

> You wondered how to better explain. I would suggest modeling. Show them the many ways they could think about telling the story. All those ways could really showcase what each individual student knows or is still playing with or struggling to learn.

Gene made this suggestion more explicit by coupling it with a model of his own writing to show her in a concrete way how to model for students.

Gene's Suggestions

In thinking about what could have been more conducive to his own learning at the institute, recruiting more male students is something that he would like to see in the future. "The way that men provide feedback, and the way that men interact, is different." Initially, I felt surprised at this suggestion. After getting to know him on a personal level, it would seem that gender would not be an issue for him, as he lives with all women and has attended graduate school mostly with women. In thinking more deeply about this, many of his colleagues at his campus are men, and along with his fellow Marines, I believe that he may be comparing his interactions at work and service with those interactions from graduate school. Maybe he wanted more of the camaraderie that he received from working with men to mirror his interactions at the

institute. Perhaps he felt that these types of interactions would add more to his need for diverse perspectives.

Additionally, he felt that women have much to gain from the inclusion of more men in the group because they would be better able to understand how boys perceive and approach writing: "I think some people see men in there and they're 'wow, these guys aren't a whole much too different from little boys'. You get a better understanding into how boys look and deal with writing."

It was evident that Gene felt a different level of comfort when he commented on his reaction to the males in the room on the first day of class: "I was happy. I was like, there's not just one, there's two guys!"

Another area Gene perceived to be a necessary change is the inclusion of visual examples of the writing that peers share with one another during the writing groups. These groups are structured in numbers of four to five peers and the purpose is to allow each person to share their writing and ask for validation and/or constructive criticism to move their writing forward. Common practice is for each group member to read the writing piece that they are currently working on out loud to the other group members. Gene talked about the need to include a hard copy for other members to read over as the piece is being read aloud. He discussed this from the viewpoint of being a visual learner and the need to see the words on the page:

> I love looking at how people actually put it in writing. I like looking at patterns and sentences and structures and how they put it together, because then I go 'why did you choose to put your sentence together this way?' You know, 'are you playing with this structure?' or 'what was your intention behind it?'

He felt that these visual examples would have provided him with more insight into both his coaching and learning from others. For Gene, these visual examples would most likely add a multisensory approach to what is already put into place for auditory learners.

Case Study Summary

In summary, throughout the time at the summer institute, I learned that Gene valued family and had deep ties to the Marine Corps. He is an experienced teacher and writer who came to the summer institute seeking inspiration, knowledge, and collaboration among a group of invested educators. A dedicated teacher, he presented himself as wanting to instill camaraderie and motivation for reading and writing to his students. Additionally, Gene is a believer in writing style and writing with the audience in mind.

Gene perceived the summer institute to be an environment of comfort, encouragement, and trust. He credited the level of commonality and sense of humor among peers, as well as a non-hierarchical feel for the establishment of these characteristics. He felt that the interactions occurring at the summer institute were for the most part, positive.

Additionally, Gene valued the positive talk about children and teaching that was prevalent during the institute. He also valued the honesty that was coupled with the need to listen and question each other's teaching practices. He felt that promoting deeper thinking through honest discussions is what he needed to improve both his writing skills and instruction.

Gene valued the time he spent at the summer institute as an opportunity to get ideas from other teachers who were currently working and learning with students on a day-to-day basis. He also appreciated getting insight into the individual writing processes that were observably prevalent at the institute. Through working with his peers, and further developing awareness for

individual writing styles, he has left with the ideal that writing is doable when he compares himself to his peers. He plans to continue to take risks in his writing.

SASSPARILLA

> [While I was an] undergrad in my creative writing classes, one of my best friends had this recurring character, and she was this strong redhead living in the old west, and her name was Sassparilla Hannigan. Her character just stayed with me, you know, that mentality of a strong woman, who can do anything…

Sassparilla's self-description in one of her interviews reminded me of my first impression of her. I found myself in awe of the strength, confidence, and wit that she visibly projected at the summer institute. It seemed to me that at times, her personality could be aloof, because of this strength, but once I got to know her, I began to understand her. Unlike my first participant, she was concise and to the point in her responses throughout our interviews.

Sarsparilla's strength and bold character did not surprise me. She portrayed her mother as having these same traits, and so it was easy for me to see who influenced her. She wrote about her mother in one of her first writing pieces, describing her in the following way:

> 'La cigüeña se equivocó. (The stork made a mistake).' The reason my grandmother used to say the stork made a mistake is that my mom was always very proper; she may have had one dress, but that dress was spotless. She also didn't associate with any of the neighborhood children. She knew she wasn't like them. Ever since she was a little girl she used to say someday she would live in America…

I found myself drawn to Sassparilla's independent spirit. Knowledgeable and seemingly sure of herself, she seemed to be the kind of person who let you know where she stood. I thought of her often in my day-to day-routine, hoping that I projected that same level of confidence that she appeared to be well known for at the institute.

Personal Background

Based on my initial interview, Sassparilla is a thirty-one year old female who was born in Tampico, Tamaulipas. As a child, she moved around frequently because her father was a sought-after businessman. She attended schools in Tampico, Apizaco, and Tlaxala, Tlaxala, and Juarez, Chihuahua. In fourth grade, her parents decided to enroll her in a private school in America. She shared that commuting across the bridge and attending a school in another country was an adjustment for her that first year, but Sassparilla was fortunate to have a family who nurtured, loved, and encouraged her. In a story about her mother, she wrote:

> [Each morning], she [her mother] would reapply her lipstick, take my little hand in hers, and give me a kiss in the palm of my hand. She would tell me to look at that kiss anytime I felt like I couldn't go on, anytime I felt lonely, or anytime someone was being mean. She would close my hand into a little fist and tell me she loved me as I got out of the car. I can remember countless times when I secretly looked at my palm and saw her pink lipstick. I'd sit at my desk working and unfurl my left hand to where only I could see my palm, marked by my mom's lipstick. It made me smile every time.

During her middle school years, she reported finding herself in a "cultural turmoil," trying so hard to blend in and be more like her peers, that she found herself pulling away from her own heritage. She reported that she spent so much more time with her friends from private school than she did her own family that it started to change her:

> I became ashamed of where I came from, I ignored my first language, and I despised how I had different rules than my friends did. My mom was relentless with the SPANISH AT HOME rule. She would ignore me until I spoke to her in Spanish. In more than one occasion, I remember going to bed hungry because I refused to give in. I was having a serious identity crisis and didn't even know it.

In 1996, when Sassparilla was thirteen years old, her family immigrated to the United States, because her father, while running a maquiladora (manufacturing operation) in Juarez for

an American company "became so essential to that company, that they petitioned the U.S. government to grant the family residence." Her previous experiences in an American private school must have prepared her for this move to the United States and helped with the adjustment that she had to make. I found myself wondering if these experiences of culture shock were what contributed to her seemingly strong character and disposition. After a follow-up interview, these thoughts were confirmed.

Sassparilla described her family as not typical of Mexican immigrants. She shared that her family never wanted for anything. They did not suffer political persecution, oppression, or experience violence from the drug cartels. In her description of immigrating to the U.S. she remarked:

> Life was just fine for us [in Mexico], yet coming to America was the biggest blessing anyone could have granted us, and we knew it. We thank God every day that we live here. I still cry every time I hear the National Anthem. When I was sworn in as a citizen of the United States in 2002, I finally felt like everything was right with the world.

These seemingly rich experiences of moving around to different areas of Mexico, immigrating to the United States, encouraged by a family that stressed culture and heritage as an important link to their lives, is what gives Sassparilla a unique perspective on life. Consequently, it provided her with a different type of background knowledge for writing and interacting with others at the summer institute.

Education and Professional Teaching

In her first writing piece for the summer institute, Sassparilla wrote about her decision to go into education:

> Growing up I often said, "I don't know what I want to be, but I know I will NEVER be a teacher." So, of course, my calling led me to teaching, and the crazy part is that I'm damn good at it. Then there was, "I will NEVER be an

> elementary school teacher!" I have been teaching fourth grade for six years and love it. After a while, "Who in their right mind would want to be a principal?" I graduated with my Educational Administration degree just last month. I better be careful when I say I never want to have children…

Sassparilla received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 2007 from a university in the southwest where she double-majored in creative writing and Spanish literature. Her two Masters degrees are in Library Science, which she received in 2012, and Educational Administration, which she recently received in 2014.

Sassparilla has worked as a fourth grade bilingual teacher for seven years. Her first two years of teaching were spent in the Rio Grande Valley and the last five years have been in south Texas. Teaching bilingual classes has seemingly provided her life as an educator with diversity and culture. In her application to the summer institute, she elaborated on the children with whom she worked:

> My students are fourth graders ages 9-10. Fourteen out of my 21 students are labeled ELL (English Language Learner), 19 out of 21 are labeled At-Risk, two are dyslexic, and three are in special education. Each day is a new adventure, and these children have worked hard and allowed me to teach them diligently every single day.

Her future goals involve becoming an administrator in order to affect more than the twenty-two children per school year that she normally teaches. Hearing about her aspirations for educational leadership also made me realize that the strength that she projected was characteristic of an administrator – strong-willed and commanding. In her initial interview, Sassparilla shared her reasons for obtaining a degree in educational administration:

> I feel like there's a lot of mediocrity in the world of education, and a lot of teachers who get by giving the kids a disservice in their education. So my thinking behind getting an administration degree is that I'll be able to "mold" teachers into being leaders. But I believe in the situation where if you're

> running a school; it's not about catching people doing wrong, it's about highlighting their strengths, and using them for the benefit of the children.

Through her service as an educator, Sassparilla has taken on several leadership positions. She has served as a social studies coordinator and committee chairperson at the elementary school where she currently teaches. She told me that these positions have allowed her to add to the social studies curriculum in ways that supplement student learning. For example, last year's Veteran's Day celebration which she helped to organize, allowed for veterans and their families to come to her school to share their stories and knowledge with students. This event was well received and it set a precedent for future Veteran's Day celebrations.

As the vertical planning team chairperson for science and social studies, she worked with her team to ensure that the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) for these content areas were being implemented according to the expectations for kindergarten through fifth grade. Sassparilla's work with this team established a community of learners among the grade level representatives. In working with this vertical team, she was able to help each preceding grade level understand their specific TEKS in order to better prepare their students for subsequent grades. She helped each team member to visualize a direction to move students toward academic success in the science and social studies content areas.

Additionally, Sassparilla has presented in-services for her district during the professional development institute for new and current teachers. These presentations are held each summer before teachers return to their classrooms. She was also nominated for Teacher of the Year during the 2012-13 school year. This nomination came directly from the faculty and staff, who let her know that she was a teacher who was worthy of recognition.

As a bilingual teacher, her work is seemingly challenging and demanding. According to my own experiences as an educator, being charged with the task of teaching students is a difficult job, but when I think about teaching language and content simultaneously, I can see how much more challenging that job can become. For one of her morning journal entries during the institute, Sassparilla wrote about the day-to-day routine of working with bilingual students and the perception of non-educators who believe that elementary teachers "play all day:"

> I have to teach everything my neighbor next door has to teach. Aside from accommodations and modifications and English language acquisition and varying skill levels in English and in Spanish. Aside from being mom and nurse and counselor and friend. Aside from all the usual paperwork and the bilingual paperwork and the bilingual meetings aside from the regular meetings. You still think I play all day?

Sassparilla obviously felt strongly about her role as a bilingual educator. She came across as taking pride in her work. I wondered if her own culture and past experiences with being an English Language Learner were the reasons why she initially pursued a degree in bilingual education. A follow-up interview later confirmed that her desire to become a bilingual teacher was a natural extension of both her culture and background experiences.

Identity as a Writer

Based on my observations and data, Sassparilla was a writer who did not second-guess herself. When she firmly believed in something, she felt free to express her thoughts and feelings. I observed this expression in her day-to-day interactions with others. The following example illustrated this confidence as she advocated for English Language Learners and Special Education students. In the following digital response of a peer coach's demonstration lesson that was conducted after lunch, she responded with honesty and a suggestion regarding student expectations for bilingual students:

> Perhaps it's because I am an elementary teacher or you presented us with a great deal of information, but I was overwhelmed at the beginning. This is becoming a trend. Maybe lunch is the problem:) The overall reaction is that I absolutely love the many choices you give your students. I wish more people did that, and obviously it is something I'm working on myself. One word of advice, don't underestimate ELLs or Spec Ed students.

I first noticed her writing style when, in the early days of the institute; she shared an entry from her morning journal with her peers. This entry centered on the Water Conference at a cultural institution. The summer institute participants would be presenting professional development at this conference, and so, in order to prepare for this presentation, the prompt for this day asked participants to write about their own personal connection to water and its importance to their lives. This particular morning journal was open-ended, as the participants were told they could write about anything related to water. Since Sassparilla had placed a copy of the oil painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* by Georges-Pierre Seurat, on her desktop, she decided to focus her writing for this morning journal on this piece of art. The painting depicts a bucolic getaway from the urban setting of the city of Paris. She wrote metaphorically about the river:

> But the thing about the lake is, it's leading a double life. It's not just about the people or boats on it, it's about the reflection of such on its surface as well. The reality is that the river is a sneaky gal. She is a vain river thirsty for attention. See, having ten boats on her is simply not enough, she must make it appear as though she is so desirable (she's right), so important (right again), that there are twenty boats delighting themselves on her impressive surface. Oh yes, I'm certain Seurat gave that river special attention. I'm convinced he spent a little extra time with his shades of white and blue because that river is what makes that *Sunday Afternoon.*

In speaking about her identity as a writer, she described the ease and self-assurance from which she wrote. In her initial interview, she spoke candidly about herself as a writer:

> I think I'm pretty good! I mean it depends what kind of writing I'm doing.

> How much I enjoy it. I think that because my writing is very honest and true to just the kind of person I am, it comes across very light and very easy.

Sassparilla reported that writing for her had always been important. She described herself as having a "passion for the written word." After her undergraduate coursework as a double major in Creative Writing and Spanish Literature, writing became even more important to her because of her perception of the power of writing to express emotion.

In expressing herself through writing, she described the need of some writers to be able to take criticism well. This openness to constructive criticism and willingness to improve her writing exemplified the importance she placed on it. In her initial interview, she described her passion and process for writing:

> Well, I've always loved writing. Enough to make it one of my majors in undergrad, so it was creative writing, and I often find that even trying to think through things, I think better as I'm writing. So it's extremely important for me.

Additionally, culture played a large part in her writing. In her digital entries, she spoke about the importance of culture in her writing, describing it as being an inseparable part of her identity as a writer:

> It's insane to try to ignore where we come from. I think every single one of my pieces has had a sprinkle of my culture in there, and it's not something I think has to go in there consciously, it just does.

Based on her writing and interviews, it was not surprising that Sassparilla was motivated to improve her writing through her participation in the summer institute.

Motivation for Participating in the Summer Institute

Sassparilla reported that her interest in attending the summer institute stemmed from her need to learn more about the teaching of writing. Although she told me that writing had always been easy for her, she felt that teaching writing was very different from being able to write:

> I'm somebody who likes to write. Somebody who it comes easy to. I found that trying to teach it, it's a completely different story. So, what I understood about the writing project is that coming here, I would be able to become a better teacher of writing. And many of the lessons that we've seen have definitely helped in that area.

Another reason she was motivated to attend the summer institute was her need to improve the quality of her own writing. Although she described herself as a "good writer," she shared her belief that her writing could be improved:

> I know that there's places where I can grow and make things better. But for the most part, all the comments that I get are 'oh, it's so good, or oh it's so funny.' So, I find myself sort of 'digging.' Because I want more than just 'I really liked it,' or 'you're so funny,' I want people to point out maybe things like 'well you left me wondering about this….' or 'you know it would be good if you also included this'.

Based on this data, Sassparilla's reasons for attending the summer institute involved not only improving her writing instruction, but, also, improving her personal writing. Seemingly confident in her writing abilities, she also made known her need to connect with her readers and write with a purpose in mind.

Previous Experiences with Coaching

In one of the first morning journals from the institute, participants were asked about their feelings regarding peer coaching. This was an open-ended response, as participants were able to share their feelings and experiences related to peer coaching. Sassparilla wrote the following response, which demonstrated her appreciation for it, as well as her perceived need for reciprocal sharing of information in these types of relationships:

> Finding someone you trust and respect enough to allow into your professional life can be a challenge, but one worth pursuing. When I engage in peer coaching relationships, I always try to bring as much to the table as I take. I am no expert by any means, but I feel that I have valuable ideas.

When asked about the kind of experiences she had with peer coaching, Sassparilla reported that they were mostly informal. She excitedly described peer coaching as part of her major in creative writing when she said, "I had the time of my life writing within a circle of peers who could provide wonderful feedback to make my writing grow exponentially." She had also willingly taken part in coaching relationships since her second year of teaching. When asked to describe these relationships she responded:

> I never knew there was a name for it. I just thought it was sort of a natural collaboration. You just pick out certain people and they, it's a mutual thing where you give and you receive and it's the same for them, and all it takes is trust and respect for it to happen.

Likewise, Sassparilla reported devaluing the times that administration mandated peer-coaching relationships as she felt that these types of interactions were not conducive to the trust and rapport needed for effective peer coaching. She talked about a previous experience during her first year of teaching in which she was given a mentor, one whom she did not choose for herself, and felt that this relationship was not a positive one:

> I think a lot of times when you're assigned a mentor, you know as an incoming teacher, it's a good idea, but it doesn't always work, because when I was a first year teacher, and I was assigned a mentor, I mean, I didn't respect her. So anything she said completely lacked value for me.

In a stimulated recall interview involving the feedback that she gave to her writing group peer coaches, I discovered that Sassparilla had experience in formal coaching. During her years as an undergraduate, she was a tutor for struggling students in the writing lab of the university

that she attended. In this video, I noticed that she appeared very assertive in giving feedback to others. When I asked her about the ways in which she provided feedback, she shared with me that this was a natural part of her personality, but that it also "might be coming from the experience of having been a writing tutor for three years."

Although the remainder of her coaching experiences was informal, she talked about her insights and feelings about the importance of coaching one another as a means of improving teacher practice. She described the informal peer coaching at her current campus as being reciprocal; the expectations were to work equally with one another:

> For the past three years, I've been involved in a peer coaching situation or relationship, more than one in fact. It was always mutual. Always mutual. It's just sort of symbiotic. Everybody gets something out of it, and it almost feels like that's just the way it should be, because if only one person is bringing something to the table, then I don't know how involved that other person that's bringing something to the table, how involved they stay in that relationship.

In connection to these relationships, Sassparilla and a colleague from her campus, Michelle, were able to attend the summer institute together. As educators on the same grade level, they were already in an informal peer coaching relationship with one another. She described this relationship at the institute as one in which they could support each other, until other relationships could be developed.

I observed this trust between Sassparilla and Michelle when, after her demonstration lesson, Michelle offered her some advice, which Sassparilla appeared to accept easily. Her demonstration lesson focused on integrating writing with social studies by giving students choice as to the perspective from which to write from, and Michelle provided her with some direction on extending the lesson, in order to allow for more meaning to take place for students. When I asked her about her reaction to Michelle's coaching, Sassparilla responded:

> Well, with Michelle, it's almost because we know each other and we sort of serve as coaches to each other. We worked together for three years; I don't think we came together to bounce ideas off each other and to pick each other's brains and everything up until two years ago. But I'm always open to see what more I could do, because a lot of times I'll have an idea, and then I kinda get stuck with where do I want to take it? Or what is the real purpose of doing this? And so, hearing something like that is very helpful, because even though it was a social studies lesson, and I did build some of the writing stuff in it, she was talking about taking it even further into the social studies and into something that I already do, but with better structure and I think for kids it's so important. So anytime anyone has something to say about having better structure or extending a lesson, in any shape or form that is beneficial, then I'm all ears.

Sassparilla and Michelle's relationship took time to develop, although she was eventually open to learn from her. It also demonstrated that Sassparilla was a participant who was open to learning from others. It would seem that trust and respect were necessary prerequisites for Sassparilla to establish a peer coaching relationship with someone. Without respect, the peer coaching relationships at the summer institute most likely would not have come to fruition for her.

Valuing of the Summer Institute

Sassparilla was clear in what she valued about the summer institute. In her final interview, she discussed the validation that she received from her peers. Although she valued the promotion of deeper thinking through the questioning of her peers, she shared with me how important validation was to her continued development as a writer:

> You know those little notes we get on Thursdays after we share? They kind of blow my mind, because so many people that know what they're talking about are saying 'you need to publish this', or 'you need to do something with this', 'you have a gift', so it's like 'oh, ok'.

Sassparilla also valued honesty from her peers at the institute. In discussing the type of feedback that she received from her peers, she reported that a majority of it was validation, and

for her, that was fine up to a point. She shared with me that what she really wanted was feedback that elevated her writing to a higher level. As I observed her interactions in her writing group, I found that she received this type of feedback when she came prepared with questions about her writing for the group members:

> In terms of the feedback I've gotten on my own writing, it's still more of you know "good job" or it's the kind of superficial stuff, but I don't know, maybe I'm that good. But when I ask questions, specific questions, I get answers, so honest answers, so that's good.

Once she presented her questions to her peer coaches, Sassparilla valued the promotion of deeper thinking related to improving her writing pieces. These writing pieces were self-selected and gave each participant time to work on their own craft as writers. She explained how participants' perspectives combined with honesty, helped her to think deeply about the pieces that she created:

> Everybody sees things differently. And maybe the story I'm trying to tell, let's say if I'm the one seeking the coaching, maybe I'm still a little bit confused or my message is just a little bit jumbled, and somebody who hasn't been working with the story or who hasn't lived the life I've lived will say "what are you really trying to say, what are you getting at?" And that's not offensive by any means, it's just a way of putting things in perspective, and being able to step back and say, 'Ok, what **am** I trying to say'? 'What **am** I trying to do with this'?

The demonstration lessons from each peer coach were another area of value for Sassparilla. In both her initial and final interviews, she discussed the importance of being able to observe the instruction of other teachers. As discussed in a previous section, one of her reasons for coming to the summer institute centered on her need to improve her teaching practice in the area of writing. She described the demonstration lessons as having "definitely helped in that area."

Sassparilla placed value on the feedback received after each lesson was completed. At the summer institute, at the end of a demonstration lesson, the whole group debriefs the lesson, giving each peer coach feedback on his or her teaching. The dialogue of this feedback centers on the following connections to the lesson: across grade-level (Pre-k through university); English Language Learners; technology; and multi-modal. These connections seek to ensure that participants are able to see how adaptable each demonstration lesson can be to their own teaching practices. When asked about the interactions that lent themselves most to peer coaching, Sassparilla explained the importance of these demonstrations to her own teaching:

> The discussion that happens after the demos I think is one of the most important ones where we talk about connections across the entire scope of education, K-University, that one's very important. I think for all of us, the entire group gets something out of that, not just the person who's giving the demo. So that's one of the best ones I think. Because, we get to talk about different aspects of what we saw, and how to apply it in different ways. I think definitely the demo ones are the most beneficial.

Clearly, Sassparilla valued the feedback that she received from what she considered a "concentrated group of great minds." Additionally, she valued the demonstration lessons as well as the electronic access to the summer institute's resources that would allow her to obtain information quickly and easily for her classroom instruction.

Perceptions of the Summer Institute

Throughout the course of her interviews, Sassparilla openly discussed her feelings about the summer institute. As noted previously, she came to the institute not only to work on improving her practice as a teacher of writing, but also to improve the craft of her own personal writing. She perceived the summer institute as an environment where this happened for her.

In her initial interview, Sassparilla reported that she perceived the environment of the summer institute as one that was encouraging and helpful. She frequently discussed the participants as having the common goal of being there for each other:

> This environment has definitely lent itself for a, I would say higher concentration, and I honestly think it's because of the quality of people that are here. It's very easy to find somebody who has something enriching to share with you and it's just sort of amazing, because I've been so encouraged, and the level of positivity is just so wonderful, that anybody who, or almost anybody who has anything to say, it sort of carries a great deal of weight.

My question at this point was **who** are the kind of people that are left out of her description of "almost anybody who has anything to say?" What kind of participants are these whose contributions don't carry a great deal of weight for her? And what made her feel that way about these particular participants? Later, in a follow-up interview, she elaborated on my question:

> I honestly feel that for me, it comes down to personality. People tell me I'm a good judge of character and when I get to see other people's personalities and if I know it's just not going to gel, I'm just very dismissive. I don't pretend to care what they have to say. If I can't connect with someone as a person, I have a really hard time accepting anything they have to say.

Additionally, she observed the environment as one that was composed of a diversity of peer coaches (teachers, directors, published authors, and doctors of education). Through the data collected, it appeared as if for Sassparilla, this diversity gave the summer institute credibility, and she initially reported a feeling of equality among its participants.

Sassparilla also perceived the peer coaching that took place at this institute as needing to be a "two-way street." Throughout her interviews, she discussed her need to contribute to others as much as they were contributing to her. Asking herself "is what I've contributed to people enough to justify everything that they've contributed to me?" was a question that she kept

returning to throughout the course of the institute. In her final interview she explained her perceptions of her contributions:

> I hope I've contributed. I mean I've given as much of my expertise that I think is lacking a little bit here in terms of having bilingual teachers or experts or anything like that. So you know anytime we discuss anything on ELL's or just bilingual students in general, I feel like it's my duty to contribute, so I think I've done pretty well, in terms of that and maybe some with technology.

Although she reported feeling that the diversity of education and experience among its participants lacked hierarchy, there appeared to be a contradiction in her feelings about this equality. According to Sassparilla, based on her perceptions of the high quality of people at the institute, she questioned her ability to coach others. She spoke candidly about working with "high quality" participants:

> What could I possibly say to someone who has been teaching for thirty years? Or who has been a principal? Or who has written books on the subject, like what do I have to contribute? And I think about peer coaching and maybe it's my perception of peer coaching, where it's a two-way street.

Sassparilla described the environment as one that was purposely created to quickly enhance a level of comfort. She credited the directors of the summer institute for their selection of participants who go through an application and interview process in order to be considered for acceptance. She reported that this selection was conducive to working with peers, as it helped her to quickly and easily find people she could trust and learn from. Additionally, she felt that although the composition of the environment was purposefully created for its success, she believed that being able to work with each other was further enhanced by personal characteristics that helped her to get along more with certain peer coaches as opposed to others.

In relation to feedback, Sassparilla wanted more than just the positive comments and praise that she received at the institute. Throughout her interviews, she described it as a positive environment in which its participants were ready to praise one another in their personal writing; however, she shared with me the need to move past validation and onto targeted criticism as a means of furthering her own personal writing: "As someone who really wants to do better, I think the superficial ones are just that. They don't, they're not very helpful."

For example, in presenting her written piece to her writing group peers – a piece that described the cultural dissonance that seemingly abounded in one of her relationships, her writing was met with validation from all group members. She received comments such as "very nice," "you're humorous, and "I love how you brought out the Latina culture. You're Proud!" To which Sassparilla responded:

> You share a lot that sounds very normal and natural to me, but the audience is gonna hear it for the first time. Yeah. Well I have some questions that I feel I would like answered in order to make this better. Does the story progress, in a seamless manner? Were you caught up anywhere or anything that you're not quite sure why I told you what I told you? Does it flow?

At this point the group discussed questions they had in relation to her piece, giving Sassparilla the feedback that she needed to consider revisions that ultimately were her decisions to make.

In a stimulated recall interview occurring after her writing group had had more opportunities to meet, Sassparilla talked about her level of comfort, and how it had helped her to remain true to her own writing, even after being questioned for something that one of her group members felt should be taken out of her piece:

> What Dana, one of the ladies in the group said was that she would hope I would reconsider using the f-word. It never occurred to me to change that word and I DIDN'T!!! because in the moment that's who my character was. It's just you know it's the character; it's the natural progression.

Likewise, while I observed Sassparilla to be at ease in receiving feedback, she also seemed comfortable in giving constructive feedback after first considering the feelings of other group members. In talking about a peer's writing, she described her thoughts about providing feedback as she contemplated the possibility of hurt feelings:

> Sometimes, with certain people, you don't want to I guess hurt their feelings or anything, so I was very careful when I started, but after I heard the rest of her writing, and knowing that I felt comfortable with them and hopefully they felt the same way with me, I felt like, ok I can be really honest about this and hopefully it will raise it to a different level. Specifically with her because she shared with us prior to this that she felt very kinda iffy about her writing. That somebody once told her it was at like a 10th grade level and after I heard her writing, I thought 'no there's no way'.

Sassparilla perceived the summer institute to be an encouraging and helpful environment. She appreciated the way the environment at the summer institute included a variety of participants with different backgrounds in education, experience, and writing. Although she praised the diversity of its participants, she presented herself as having contradictory feelings related to learning and coaching in this environment. She felt that peer coaching should be a reciprocal relationship in which each person gives equally, and often questioned whether or not she was giving to others as much as she felt she was receiving. Finally, she perceived a level of comfort with participants in that she felt she was able to provide her peers with honest, constructive feedback.

Writing Instruction: What did Sassparilla Learn?

Sassparilla reported learning different strategies and models for teaching writing to her students. Her digital responses to her peers demonstrated her desire to implement these ideas in her own classroom. In her initial interview after being at the summer institute for approximately

one week, she reported that the demonstration lessons from her peers were "incredible lessons that apply pretty much to everything." She also shared with me that the majority of these lessons which she considered "fun and interactive," would "definitely make a difference in the way my classroom looks." Likewise, during her final interview at the end of the summer institute, she described the demonstration lessons in the following way:

> I think what we bring to these demos is the best that we have to offer. So seeing the best from fifteen, sixteen people that are teaching from kindergarten through college is just, it's funny how they're kind of adaptable to anything, so those are really wonderful.

Additionally, she described some demos as being "almost perfect for my classroom," and she reported planning to revisit some of these lessons with the access she has to the Google site in which all demonstration lessons are housed. She discussed her hopefulness that these lessons would "reflect on the children and the things that they can achieve."

The following description of demonstration lessons are examples of writing models and/or strategies in which Sassparilla commented positively to her peers about her learning as a teacher of writing.

Arlene's demonstration lesson was designed for her high-school students, and was titled *"Writing for Different Purposes."* This lesson involved participants' self-selection of topics coupled with the support of different question cards that helped to frame their writing pieces. These questions included different purposes for writing to include expressing and reflecting, informing and explaining, evaluating and judging, inquiring and exploring, analyzing and interpreting, and taking a stand and posing a solution. After Arlene modeled selecting her own prompt and answering all six different types of questions, participants were asked to do the same by focusing on only one type of question. In her comments to Arlene, Sassparilla responded:

> I think the cards are a wonderful resource that would be very useful in the elementary classroom. Having that push to generate ideas is so important because many of our little writers aren't sure what to write about.

Gene's lesson *"Cover Songs Become Stories,"* targeted middle school students and involved the use of cover songs (a new performance or recording of a previously recorded song, by someone other than the original artist or composer) as a vehicle to address a writing prompt in a variety of ways. During his lesson, Gene talked about encouraging students to see that the seminal events that have occurred in their own lives can be written down and applied to almost any writing prompt. He went on to explain that cover songs can show students how others see the emotion that comes from writing about a song. Gene talked about the idea that using cover songs in writing instruction can make more concrete the idea that one song (one event) can create multiple songs (stories) based on one's individual perspective.

For this demonstration lesson, the participants were asked to listen to different variations of the same song and write about memories that they associated with each of the songs. This demonstration aimed to show participants that cover songs can help students to understand how others see their world, rather than not just the one way the original writer saw it. In her comments to Gene, Sassparilla stated:

> After seeing the whole lesson I understand how powerful it is. I love using music in my classroom, but I never used it to lead a lesson. This is new territory for me, and I am very excited to explore it! I think it is fantastic and can be used even in a historical context with music of different times. Cross-curricular connection!

Deena's lesson on *Indelible Moments*, (emotional moments in our lives that leave lasting impressions), was centered on strategies for teaching reflexive writing and literary analysis at the high school level. In her lesson, Deena showed how writing tools, such as a phone conversation

memo or Big Chief pad can help to motivate students to write. Additionally, during her demonstration lesson, Deena suggested that teachers could use Indelible Moments with works of literature and could then help students write poems based on the Moment's key words and phrases. Sassparilla expressed an interest in implementing this activity with elementary students. She wrote,

> Deena, this lesson is an easy and brilliant way to get children writing about moments that matter to them. Clearly, the use of different paper will make any kid want to write. Somehow even I feel special writing on different paper. Thank you so much for sharing this. I like going further and applying it to literary works. I do believe this has a place in the elementary classroom.

Katie's upper elementary lesson, *A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words*, reinforced the need for technology integration and multi-modal texts as an avenue to help students become more technologically savvy. Participants were sent on a scavenger hunt for twenty items and were asked to photograph these items in as creative a way as possible. Examples of the items to be photographed ranged from the concrete such as "natural landscapes", to the abstract such as "harmony." Participants were given ten minutes with a partner to locate and photograph the items on the list. Upon returning to the classroom, participants explored different websites in order to create a motivational poster for the photograph that they chose to write about. Participants then shared their photographs and captions with the group. Sassparilla commented:

> Awesome demo. You've given me a few more resources that I really enjoy. You've also opened me up to the idea of storytelling through pictures as writing. You are right in that these are genres that are developing in this era, and we need to acknowledge and explore them. Thank you for taking a risk and giving us something non-traditional.

These examples from Sassparilla's digital responses demonstrated her motivation and realization of her need to explore different avenues in her own practice that she had not yet attempted.

What Sassparilla Learned Through Being Coached

In response to a morning journal prompt asking, "what do you feel you have learned at the institute?" Sassparilla responded:

> I've learned that I don't always have to be in charge. I can let myself be a follower in a group situation. I've learned that some of other teachers' best practices are the same as mine; I've learned to be brave and share things that are near and dear to my heart.

Allowing others to lead, receiving validation for her teaching and writing, and taking chances in her personal writing are the areas that Sassparilla felt she learned about most.

Sassparilla wrote about the importance of being coached in one of her digital journal entries. One of the prompts asked participants to think about "what peer coaching means to you." She responded that it is "inherently necessary to grow as a professional." She also wrote about the trust and respect that one must have for others, and the importance of "giving as much as you take." Early in the summer institute, she wrote about peer coaching relationships and her acceptance at being led by others:

> At the [summer institute], I almost feel like I'm taking in more than I can give. It is overwhelming to be in a classroom full of Doctors of Education, doctoral students, and veteran teachers of up to forty years in the field. I am completely fine being coached, encouraged, and even sometimes praised by these individuals because I can appreciate their experiences and expertise. I think there are few opportunities like the one that is presented here, and I am ever so grateful to have this opportunity.

Additionally, Sassparilla felt validated as a teacher of writing. She wrote about how she appreciated the feedback that she received regarding her demonstration lesson. Her demonstration involved the integration of writing within the social studies content of Texas history involving Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and his expedition to find the seven cities of

gold. Throughout this lesson, she incorporated music, art, humor, and kinesthetic aspects. I observed the participants moving to music, and physically using signals that she prompted such as a "pencil moustache" (holding your pencil under your nose) to show they were ready to move on. She modeled creating a list of nouns, verbs, and adjectives that related to a painting of this expedition. The participants then used these lists of words to write from the different perspectives of historical figures of that time. Her peers validated her teaching during the whole group feedback and individual digital feedback. Examples of this validation included the following:

> You've got so much personality! I can see why your students adore you. I like how you make your classroom a fun, accepting and safe place for students where they have fun but get work done too. It was nice how you used art to inspire writing while giving the children tools by having to list the nouns, verbs and adjectives. (Mimi)

> Excellent work. All the use of nouns and adjectives sets up a class to have all sorts of things to write about before they even know it. It has the potential to work with so many things. (Gene)

> "Walking in someone else's shoes" was taken to a different level. I think that this is so powerful in a world where visuals are SO important. Taking the visual distractions away so the students can internalize in another way is imperative. Troy Hicks talked about being well intentioned, and your lesson definitely was. Still, you are a natural. (Katie)

In our final interview, Sassparilla reported that the feedback validating her sense of humor as part of her teaching style gave her permission to more frequently incorporate it in her work with students. Likewise, Sassparilla received validation for her personal writing. When asked what she felt she learned the most from her peers, she responded, "That I'm a better writer than I think I am. I think that's honestly the biggest thing."

Finally, Sassparilla talked with me about the importance of taking chances in her writing and how her peers had influenced her to explore and address a more diverse range of topics. In her initial interview, she shared with me that she felt her writing tended "to have a humorous, light tone," but because of her peers, she was taking more risks in her personal writing.

Based on my observations, this type of validation allowed Sassparilla to be coached by her peers at the summer institute. The combination of validation and promotion of deeper thinking in both her teaching and writing seemingly influenced her to take more risks in ,these areas.

Sassparilla as the Coach

Throughout her initial and final interviews, as well as her stimulated recall interviews, Sassparilla demonstrated a concern for equally contributing to her peers as much as she felt they had contributed to her. She shared her concern about coaching people who had advanced degrees, such as doctorates, as well as published authors, and teachers with many years of experience, wondering what she had to offer to these educators who she perceived to be very accomplished in their field. Although, she reported feeling this way, it did not stop her from giving coaching advice when she felt it was necessary. It seemed that her role as a bilingual teacher and her knowledge of English Language Learners gave her confidence in coaching the participants of the summer institute.

As I observed her coaching interactions in a small group of participants who shared their writing, I noticed that she was seemingly assertive as she gave advice to her peers. In my opinion, the combination of her strong personality, along with her tutoring experiences contributed to her coaching abilities at the institute. Additionally, her past experiences in

immigrating to a different country may have provided her an ego boost in having accomplished much in a relatively short amount of time, thus enabling her to feel more confidence in herself as she worked with other participants.

I observed an example of her confidence in coaching peers during a writing group in which five participants assembled for feedback on the writing pieces that were due at the end of the week. The group was structured so that each participant would first read through their piece, either in its entirety, or through a specific part that the writer felt a need for feedback. In this example, Joy shared a memoir involving her brothers and grandmother. Prior to meeting with this group, Joy had shared with its members that she was once told that her writing as an adult was approximately that of a high school tenth grader, so it was not surprising to me that she felt a level of vulnerability when it came to writing. Sassparilla, based on her familiarity and knowledge of Joy as a writer, seemed both comfortable and direct in giving constructive criticism. It seemed that this directness came from Sassparilla's understanding of Joy's self-perception as a writer.

This assertiveness was also evident in her digital responses to peers regarding their demonstration lessons. At the summer institute, after participants had completed their demonstration lessons, all group members were asked to provide individual, written feedback to the participant. Sassparilla often provided written feedback that offered support and promotion of deeper thinking to the participant. One demonstration lesson was unique in that participants were required to role-play, pitching their ideas to an editor. It allowed participants to feel the demands of asking the right kinds of questions and getting to the point in their writing, or being fired and sent to another department. This demonstration showed the importance of writing with clarity and conciseness. Sassparilla's response to Mimi was:

> I really enjoyed peeking into your journalist side, but I can't help but wonder how someone as creative as you could stomach writing so contained. Questioning is such an important part of teaching, and usually the emphasis is placed on what kinds of questions teachers are asking. What you did was place the emphasis on what kids are asking. Kids are so full of questions. Joy gave us a great example the other day, and quite honestly, we regularly dismiss their questions. I say it's time to guide the questions, let them be curious, and engage them in ways we are not encouraged to do anymore.

Sassparilla demonstrated through her written feedback to her peers that she was comfortable in offering validation, support, and suggestions when she felt it was necessary. I observed her peers to be seemingly open to her coaching, as they appeared to value and respect both her teaching and writing.

Sassparilla's Suggestions

Sassparilla stated that having more time with the writing and research groups would have been beneficial to her learning. As a participant, I noticed that time passed quickly during the seven hours of each four-day week, and it was seemingly a challenge to fit all the components of the summer institute into each day. There were two ninety-minute demonstration lessons each day, with approximately thirty minutes of whole group feedback following each lesson. These demonstrations, along with the morning journaling, sharing, research, and writing groups made each day seem both busy and productive. On some days, the research and writing groups would have to be postponed until the following day(s) to allow for other components to be fulfilled. Sassparilla conveyed her understanding that this had to happen, but she did express her thoughts on having more time in the writing groups:

> Coming into the writing project I thought, yes I'll learn about strategies and becoming a better writing teacher, but I also did it for myself, because I really felt there would be more time for writing, more feedback from people. So the fact that, that I mean I understand you have to cut something from the

> day, when, when things get past schedule, but I think it would have produced or it would have helped everybody produce even higher quality writing. Because what we did as a whole I think was pretty excellent, but I know that a lot of what I did was just sort of written "on the fly," because we met maybe once for twenty minutes, thirty minutes, so I wanted more of that.

Sassparilla also expressed wanting more time in research groups. The research groups involved small group book selection and study of professional writing books such as *Crafting Digital Writers* by Troy Hicks, and *In the Middle* by Nancie Atwell. Sassparilla stated:

> I think rather than just having to do what we did because in the end, we ended up just saying ok, you're gonna be the expert on this chapter, I'll be the expert on this chapter, like that; we had to split up the book. I think having more time would have allowed for better communication. Maybe I would have learned more from it, so I think that would have helped.

For the most part, Sassparilla was seemingly satisfied with her learning during the summer institute. She found it to be valuable and educational for her professional development as an educator.

Case Study Summary

Sassparilla presented herself as a strong, assertive, and confident woman. Throughout her interviews and observations, she seemingly exuded these qualities as well as a desire to improve her learning as an author and teacher of writing. I observed her to be a teacher who advocated for bilingual students as well as English Language Learners. She appeared willing to contribute her knowledge of these learners during general discussions, as well as in her written feedback to individual participants.

Her main concern seemed to be her ability to contribute to the learning of her peer coaches and ensuring that she was reciprocating all that she felt she was receiving at the summer institute. Additionally, she perceived the environment as one of equality, although she seemed to

contradict herself when she reported feeling unsure of how best to advise participants who possessed advanced degrees, as well as those who were published authors and experienced, seasoned teachers.

Likewise, she shared with me her appreciation of these types of participants as important to her learning, and was seemingly pleased with the diversity that was present at the summer institute. She appeared to truly value these participants as contributing to her professional development as a teacher and writer.

Through my observations and notes of the summer institute, it appeared that Sassparilla was a participant seen by others as one who possessed a knowledge of bilingual and English Language Learners. I frequently observed participants turn to her for guidance in how to apply the content of daily demonstration lessons to instruction for these particular students.

Additionally, participants appeared to both enjoy and appreciate her personal writing style. Through working with her peers, she presented herself as a writer who was validated for her work as well as encouraged to take risks. She also reported being encouraged by her peers to explore topics about which she had not written. She plans to implement a number of demonstration lessons in her classroom this fall and to continue to "push herself to write."

MARIE

When I met Marie, I felt caught up in her excitement for teaching (seemingly characteristic of a novice teacher.) She spoke passionately about her work with children, and her desire to be the best teacher she could be. She also exuded a strong desire to obtain her master's degree. She talked about this goal as a means of providing for her two young children. As a single mother, her family is the fuel that lights the fire to accomplish her dreams. They also look to her as a model of someone who is both hardworking and persevering in achieving her goals.

I considered it a privilege to have been partnered with Marie in one of the early assignments of the summer institute. The task involved interviewing a partner in order to get to know each other on a more personal level. The content of the interviews involved questions regarding family, interests and hobbies, reasons for teaching, etc. Through this interview, I found that Marie and I had things in common: she had recently purchased her own home, she felt strongly about education, she was divorced, and through all of this, she found in herself a sense of independence and strength.

She described her path in life as having shifted, as she did not originally see her herself as a teacher, but as an artist. Although she continued to foster her creative side, her priorities for her future changed when she had children. She also looked forward to eventually obtaining a doctorate in education. Both of her parents possessed master's degrees, and as reported by Marie, have been a major influence in her education.

Through her interviews, she portrayed herself as a teacher concerned with improving her writing practice, as well as her own personal writing. She also shared that she looked forward to the summer institute as a time for finally focusing on writing for "pure pleasure and enjoyment."

Personal Background

Based on my initial interview, Marie is a thirty-one year old Hispanic female, and has lived in Texas for most of her life. She is a single mother of two young children. She observably exuded warmth and joy for her daughter and son. The following piece of writing detailed the love and affection she has for her children:

> For the past decade my heart has been filled with thoughts of my two children. Every good memory seems to stem from them. All of the emotions I have. Whether I am happy, worried, angry, sad, or tired, all seems to originated somehow from my two children. They provide the scraps that I need to write.

Her mother and father were also seemingly important to her as she frequently referred to them in her writing with a sense of pride: "I am very proud of my parents. They have been through almost every job I can think of. My mother has overcome poverty, language barriers, and stereotypes." Her mother, in spite of these obstacles, graduated with her master's degree and later became a registered nurse. Her parents] have achieved advanced degrees and have influenced her in following her dreams of obtaining an education in order to support her own family. In her mother's words, "to be a Hispanic female and to have a master's degree, you are a part of a very small percentage." Her parents' expectations for Marie's education later became her own as she strove to achieve success.

This parental influence has also translated to her beliefs about education for her children. She shared with me that her ten year-old daughter has already set her sights on a specific college, wanting to attend their school of design. Marie spoke candidly about nurturing her young daughter's dream:

> I just bought her a sewing machine to make her doll dresses because she creates all the time and she's constantly designing, and I won't stifle that by saying "it's a mess, you need to clean up." I'll let her just shred the room because there's an end result, and I think it's fostering that dream and hope that, well, she's gonna go to college.

Similarly, she has positively fostered her three year-old son's impressions of school. He has been able to visit the school where Marie is a teacher and calls it "his school." She has worked to give him a positive perception of education and reported that he is excited about attending school when he turns five. Clearly, Marie has set precedence for education for her children and has seemingly influenced them to view school positively in the same way that her own parents have worked to instill in her the need to achieve academically.

Marie spoke of her maternal grandparents as part of her memories of growing up. She wrote about her annual trip to her grandparent's house in south Texas and how these memories were reminiscent of a time that was both carefree and comforting to her. In this example, Marie illustrated the pleasure she experienced in seeing her grandparents at the beginning of each summer:

> I could barely see the two dark figures standing on the front porch waiting to greet us, but can tell that they are as anxious for our arrival as I was. My Mama Tere greeted me with milk and warm pan dulce. With Max [Marie's dog], next to me I drift off to sleep comforted by the voices of my parents and grandparents as they sit in the kitchen and chat. The house is filled with love, the smell of sweet pan dulce, and my excitement for the days to come.

Culture also was a seemingly large influence in her life. Marie frequently wrote about her experiences of growing up in a traditional Hispanic family. Her mother, seemingly a woman ahead of her time, still held onto her beliefs of a Hispanic woman, and instilled in Marie a sense of that identity through her determination to raise her to be a good Hispanic wife.

I instantly wondered what it was that kept Marie's mother coming back to tradition when she had obtained an advanced degree and was working in a demanding profession. By the same token, I wondered how Marie felt about this, as she appeared to be a modern woman – one who was the sole provider for her children, and outwardly appearing independent and self-sufficient.

At the tender age of eighteen, Marie announced that she was going to be married. Her family supported her in this decision and Marie stated that she "quickly realized that there were so many things women needed to, or were 'supposed to', learn as new wives." I found myself thinking that Marie was not the kind of woman to take a lot of time in thinking about what a woman is "supposed" to do. In this example, she described the role of the women in her family:

> The women of my family prided themselves on being great culinary cooks and tamers of the tamales. And a good wife should be able to handle a household and what it entails, such as cooking and cleaning. Yes, I realize what decade it is. My mother always told me that she did not mind doing those things out of love.

Seemingly proud of her Hispanic heritage, Marie continued the traditions of her family, while at the same time becoming a stronger, independent woman who is able to provide the financial and emotional stability needed to maintain her own immediate family. In my opinion, this modern day woman, who has held onto her family's traditions and beliefs, will enhance study with her unique perspective on education and cultural background.

Education and Professional Teaching

Marie's interest in furthering her education was also indicated on her application for the summer institute. She reported that she received her Associate's degree in Education from a southern college. She later received her Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from a southern university. Currently, she is working toward her Master's degree at this same university. She plans to continue her education by pursuing her PhD upon completion of her Master's degree.

Marie has been an educator for two years. She taught fifth grade during her first year as an educator. Originally, she was supposed to teach second grade, but due to campus need, she was placed at the fifth grade level. She shared her feelings about being a teacher for this grade level: "I wanted to try everything, and so you can't say you don't like a grade until you try it. It's not that I don't like the grade, I know that I'm more successful in other grade levels, I feel."

When Marie said this, I wondered how she knew that she was more successful in other grade levels, when at the time, she had only had two years of experience. It made me think of

my own beginnings as a teacher. Originally, I taught the primary grades and felt that these were the only grades that I would ever attempt to teach.

Although fifth grade was not her first choice, she felt it was important to gain experience at the intermediate grade levels. She reported, "It was an eye-opening experience to see what the students needed vertically." At the beginning of her second year of teaching she was asked if she wanted to move to second grade. She reported being thankful for the move, and excitedly talked about her placement at this level:

> I had a blast my second year teaching, it's just ideal and so now I'm excited to start my third year in the same grade level, and I feel like this year is gonna be even better because now I have that background and I've learned you know a little bit of the curriculum and the lesson and I just, you know, what can I do better next time?

Marie exuded an excitement for teaching and was looking forward to the next school year with anticipation and her newly acquired knowledge.

Marie is a teacher who cares about children. This compassion was evident in her journal responses that demonstrated her concern for children who could not stand up for themselves. After a discussion that focused on the issue of unaccompanied immigrant minors crossing the border she wrote:

> I think of the children and how they must be terrified in the hands of a stranger. Is that "coyote" going to harm them in any way? Are they going to let that child perish alone and scared? Do they comfort the child? All of these thoughts take away my fear and quickly replace that feeling with anger. Why are the children of strangers less important than our own? I have these questions, and see the obvious answer. Be an advocate for all children. Well, this is easier said than done.

Marie further elaborated on her concern for children in talking about her field experiences. She was able to conduct some of her fieldwork in a kindergarten classroom, and

wrote about the importance of appreciating the individuality that each child brings to school. In this example, she wrote about a particular child in this classroom that did not create an image of a bluebonnet exactly as the cooperating teacher had modeled:

> The teacher came around to check on the tables' progress. "It's wrong," she said. "You need to start over! Make it look like this!" and she pointed to her model. The girl was crushed. I felt horrible because it was not wrong. It was her interpretation of a bluebonnet. I wanted to tell the teacher that if she wanted a picture perfect bulletin board that she needed to do it herself. I wish that I were braver.

I can understand Marie's trepidation in standing up to a cooperating teacher. She most likely felt intimidated by the level of hierarchy and did not want to cause dissonance even though she appeared to support the individual learner. I feel that at this time she just had not yet found her voice. Later, as a teacher in charge of her own students, Marie's feelings toward individual differences were made even more apparent as she wrote about certain children – the individuals in her classroom who are never forgotten. She called it "the teacher's curse":

> This student will test your patience, make you lose sleep at night, and dread certain transitions throughout the school day. You can't help but care and love this student. What would cause most people to ignore this student or discard them because of their behavior seems to make a good teacher more determined to help this student. That is the teacher's curse.

These examples showcased Marie's love and support for children and demonstrated her "spark" for teaching. They also provided an insight into her humanity and appreciation for all children with whom she comes into contact. Marie is a novice teacher whose compassion seemingly shines through. She seemed to be in the process of finding herself as a teacher, and it is these types of experiences that will provide this study with a different perspective.

Identity as a Writer

In her initial interview, Marie described herself as someone who was not a writer. Her past experiences with writing were dictated by specific academic purposes. Writing for college, standardized tests, and grades took precedence over writing for enjoyment. She wrote about not being able to write for herself.

> I had to write in school for a grade. I had to write in school to pass a standardized test. I then continued writing, but it was, again, for school. All throughout my years in college I have written. Pages and pages of writing, but none of these pages were something that truly represented me. I did not really take pleasure in the process.

This example showed that although she considered herself an academic writer, she realized that she was beginning to think about writing for herself. Her feelings became more evident as she wrote about modeling her writing for her second grade students:

> I then became a teacher and with that I must model writing in my class. Once again, my writing is forced by some form of educational reason. I have had to write so much for other reasons, that I have no urge to write for myself.

I wondered if she would come to find writing a pleasurable activity. For someone who came from an academic writing background, writing to make the grade, I wondered what it would take for Marie to write for herself and whether she would find herself enjoying it. Although she was honest about her feelings, she realized that she needed to change in order to be an effective teacher of writing:

> I cannot help but think about our students. If I, as an adult and teacher, feel this way about writing then how can I encourage students to develop an affinity for writing? I know that I need to find my spark for writing so that I do not feel like such a hypocrite when I teach my students about writing.

Later in the summer institute, when asked to think about her own writing process, she wrote about it from what she believed should be "a specific and very organized way that one should begin to write." Having been taught this way herself, she wrote, "It makes sense. It is organized. This writing process is reliable." She continued to write about the need to gather ideas, compose a rough draft, revise and edit, find a peer to review it, and finally create a final draft that leads to a published piece. Marie saw these steps as being "the foundation to learning how to write, and being necessary to learn." This process, seemingly basic and sequential, is reflective of Marie's background in writing for academic purposes.

I expected her to be a little less linear in her thinking and more "out of the box" given her personality and creative side. She changed my mind when I reviewed her digital entry about her writing process. In reflecting on this process as an adult, she wrote:

> I have learned the necessary steps but do I really follow them? I realize that I do not. What a hypocrite I am. I teach the steps, but I struggle to follow them myself. I think about what I really do and it dawns on me that my writing process varies for each type of piece I write.

As she participated in the institute, she continued to write about her need to write for herself, "I don't know when I will actually take the time to write something that is for pure pleasure and enjoyment. I know that the writing project may just be the ignition to my passion for writing."

Even though Marie saw the purpose for writing to be for educational purposes, she appeared not to realize that she was already creating an environment where children could write for themselves. She wrote about giving her students the opportunity to "write from your heart." She explained that their "heart" was a graphic organizer they created at the beginning of each year, filled with drawings and words that stood for things that were loved or held dear. Anytime a child would tell her that he or she did not know what to write about, she would tell them to

"write from your heart." Marie easily related to her students uneasiness about writing when she wrote:

> Like most of my students, when I begin to write, my first thoughts are that I do not really know what to write. I hear my students' voices in my head, 'but miiisss, I don't know what to write about!' I also created one [a heart] with them. So as I begin to write, I remember my heart.

Even though Marie wrote about her own writing as being connected to academic purposes, she appeared to see the need for writing for herself in order to be a better teacher of writing for her students. She seemed to be taking steps in that direction for herself and for her second grade students. She saw the summer institute as one way to begin working on this need. My question at this time was, would she eventually see this type of writing to be pleasurable?

Motivation to Participate in the Summer Institute

Before coming to the summer institute, Marie admitted that she did not know that it existed. She reported that her motivation to attend was influenced by the director, as well as a classmate who had recently attended the institute. During her initial interview, she shared how she learned about it:

> I didn't even realize it existed until I met [the director], and she's been my professor for going on three of my classes now. And I love how she's pushy, but she just came up to me one day and said 'you really have to try this, you need to try this.' and I was kind of resistant and I had another student in my class who'd done previously the year before and she mentioned so many good things about it and I said, you know I'd really like to try it.

Marie was also motivated to attend the summer institute because of the six hours of credit that she would obtain at its completion. As mentioned in a previous section, Marie's parents positively influenced her to achieve an advanced degree. Her positive attitude about higher education had seemingly transferred over to her children, as she spoke of the need to ensure that

she was influencing them in the same way that she had been. As noted in her application to the summer institute, she described herself in the following way:

> I am a single mother of two. My goal is to get my Master's degree to better the lives of my children and I. Also, I want to model to my children that no matter how hard things may seem, you can still achieve a higher education.

Marie had also been notified that she had received a scholarship to attend the summer institute. College tuition is expensive for many students, and so receiving half of it through a grant was seemingly helpful toward her goal of achieving her master's degree. She spoke of receiving news of the grant:

> I came in one day [to class], and I'd already registered for summer, and [the director] informed me that I'm going to drop my classes for the summer because I was awarded a scholarship that I had applied for and I need to register immediately so I went and dropped my classes and I re-registered for these and here I am.

I wondered if the director influenced Marie to attend the summer institute because she admired her ambition and goal-driven personality. It would stand to reason that the director would recruit students who were hard working and serious about their studies. Recruiting these types of students would help in creating a rich composition of participants and Marie seemed to fit this profile.

Marie's reason for attending the summer institute was her desire to advance in her education. The summer institute was one way of doing this. She also talked about improving her writing instruction with her second-grade students. In analyzing her instruction, she realized that she needed to become more impassioned to write, and felt that attending the summer institute would allow her to step out of her usual academic writing. She expressed her hope that the summer institute would allow her more time for personal writing that would in turn help her

to see the pleasure in it. She looked forward to attending and finding enjoyment in writing so that she could take that spark for writing back to her students.

Previous Experiences with Peer Coaching

Marie spoke about the importance of her peer coaching interactions at her campus. She reflected on them as being a vital component to her success as a novice teacher:

> For me it absolutely meant survival. You know, I don't think I would have been as successful if I didn't have someone like a peer help me along the way.

Marie's peer coaching interactions were unstructured. She spoke fondly of these informal coaching situations during her two years of teaching. Her campus had a system in place for providing mentors to novice teachers. Marie's principal assigned her a mentor - her grade level team leader, and was told that this person would help her with whatever she needed, whenever she needed it. She talked about the way that her mentor had initially made contact with her:

> She's the one who truly made it welcoming. You know even down to greeting me with a beginning-of-the-year basket that had snacks and popcorn, and Tylenol in it, and soda, and all the little goodies that you would think you wouldn't need, but then sitting there, I'm like, oh I'm so hungry now, it's after school and I have popcorn!

After being introduced to her mentor, Marie said, "they kind of threw us out there." It would seem that the initial "welcoming" from her mentor helped Marie to feel comfortable in approaching her for guidance. Marie described the ways that her mentor guided her during her first year of teaching:

> She was literally across the hall, and if I needed to scream at her I would, or email her, or call her to run over to her, or even go to her and say 'can I sit in on your class?' and they [administration] would get someone to watch my class, so that I could sit in and watch her teach, anything like

that.

Marie appreciated the informal format of these coaching sessions. She seemed to value this flexibility because, as she reported, "it was whenever I needed it, whatever I needed, and I think that was helpful, because I didn't feel constrained by specific times."

I expected Marie to value a coaching situation that was structured because she appeared to be an organized and linear thinker, but as I thought more about her reasons for appreciating a non-structured coaching relationship, it may have been more helpful to ask her mentor for guidance when Marie felt she needed it. As these teaching situations arose, she was free to ask for help. Had she been placed into a coaching relationship that ran according to a schedule, her specific needs "in the moment," may have not been addressed. Perhaps this type of coaching relationship helped Marie to learn more about teaching during her first year than scheduled visits would have allowed.

Additionally, Marie spoke of her fifth grade team as being supportive:

> They kind of took me under their wings and everything that I needed help with and support. You know when you first start teaching, they don't tell you all of the dark secrets about paperwork and ESPED, and just having someone model that and guide you.

Marie also spoke of the trust that she had in her team and how she felt she could approach them without being judged. She also spoke of how that bond endured even though she moved to a different grade level for her second year of teaching:

> Being able to go to them unafraid that you're going to look silly or unprepared. You know, having that bond was so helpful, you know, and to this day, even though I'm not on the same grade level with them, I still go to them for guidance. They were my day-to-day, hour-to-hour, second-to-second, when I was struggling and trying to figure something out. They would sit down with me and cause I would cry, from the stress, and they would guide me, and they still like me [laughing], even through

all of that.

It seemed that Marie had positive experiences with peer coaching during her first years of teaching. She not only found guidance in her assigned mentor, but in her grade level team as well. She even spoke about seeking and finding help with other teachers on her campus. It would seem that her administrators had set up the campus environment as one in which teachers were expected to help each other be successful.

Valuing of the Summer Institute

In her initial interview and digital log, Marie discussed the validation that she received from her peers. She shared how important validation was to her continued development as a writer: "I love positive feedback, it gives me the encouragement to continue." She seemed to contradict herself in her appreciation for validation when she spoke of receiving whole group feedback after her demonstration lesson. As soon as I prompted her to review this feedback, she became nervous and stated:

> Oh, dear! I, as a person, personally I am very uncomfortable with and I always have been with I guess what do you call it? Compliments…I struggle with compliments. Cause I think I'm very hard on myself. So people give me compliments, I can't agree with you. So this was the part that I probably dreaded the most.

Marie's anxiety over validation was made more evident when she discussed the validation that she received each Thursday after reading her writing to the whole group. After each participant read his or her piece, audience members were required to hand-write their thoughts about the piece on a note card that was given to the presenter. Marie spoke of being anxious at receiving this type of validation, stating that she had not yet read any of these cards.

Across her interviews, I noticed that even though she shared her struggle with positive feedback from her peers, she reported wanting more constructive criticism to elevate her writing to a higher level. When we reviewed her video from the group feedback she received after completing her demonstration lesson, a lesson that involved science notebooks and word walls, she spoke frankly about these two types of feedback:

> They're both good. Pete's was helpful on you know, who doesn't like to be complimented? But, Cory made me actually think of things that you know, I probably wouldn't think of until August when I'm actually trying to put my walls up. So she really made me think right there, if you could tell.

Additionally, she talked about valuing peer feedback in her writing group. The writing groups involved small groups of participants listening and responding to each member's writing piece for the week. When I asked Marie if there was something more she would have liked to receive feedback on for her own piece, she responded, "Probably talking about maybe how I could have flowed from maybe one section to another, the story, more of a writing process would have been nice."

Marie seemed to be conflicted in receiving validation from her peers. On one hand, she spoke about how this validation encouraged her to continue writing. On the other hand, she discussed her anxiety at receiving compliments. She also talked about the need to improve her teaching and her writing. Through her interviews and digital logs, she came across as someone who wanted her peers to prompt her to think deeply about her teaching practice and her own personal writing.

Throughout her interviews, it was evident that Marie valued the commonality she shared with her peers, as well as the bonds that she was able to make at the summer institute. In discussing the commonality among her peers from her writing group, she talked about the ways

that she felt her writing provided for connections among group members. Marie's writing piece for one particular week involved a narrative description of her summer visits to her family's ranch in south Texas. Her peer coaches spoke of the multi-sensory ways that her writing transported them back to their own background knowledge of what home meant for them. Marie spoke of the way her writing seemingly provided connections for them:

> It was nice to see that everyone had some type of connection with that. Everyone, no matter how old or what they've done, they have something that transports them back. So it's kind of like Pete said, some type of a universal connection. I thought that was nice.

In a morning journal during the second week of the institute, Marie spoke of the bonds that were made through the sharing of writing. She also reported feeling that this bonding helped create a trusting environment. She valued these opportunities as a time for growth and development as a writer and teacher:

> Here in this room I have been able to share my thoughts and memories. I was supported by my peers, applauded, and encouraged. On Thursdays we share our stories with each other. I have learned more about my peers in these past two weeks than I ever thought. These stories have created bonds between the fellows. I think that it is because of the safe environment we have been able to create.

Marie also valued the diversity of peers that were present at the summer institute. She appreciated the different writing styles that she was able to observe, "It was interesting to see the differences and the tone in which we wrote and that was nice. Something like that was good to see and just being able to hear how a person writes differently and discuss it."

Additionally, she was able to see how other participants' writing processes could help her in her own writing. She shared feeling anxious about not having time to create what she felt

would be a good piece for each week. She reported that through her writing group she could see how another participant approached the task:

> I liked how I heard another fellow say that they were writing chapters and so this is a new chapter in their story. And so it's kinda like, gosh, had I gone into that at the very beginning, I could have had this long story and had chapters, I probably, I don't know, it might be different. So next time…

Marie also valued the diversity of experiences among participants and the opportunity to learn across the grade levels. Peer coaches' teaching experience ranging from pre-kindergarten through university levels gave her an opportunity to see the "perspective of a secondary teacher which I normally wouldn't get as a primary teacher." She reported that exposure to these different ideas was helpful to her:

> You're with people who are diverse in their background, so when you go to ask for help, or I have many coaches here, so I get to experience many different perspectives and I think that that's helpful. And so it's not just one person, it's many. And it's many ideas, and everyone's working off of each other.

Marie reported also valuing the perspective of seasoned educators at the institute. "I've really kind of taken in how they watch or how they conduct things as more of a seasoned educator I guess, cause they have more experience than me." It didn't surprise me that Marie brought up valuing this type of perspective. As a novice teacher, it would seem that these perspectives would weigh heavily on her own decisions and emulations as a budding writing teacher. When asked what she felt were the best aspects of working with peers in the institute, she responded, "Learning from them. Picking up their techniques that were successful. Sharing ideas vertically throughout the grade levels."

Another aspect of peer coaching that Marie valued was the assistance that she received at her pre-demonstration lesson conference. She reported feeling anxious about presenting a ninety-minute lesson to the whole group and how Polly – a co-director, had been able to alleviate some of that anxiety. Her demonstration lesson involved the use of journaling in science, by providing assistance to children through the use of writing frames (models of how to approach a response to text). Marie had originally created a demonstration lesson that had seemed to have too much content to cover in the ninety minutes. She reported, "I was afraid that I wouldn't have enough, so I over, I filled it too much." Polly, upon seeing the amount of content that Marie had planned for her lesson, made a suggestion that Marie run through the demonstration lesson at home and time herself. Marie reported that this suggestion helped her to realize for herself what was important to include and leave out:

> I was gonna make little notebooks where we would go through an observation poster and talk out you know use an actual pencil and talk about the physical properties I observed, and that's a whole other lesson and I realized that. I took out the stuff that wasn't necessarily important and it wasn't there when I presented.

Another suggestion from her coach involved Marie showing participants examples of effective and ineffective word walls. Marie talked about how she knew that this was important, but admitted, "I wouldn't have necessarily done that had she not mentioned that. I guess it took her perspective to see how much that supported the notebook writing."

Marie valued the feedback that she received from her peers at the summer institute. Although she appeared conflicted in her views on validation, she valued the type of feedback that allowed her to elevate her thinking about writing and writing instruction. She also valued the commonality among peers, reporting that the bonding among participants lent itself to a trusting environment in which she could approach other participants with questions related to her

teaching and writing. Marie appreciated being able to sit down with a co-director to go through her demonstration lesson. It seemed that this coach pointed out suggestions that were ultimately Marie's decision to accept. Additionally, Marie was able to determine for herself what to include in her demonstration lesson based on the time that was allotted. Finally, she valued the diversity among peers, appreciating the different viewpoints of participants who taught writing at a variety of levels, as well as the individuality of participants' writing styles and processes.

Perceptions of the Summer Institute

I define perceptions as interpretations of the environment (Schacter, 2011). Throughout the course of her interviews, Marie openly discussed her feelings about the summer institute. As was noted previously, she came to the institute to improve on her motivation to write. She perceived the summer institute as an environment where this happened for her.

In order to understand Marie's perceptions of the summer institute, it is important to understand her feelings regarding peers and peer coaching. Marie's responses about what it meant to be a peer and to coach were consistent across her initial and final interviews:

> When I hear the word 'peer,' I think of someone who's similar to me and my background and my education and stuff like that, going to someone who's as knowledgeable as you and maybe even more knowledgeable, bouncing ideas off of each other. Supporting each other and kind of helping each other get to a better level.

In her final interview, I asked her to make a concrete comparison to help people understand the experience of coaching and being coached. She quickly responded that she considered it to be similar to students in her classroom:

> Sometimes a teacher can explain something to you and you *will* get it. But when another student their age explains it in their own words, then they're able to understand it. So it's a peer that's helping you. And so you're on the same level. You're able to use some type of explanation. And all of a sudden, the kids get it. And then you could've explained it a million ways

> as an adult, but it took that child to explain the same thing for that other child to get it.

For Marie, peer coaching meant having someone that was similar to her in background and education, helping her to advance to a higher level in her learning. During the first few weeks of the institute, it seemed as if Marie did not consider herself to be a coach to others. Perhaps this was because she felt that she still had much to learn, based on her minimal teaching experience.

Later, in a stimulated recall interview involving her demonstration lesson feedback, she seemed to feel that what she had to offer was valuable to others. When I asked her what she felt she learned most from this particular feedback she responded, "that I'm capable of delivering information that is of quality and use to other educators."

When I asked Marie what types of interactions lent themselves to peer coaching, she responded that "almost everything" involved coaching due to its "intimate" composition. She elaborated on this composition by talking about the table groups in which five to six participants sit with each other on a daily basis. These table groups seemingly support each other as they work on morning journals, work as a group on activities that are presented from the demonstration lessons, and discuss various writing practices. Through my observations, the table groups became very comfortable with each other very quickly. They interacted professionally as well as personally. The table groups are very similar to what some people might think of as a "home base."

Marie also shared that she considered the demonstration lessons, Thursday sharing of writing pieces, book groups, writing groups, and anthology groups as lending themselves to different types of coaching interactions.

The anthology groups are assembled due to the requirement to publish an anthology of the participants' writing pieces. Each participant, along with family and friends attending "Visitor's Day," received a copy of the summer institute's anthology. The publication of the anthology was a labor-intensive task made possible by several groups made up of peer coaches. These groups included an editing group whose purpose was to edit the written pieces of the peer coaches. A formatting group worked together to designate the order of the written pieces, along with an introduction and table of contents, while another group worked together to design the cover.

It seemed that these interactions helped Marie to perceive the summer institute to be a trusting environment. During a stimulated recall interview involving her writing group, Marie brought up her perception of the group dynamic due to the developing relationships with other peer coaches:

> I think a lot of the dynamic has to come from the fact that we already have developed a relationship with one another in our group, and by the time we sat down, it seemed easy to share because we've been sharing things and details from our past since the beginning of the writing project.

Along with this dynamic, Marie talked about her perception of the non-hierarchical feel of the institute. She based this feeling on already being familiar with the director and one of the co-directors, and observing these people as participating in the institute activities, just as everyone else did.

Later in this interview, when I asked her if she considered feedback from fellows, teacher consultants, co-directors, and directors to be of equal weight, she responded:

> I think it's equal now, because of once again the dynamic. Equal in the fact that as they're peers but they're all bringing a specific background and a specific amount of years of knowledge, and maybe even a specific content area and so they're all very knowledgeable, I don't want to say it's

> unequal, that someone has more knowledge than the other, because they each bring their own wealth of knowledge. I don't think anyone's comment meant more to me than the other.

In comparing Marie's views on hierarchy at the beginning and end of the summer institute, I believe that this happened because of the requirement of having to present a demonstration lesson by herself to the whole group and having to receive feedback from her peer coaches. From my previous experience of having to present my own lesson in front of the institute participants, I felt anxious, even as a veteran teacher. I can certainly understand how Marie would feel as a novice teacher. The only other interaction in which participants are required to present by themselves involved reading their writing pieces to the whole group on Thursdays, to which Marie previously explained that she was not comfortable in receiving compliments. It appeared that Marie perceived the environment to be non-hierarchical when she had the support of presenting with her peers, instead of having to present information by herself.

Marie came to the institute with preconceptions of peers and peer coaching, most likely because of her past experiences at her campus. She believed that peer coaching meant learning from someone on or about her level, although she initially did not see herself as a coach for others. She was very clear about the interactions that lent themselves to peer coaching. She felt that the institute was an environment that encouraged support and trust, a safe place in which she felt she was not being judged. She perceived the institute to have a non-hierarchical feel, although she presented some conflicted feelings about this, seemingly based on certain types of interactions.

Writing Instruction: What did Marie Learn?

In our interviews, Marie consistently spoke of the opportunity to observe teachers at other grade levels demonstrate their writing practice. She reported that she felt this was beneficial to

her because she did not often get to see other teachers model the teaching of writing. She felt that this was important because it showed her how students were expected to advance as writers. She elaborated about this in a journal entry that asked participants what they felt they learned at the summer institute, Marie responded:

> I have learned many things during these four weeks. It has been an amazing pleasure to work with educators from different grade levels. Usually primary teachers do not get to see the teaching practices of secondary teachers and vice versa. Being able to have feedback from those teachers has been helpful. Seeing how they teach and the similarities that are vertical is good to know. I have a different perspective on the upper grade levels. I can now see that we are able to take the same ideas and modify them for each grade level.

The following descriptions of demonstration lessons are examples of writing models and/or strategies in which Marie provided feedback to her peers about her learning as a teacher of writing. These examples demonstrated what she learned about writing instruction through her peer coaches at the summer institute.

Arlene's demonstration lesson was designed for her high-school students, and was titled *"Writing for Different Purposes."* This lesson involved participants' self-selection of topics coupled with the support of different question cards that helped to frame their writing pieces. These questions included different purposes for writing to include expressing and reflecting, informing and explaining, evaluating and judging, inquiring and exploring, analyzing and interpreting, and taking a stand and posing a solution. After Arlene modeled selecting her own prompt and answering all six different types of questions, participants were asked to do the same by focusing on only one type of question. In her comments to Arlene, Marie responded:

> I loved your activity. It gave me many different ideas and it was easy to write about a topic in many different ways with your example. I think that this is helpful for students and breaks it down into manageable pieces.

Chloe's lesson was designed for all levels and was titled, *Blogging, The World Will Know.* This lesson taught participants about the purposes of different types of blogs. Participants were shown the importance of allowing students to write entries and comment on the entries of their peers as a means of being part of a literacy community. Chloe's lesson showed that through writing and commenting on blogs, students write for real readers. Participants were given the opportunity to create their own blog by choosing their topic and elaborating on their opinions. Marie commented on her newly gained perspective:

> Thank you for sharing the difference between blogs. I was unsure what each one was, and mostly thought that it was used as a form to complain about something. You changed my perspective of it. I see how fun they can be and have good ideas to use in the classroom.

Corey's lesson, *Math and Writing,* targeted the elementary level, and integrated math and writing by having participants represent their thinking about math concepts in multiple ways to communicate their ideas. Corey provided opportunities for participants to share their ideas through listening, dialogue, writing, drawing, and the use of tools. It also showed participants the benefits of written communication as a means of explaining math ideas. Corey had participants apply their learning of using multiple ways of knowing mathematical concepts through an activity that required them to brainstorm, rotate through math stations, engage in multiple forms of communication, produce textual and visual products, and present their learning through the use of digital tools. Marie wrote about using Corey's ideas as a way to integrate writing into her own math lessons:

> I really enjoyed your presentation. It was engaging and you explained it very well. I liked the new and different ideas to introduce writing into different math areas. I am sure that I will try to use some of these ideas for writing in my math lessons.

Katie's upper elementary lesson, *A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words*, reinforced the need for technology integration and multi-modal texts as an avenue to help students become more technologically savvy. Participants were sent on a scavenger hunt for twenty items and were asked to photograph these items in as creative a way as possible. Examples of the items to be photographed ranged from the concrete, such as "natural landscapes", to the abstract, such as "harmony." Participants were given ten minutes with a partner to locate and photograph the items on the list. Upon returning to the classroom, participants explored different websites in order to create a motivational poster for the photograph that they chose to write about. Participants then shared their photographs and captions with the group. Marie commented:

> It was a great way to incorporate technology. I can see how this could be used to teach other lessons. I loved the scavenger hunt. It was a great way to enjoy technology in school. I now have another fun resource to use.

It appeared that Marie felt strongly about this lesson because she posted her own example that she worked on during the demonstration lesson. The majority of the participants did not include the writing they created during Michelle's demonstration, so I believe this act showed how relevant she thought it was for her own students.

These examples from Marie's digital responses demonstrated her excitement in gaining new ideas and different perspectives on writing instruction. As a novice teacher, she felt that the demonstration lessons she observed would be helpful to her as she continues her work at the elementary level.

What Marie Learned Through Being Coached

In our initial interview, when I asked Marie what she felt she learned from her peer coaches in the institute, she responded, "how to be supportive and open." I observed Marie to

receive the same kind of support in many interactions. She received encouragement in her writing group when she felt unsure about her writing. She also received support during her pre-demonstration coaching and demonstration lesson feedback. It did not surprise me that she spoke about learning how to be supportive when she had the kind of encouragement that her peer coaches were able to provide.

During her final interview, Marie reported that what she had learned from her peers would most likely change the way she presented writing instruction. She reported that she would model more of a love for writing and felt that this would positively affect her students. She also reported that she now had a better understanding of integrating writing in the content areas in fun and exciting ways.

When I asked her why she felt she did not have that love for writing before the institute she responded, "I think it was more me being scared of it [writing instruction], and how to…because we all have to do it. We just don't know sometimes how to." Marie also shared that she learned that she is "okay at what she does." She talked about how anxious she felt at the requirement to present a demonstration lesson in front of her peers, "I know I'm going to be coaching fellow educators and that's scary." I believe that this realization that she is "okay at what she does" came from the encouragement she got from this group during her demonstration lesson feedback: "everyone's so very positive and they're a wonderful, supportive group."

Marie's demonstration lesson titled, "*Writing in Science: Science Notebooks in Action,"* demonstrated the use of journaling in science. Marie taught participants how she was able to provide writing assistance to children through the use of writing frames (models of how to approach a response to text, for example).

During her demonstration lesson feedback, she talked about how her peers helped and inspired her. She said she felt that she "had actually gained confidence I think in my own teaching abilities." It appeared that the comments from her peers regarding her lesson, helped to cement these newfound feelings of confidence. In particular, Marie commented on the feedback that she received from teachers of math and technology. Corey, a math specialist, pointed out to Marie how she would use the question stems Marie had provided in her math instruction, which, in turn, made her realize that it could be used in this content area.

> I like that they were able to connect the posters to other things [content areas] that I necessarily wouldn't have seen. That it would go with reading, but when she said at the math, the questions, I really didn't see it then, but now I think well man, I could probably use it in math. And then like even with technology, how she would use the questions you know? And I thought that's cool so…

In the area of science, Marie was validated for her incorporation of color-coding of different science concepts to assist students in their journal writing. Joy, a former middle and high school teacher and currently university science teacher, validated her use of this system in helping students to be successful scientific writers. Later, during the feedback, Joy further encouraged her for her efforts to integrate science and writing:

> Having been in both high school and the middle school, I would love to know that I was getting your kids, because we've had issues with primary teachers not teaching science because the other tests were more important. In fact two of the teachers argued with us that Fahrenheit and Celsius are the same thing. And so if I had known your kids were coming up to me, I would know that you had prepared them for all of that so you just rock.

Additionally, I observed two experienced teachers from this group further validate Marie's teaching when during her feedback, they asked if they could each have one of her self-made posters of question stems that she displays on her classroom walls. These posters serve to

scaffold as they write about science concepts in their journals. It appeared that Marie was surprised at these requests, and I believe this made her feel more effective as a teacher when this happened. I also noted a sense of pride in her work when I asked about her feelings about this feedback:

> I kind of was excited I think when I noticed her taking notice of it and I wanted to give it to her cause I was like can I just write 'by Marie", so when they look at it, they know it's me? But I was excited that someone who, cause my math specialist is, I held her up higher than me you know? She's a specialist. So that was exciting to see that another math specialist from my district took interest in using my posters. So that was validating right there.

Marie reported that she learned how to be supportive in her writing instruction. She learned that she had a love for writing that she would take back to her classroom in the fall. She felt that this love was due to seeing her peer coaches at the institute struggle with writing. She also learned that she was too self-critical and felt she had gained a sense of confidence in her teaching. She hoped to take the strategies and philosophies she had learned from her peers back to her elementary students in the hopes of helping them to gain a higher level of academic achievement.

Marie as the Coach

Given the fact that Marie had only taught for two years, each year at a different grade level, it appeared that she lacked confidence in her coaching abilities. In her initial interview, she seemed to believe that her opportunity to coach others would only happen through her demonstration lesson: "I know I'm going to be coaching fellow educators and that's scary. Shortly next week." When I questioned her further about whether she felt she had coached anyone up to that point, she responded:

> I don't know. I know that I sit with people at my table. For example,

> Katarina has a lot of questions about the language, and so she'll constantly ask me questions about the Spanish and terms and stuff, and I guess in a sense, I'm coaching her there, and I'm giving her, I'm helping her with any questions she has about our culture or anything like that. I guess if you look at it I guess that's helping her. In a way.

Additionally, as I reviewed her digital responses to other participants regarding their demonstration lessons, I noticed a large amount of validation, but no responses to help participants advance their thinking on their lessons. Perhaps Marie felt that this was all that was needed in providing a response, believing that providing validation was an adequate response.

In her final interview during the last week of the institute, she seemed a bit stronger in her perceptions of herself as a coach. Although she still reported feeling that she was more of a learner, she elaborated on her ability to share her knowledge with others:

> It has been nice to I guess share things that I've learned, because everyone's experience is different and I know that there's other peers here who are also newer teachers and learners. And so it's been nice to to be able to kind of maybe even share ideas and possibly teach new things to other people, cause I know that eventually I'll be an experienced teacher and I'll be hopefully a role model or a peer for others.

Marie seemed close to believing that her knowledge would be of use to other educators. During the independent practice of her demonstration lesson, I observed her as she coached participants at a back table on how to make better use of her question stem posters. Marie first listened to her participants and then made split second decisions to attend to what she felt were the specific needs of her peers, based on what she had already taught. This observation demonstrated that Marie had advanced in her coaching abilities and felt that what she had to say was important for those wanting to incorporate her lesson in their own work with students. When I asked her about her decision to further coach participants she responded:

> I think when we started talking about them [posters] at the back table when we started the questioning, I went back to this poster and talked about it some more cause it kinda sparked you know things that I hadn't said, so maybe questioning how to actually use them more maybe? Cause I don't know, I think I just kinda generally presented it. And it would take a lot more little workshops to teach the poster so yeah.

Because of Marie's limited experience, she seemed to feel somewhat tentative in her coaching abilities. Initially, she appeared to believe that she would be coaching only during her demonstration lesson, but further questioning helped her to consider that she coached at her own table on a regular basis. After completing her demonstration lesson, she was able to see which components needed to be developed further, and approached them through coaching a small group of participants who needed additional clarification. Although she felt her role at the summer institute was that of learner, she reported appreciating being able to share her own knowledge of writing practice, and felt capable of delivering information to other educators.

Marie's Suggestions

At the summer institute, participants are seated at the same tables for the majority of activities, such as morning journal and sharing, demonstration lessons, guest speakers, and Thursday readings of participant writing pieces. When I asked Marie if she could have changed anything about the relationships here, she stated that being able to move around to different table groups instead of being seated with the same participants daily would have been beneficial in getting to know each participant quickly:

> I think that it would've been nice, to I know that we've all worked together and we got to sit in different groups for writing and stuff, but we kinda stuck in the same group for most of the time. And so the only other time I got to sit with other people was maybe in the writing or the anthology group, and so it, so those relationships weren't developed until later on. And so I know we get kinda stuck at sitting in the same place everyday, and it kinda would've been nice to make us move around and forced us to interact much sooner.

Marie had the opportunity to state her suggestions for improving her experience at the writing project. During her initial interview, she stated that everything was ideal and that she would not change anything. I believe that this was because of experience and her reluctance to say anything that would portray the institute negatively. For the most part, Marie appeared satisfied and appreciative of her experiences at the institute.

Case Study Summary

Marie presented herself as a compassionate and goal-oriented individual. Throughout her interviews and observations, she seemingly exuded these qualities, as well as a desire to improve her learning as an author and teacher of writing. I observed her to be a teacher who seemingly advocated for all students. She appeared to be very interested in integrating writing instruction into the content areas. She saw her role at the institute as one of learner, and after presenting her demonstration lesson, realized that she enjoyed sharing her knowledge with others.

Her ideas of peer coaching came from her experiences from the campus where she began teaching. The campus had implemented a mentor program for novice teachers and had assigned her to her grade level leader. She saw this person as someone who she could trust. She also frequently talked about her level of experience, stressing that although she was new to education, she knew she would eventually become a mentor and role model for others.

Although she reported perceiving the environment of the summer institute as one of equality, she appeared to contradict herself when she reported that she saw her role as a learner at the institute. She did not seem to think of herself as a peer coach for others. I believe that this was because of her level of experience. It also seemed that she became more comfortable with the idea of coaching after she had completed her demonstration lesson. The feedback from her

peer coaches validated her teaching practice, and she seemed to understand that the knowledge that she had to share was valuable to her peers.

She shared with me her appreciation of her peer coaches as an important part of her learning, and was seemingly pleased with the diversity that was present at the summer institute. She appeared to value her peer coaches' contributions to her professional development as a teacher and writer.

Marie reported that the bonds between peer coaches were made quickly. She felt her learning was made possible because of these connections. She shared that these bonds seemingly laid the groundwork for her learning, making it easy to share with her peers.

Through my observations and notes of the summer institute, it appeared that Marie was a participant who was seen as one who had a fresh perspective on teaching because of her novice level as an educator. Additionally, participants appeared to both enjoy and appreciate her personal writing style. Through writing with her peers, she began to see that her writing could allow others to connect to her stories. She plans to implement a number of demonstration lessons in her classroom this fall and to share her love of writing with her students.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

My data analysis was highly complex and non-linear because I examined participants' meanings and understandings of peer coaching in the context of a summer institute. According to Merriam (1998), qualitative research involves analyzing how human beings make sense of and experience their world. Through an intuitive process, I created categories that were constantly evolving according to this study's purpose, researcher orientation and knowledge, and participant meaning (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, as I coded data, I discovered that it was not always placed into neat, little boxes that simply explained my participants' intended meaning. Participant understanding was highly complex and involved, as I found myself constantly organizing and reorganizing the data during this stage of analysis. This is a very common phenomenon in the paradigm of research in which I situate this study (Merriam, 1998).

To illustrate this complexity, I coded data that eventually went under the category of "how peer coaches help one another." As the researcher, I could have placed these data under the category of "interactions lending themselves to peer coaching." However, following the work of Merriam (1998), I wanted my codes and categories to be mutually exclusive. At this point, I ultimately decided to place data such as "encouraging risk-taking", "questioning as a means of promoting deeper thinking", and "comparing one's writing to other peers" under the first category of "how peers help one another." Although interactional by nature, I felt that this data was better explained under the specificity of how peers either directly or indirectly helped each other; therefore, I felt the need to reorganize the data that fell under this particular category. Through constant comparative analysis, I was then able to make similar determinations concerning this type of "fluid" data.

Participants

Although Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie are highly diverse in their backgrounds and experiences, they share many ideas regarding the nature of peer coaching as they relate to the Summer Institute. During our interviews, I asked them to explain their thoughts as to how they perceived peer coaching as participants of the summer institute. I asked them to explain the types of interactions that they felt lent themselves most to peer coaching situations. I asked about their thoughts on how trust was established among their peers at the summer institute. Additionally, I asked them how they perceived the coaching that they received at the institute as potentially impacting their writing instruction during the following school year. Finally, I asked them to reflect on what they felt they learned most about writing and writing instruction from their peer coaches. In the paragraphs that follow, I provide an overview of each of the themes related to these reflections.

Interactions Lending Themselves to Peer Coaching

During our conversations, Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie described the types of interactions that they felt lent themselves most to peer coaching at the summer institute. All three participants indicated that both formal and informal interactions were prevalent during the summer institute and that these structured and unstructured activities were conducive to peer coaching scenarios. Each participant also described different ways that peer coaches helped each other to learn more about writing and writing instruction. Additionally, all participants talked about feedback in the form of validation. In the paragraphs that follow, I describe the codes associated with these categories and support these codes with examples from participant interviews.

Formal Interactions. Participants discussed formal interactions as those that included structured activities such as writing groups, demonstration lessons, research and anthology groups. Writing groups were structured to include four to five peer coaches that met roughly two to three times a week for approximately thirty minutes. The members supported each other as they worked on their required weekly pieces of writing.

Demonstration lessons were conducted twice daily and involved individual participants presenting their best writing instruction to their peer coaches. Research groups were structured to include five to six peer coaches whose purpose was to present content from a self-chosen book study. The groups generally met twice a week during the latter part of the institute and were given the freedom to choose how best to present pertinent information from their book study.

Anthology groups were conducted during the latter part of the institute and involved peer coaches working together to publish the summer institute anthology. Additionally, peer coaches were given the task of putting together a Visitor's Day Program that guests attended in order to learn more about the summer institute.

All three participants shared that these formal, structured activities lent themselves to peer coaching situations. Gene talked about these formal interactions as a time when peer coaches got together to discuss writing pieces or professional books. He elaborated on these coaching interactions when he said,

> It was a group of people sitting together and saying, 'here's what I see, here's what I know.' You were able to take those things and you know you either wrote it down as a note or you kept it up in your head.

Similarly, Sassparilla talked about the writing groups as a time "when we share our stories and get feedback there." Marie talked about the anthology groups as a time when participants worked together to complete tasks:

> Everyone was helping each other kind of guide each other to getting this final product finished, and you know, sometimes people didn't know exactly what they should do. Everyone kind of threw in their ideas, and worked together, and people were literally coaching one another you know?"

Based on these statements from Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie, these formal types of interactions lent themselves to peer coaching situations.

Informal Interactions. All participants reported that informal interactions led to peer coaching in unstructured ways. Examples of these types of interactions from the participants' perspectives included events, such as eating breakfast or lunch together. Participants reported appreciating these types of breaks (such as Thursday potluck) – down times when they would chat in between activities and assigned tasks. All three participants mentioned appreciating the informal structure contributing to peer coaching interactions. Participants mentioned appreciating being able to ask a peer for help because they felt that this allowed them flexibility within their own schedules. About the importance of informal peer coaching interactions, Marie stated, "I like that they're not very structured, they're relaxed. You don't feel like you're sitting down for a lesson. There's no stress when it comes to it." Gene responded that informal interactions such at lunch were important because "you get ideas about stuff just chatting with people." Finally, Sassparilla summarized the differences between formal and informal interactions by responding:

> I think, you know, we're serious and professional and share knowledge when we have to be, but at the same time, you know, when there's down time or lunchtime or, whatever, then we also share on a more personal level, so it's just really well rounded.

This data demonstrates that Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie considered these informal interactions to be just as important as the structured activities in peer coaching situations.

Digital Entries. Although none of the participants mentioned the digital entries as being conducive to peer coaching, it is important to note this type of feedback and response; I observed peer coaches responding to individual demonstration lessons in this daily digital content. This adds another dimension to peer coaching; peer coaches who may not feel comfortable voicing their comments out loud to the group can respond in a written format. Gene's response to a peer coach demonstrated an example of peer coaching when this particular peer coach voiced the need for suggestions on how to better explain to students how to make the concept of point of view more understandable. Gene responded,

> You wondered about how to better explain. I would suggest modeling. Show them the many ways they could think about telling the story of a water drop. All those ways could really showcase what each individual student knows, is learning more about, or is still playing with and struggling to learn.

Through digital responses I observed peer coaches validating and offering suggestions for writing instruction.

How Peer Coaches Help One Another

In analyzing the data from the interview transcripts, participants discussed the ways that they felt peer coaches helped each other grow as writers and writing teachers during the summer institute. These ways of helping each other were collapsed into the category of "how peers help," another form of interactions that contributed to peer coaching.

Peers Encourage Risk-Taking. All three participants reported that peer coaches encouraged risk-taking in writing. Examples of these types of interactions involved peer coaches supporting each other during writing groups. It was through the writing groups that they made connections and were able to learn about each other's strengths, needs, personalities, likes, and dislikes. Gene shared that through the peer coaches in his writing group he was able to take parts

of their writing and use them as mentor texts for his own writing pieces. He recounted a time from his writing group that exemplified this type of interaction:

> You think through something like Peter telling a story about his family dog on the roof and Marie writing about going to her Father's ranch, and you take those things and you go mmm, I have this one little thing that I have here, but I'm gonna do this with it. I'm gonna put this little bit of memory in this thing that I have in my family. I'm gonna put this odd bit of humor into it like another and make it mine. So I I took things from both of them and made it mine.

Sassparilla reported that the peer coaches in her writing group encouraged her to expand on her writing by broadening her choice of topics. Although she felt that this new choice of topics was not what she considered to be her style, she was positively influenced to take on a new direction in her writing because of her peer coaches' validation that what she had to say was both worthwhile and interesting:

> My writing tends to have a humorous, light tone, but I'm exploring different avenues because of what people have asked of me. Or they know something about my life and they say 'well, why don't you write about that?' and I say well, that's not funny, and they say, 'but it's interesting.'

For Marie, an experienced academic writer who wanted to improve on her narrative writing, this encouragement served to help her in moving her writing forward. Through our conversations, she shared with me that she needed this encouragement to continue writing for pleasure: "I don't feel like a very good writer, let's say that, so I love positive feedback it gives me the encouragement to continue." Thus, for Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie, writing group interactions served as a means of taking risks in their writing based on their individual self-perceptions as writers.

Questioning, as an Interaction, Promotes Deeper Thinking. Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all reported that although they appreciated validation, they wanted constructive criticism

to move their writing and writing instruction to a higher level. These types of desired interactions included peer coaches questioning one another as a means of promoting deeper thinking by the coached peer. Examples of these types of interactions involved co-directors and directors conducting pre-demonstration lesson coaching as a means of helping each participant prepare for the delivery of a ninety-minute lesson to the peer coaches of the summer institute. Two of the participants had the same coach guide them in the preparation of their lessons. Both participants reported that this particular coach asked them questions to push their thinking to a deeper level.

Gene reported that his peer coach listened to his ideas for his demonstration lesson, a lesson that was focused on the use of cover songs to approach writing prompts in multiple ways. In a stimulated recall interview involving his demonstration lesson he stated,

> She [peer coach] was looking and thinking and going well 'have you thought about this?' and I'm like, no I hadn't. So she's trying to get me to rethink or deepen some of the thoughts that I have with it. 'Here's other possibilities, have you thought about these?' She's like your idea's fine, it's good, but what about these things?"

For Marie, a novice teacher, this pre-demonstration coaching involved questioning her timing of the lesson and the suggestion to "time herself" at home. Upon following her coach's advice, Marie realized that her demonstration was indeed too lengthy and decided on what components to leave in and which components would be better suited to additional workshops. This suggestion required Marie to think more about her lesson and decide for herself what would be best to present in the time frame that was allowed.

Related to this type of interaction, but slightly more directive, her peer coach suggested displaying different types of examples of word walls (effective and ineffective) for the group to compare. Marie said she felt that this was important to include in her lesson.

> I wouldn't have necessarily done that had she not mentioned that cause I didn't really…I mean I knew that was important…I didn't know…I guess it took her perspective to see how much that supported the notebook writing and how she wanted me to highlight that.

By contrast, Sassparilla had a different coach for her pre-demonstration coaching and felt that although she did not change anything in her lesson after meeting with this coach, she felt that sharing her ideas with another person proved to be valuable. "Nothing changed, I mean from my original plan. But it was good to talk it out with somebody even if nothing changed, to be honest."

Additionally, peer coaches questioned each other during the writing groups by analyzing their peers' writing. When participants coached their peers, specific comments assisted other peer coaches in considering, and at times, revising their writing. Sassparilla reported that when she thought to question a peer about the use of cliché, she first analyzed the situation at hand:

> The beginning part I think where I said, 'you can do so much better, I don't think I would've said that to just anybody. So I think that was part of the comfort level, because I didn't know until she read the entire piece where I felt yes she can do so much better. So I wrote it down not knowing whether I was going to discuss it or not.

Because background experiences had previously been shared among these peers, Sassparilla learned that a previous instructor had compared her peer's writing to that of a tenth grade student. As a peer coach, after hearing the piece and understanding this peer's background, she felt that she could address her concerns regarding the use of opening the writing piece with a cliché:

> Starting off with a cliché would normally have just…if it had been something I would have been reading, I would've cast it off to the side. But because I was trying to do her this service of helping her, then I kept listening, because something so small can be changed and she did change it, and it was so much better.

Similarly, Gene analyzed a peer coach's writing style, when this particular peer talked about feeling safe in composing humorous, light-hearted writing and not wanting to write about more serious topics. As a way of suggesting a different direction in his writing, Gene brought up the point that the content of this peer's pieces had the potential to be used for obtaining deeper stories:

> Peter has these things that on the outside they seem like these trivial, fluff things of, you know hey one time I was in class and I flicked a booger on a girl's knee. And there's many, many layers on that that sometimes you don't see it when you're writing it. Maybe you were just trying to be humorous, but when other people hear it, they remember those experiences of being young. Yeah, it's a booger story, it's a gateway to so many other stories.

Unlike Gene and Sassparilla, I observed that Marie received coaching in the writing group more than she provided it. This could have been because of her status as a novice teacher. Perhaps she felt that her lack of experience did not lend itself to coaching others, or that the observations of the writing group occurred early in the summer institute when she was still getting to know others. I observed Marie's peer coaches from her writing group to be both complimentary and helpful in pointing out different perspectives that showed her that her writing provided connections. They described her writing as taking them back to past times through her use of sights and sounds in depicting the ranch that she visited during summers as a child. Peter, a peer coach from her group made the following comment to Marie, "You have, there's something in there that's universal. That you connected to." The data demonstrates that peer coaches analyzed and questioned each other's writing and writing instruction through the interaction of the writing groups and pre-demonstration coaching, serving to either validate and/or add to peer coaches' writing.

Comparing one's Writing to Other Peers. All of the participants seemed to hold published authors in high esteem. From Cormack McCarthy, to a well-published participant (a fellow summer institute peer coach), the general impression among Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie was that these authors, (commercially published authors), were of high caliber. This took me by surprise, considering that the summer institute surrounds its members with peer coaches who should be viewed as authors, themselves. I observed a noticeable difference between the participants' perceptions of professional authors and peer authors. I observed an example of this difference when Sassparilla commented on a participant who was a published journalist: "I view them [published authors in the summer institute] as experts or true professionals."

By contrast, Gene and Marie described the interactions with their peer coaches during their writing group as validating. Comparing themselves to each other made writing seem more doable and achievable. In our conversations, Gene said,

> I mean you can have authors that you read and you can mess with, with that type of writing but sometimes it's too much for a lot of people. Like how am I ever gonna be like Cormack McCarthy? The guy is a master. But I can be like Marie. You know that's a more doable goal.

Marie corroborated this finding when she talked about appreciating the experience of writing among her peers:

> I mean, you can read authors and each author has their own style, but when it's the person sitting next to you writing and you get to hear it from them, and so, I think that that's kind of amazing and I've never really experienced that.

Therefore, Gene and Marie felt that writing was a reality for them when they were able to compare themselves to each other during writing group interactions.

Feedback

In analyzing the data related to interactions, participants reported that they received feedback through validation and questioning each other regarding their writing and teaching practice. I observed validation through pre-demonstration coaching, writing groups, feedback following demonstration lessons, digital responses to participants, and affirmation cards following the Thursday reading of writing pieces. In the following paragraphs I discuss validation as an interaction and its respective codes along with examples from the interview transcripts.

Validation. All three participants felt that their teaching practice was validated during the feedback that followed their demonstration lessons. Upon completion of demonstration lessons, the whole group was able to respond with comments and questions to the presenter. Although Gene reported that he felt his lesson lacked some key components, he was observably validated for his teaching practice,

> You know, like, when I finished mine, I was like, oh, that thing was heinous. It was horrible. And still, people go 'oh, you did a great job. I never thought of anything like this.' I thought it was terrible. But people got things out of it, I guess, you know they hadn't thought of it before.

Likewise, Sassparilla reported feeling validated in her teaching practice after her demonstration lesson. In her final interview she shared with me that this type of feedback validated the humor that she had always infused in her teaching as a means of engaging elementary students. Peer coaches' comments during her verbal and digital feedback corroborated that her classroom was a fun and engaging place for children. In reflecting upon this feedback Sassparilla responded,

> With children, you have to sometimes try to be funnier or try to incorporate silliness to keep their attention. So now that I know that I can do that, I think there will more of that going on in my classroom.

Clearly, validation was a type of interaction that corroborated these participants' teaching practices.

Interestingly, Marie shared with me that she felt uncomfortable with compliments. In our conversations she told me that she had always struggled with this type of feedback, saying "Cause I think I'm very hard on myself, so people give me compliments, I can't agree with you." She later contradicted herself during the same interview when she shared her reaction to a peer coach who had validated her teaching practice after her demonstration lesson, "Peter's [feedback] was helpful on you know, who doesn't like to be complimented?"

Participants also received other forms of validation following their demonstration lessons; applause and use of affirmation cards. Upon completion of each reading, all participants took a few minutes to jot down words of affirmation for their peer coaches about their writing pieces. At the end of the day, participants placed these affirmation cards into personalized bags. Observing participants as they read their affirmation cards reminded me of the days of elementary school valentine's day parties, anticipation and excitement filling the air.

Gene and Sassparilla reported that these types of feedback were another interaction that allowed for validation and positive feedback. Sassparilla talked about receiving affirmations for her writing as a time when she felt validated as a writer. When I asked Gene to elaborate on applause and why he thought this was an important interaction he responded:

> At the end people clap. What does that signal? It says we accept your story and it's good for us. And so that person goes, 'alright, I'll share.' Joy will share again even though I know she's shy. So she's, 'I'll write something like this again because they [my peers] told me it was ok.'

In contrast, Marie, reportedly uncomfortable with praise, shared with me during the last week of the institute that she had not yet read any of her affirmation cards. By that time, the group had

received three different sets of these affirmations. When I asked her about this, she responded, "I haven't read them yet, and I need to read them, and I will, but I need to be done with the class first." I believe that Marie was uncomfortable with this praise because she felt that at this early stage in her writing, she felt praise for her work was undeserved when she compared herself to other more experienced writers, such as Gene. On more than one occasion she spoke of her admiration for Gene as a writer: "Gene is very good at like his transitions and stuff. You can see it in his writing, his descriptions, so well but then he teaches a higher level, and he's used to that."

These examples illustrate that Gene and Sassparilla appreciated feedback in the form of validation. The feedback from demonstration lessons and Thursday affirmation cards validated both their personal writing and writing instruction.

Establishing and Building Trust

Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all shared that trust was an expectation for peer coaching interactions. When asked how trust was established in order to build relationships that would support peer coaching, they all spoke of how the positive interactions of the institute lead to a sense of trust among peer coaches. They also spoke of their comfort level with their peers as being a foundation from which to build peer-coaching relationships. Additionally, they elaborated on their beliefs that peer coaches at the institute exuded a sense of being non-judgmental when it came to their personal writing, and they also discussed the time they felt it took to establish these relationships. They also discussed their perceptions of hierarchy, as they related to their feelings of trust. In the paragraphs that follow, I present these categories along with examples from participant interviews.

Positive Interactions Lead to Trust. Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all indicated that the positive interactions at the summer institute lead to feelings of trust among their peer coaches. Gene noted that the best parts of his relationships with other participants involved the positive dialogue about teaching. When asked to elaborate on this, he responded:

> Like with talking with other teachers, it was a positive talk that you had with other teachers. It's not teachers grousing about things that make them mad. You know, man, I can't stand those things. And everybody does 'em, but when it's constant…and so I like the positive talk on, 'here's the things, the good about being a teacher.'

In a stimulated recall interview related to her writing group, Sassparilla talked about being able to have time to get to know her peer coaches in the whole group setting before working with them in her writing group. She valued the time spent with the "quality of people" enrolled in the summer institute. Sassparilla explained her sense of trust with her peer coaches:

> We got to spend time not necessarily together before, but you know in the classroom setting and so you kinda got to know people and just this group in general it's like, I don't know, it's really cool being surrounded by everybody who you sort of feel like is either your equal intellectually or your superior. Even from the first one [small group], I did feel safe because of that. Because of the level of let's say individuals that are part of this project.

Similarly, Marie, in describing her perceptions of her peer coaches' roles, elaborated on how the personal connections that participants made with one another evolved into a sense of trust. In her final interview, Marie talked about her increasing feelings of trust:

> In the beginning, they were more of, well no, they still are more of a leadership role, model, a teacher to me. But as time has developed, we were able to make more of a personal connection as well. So on top of that, there have been friendships that have developed, which I think add to the trust, which makes it even more comfortable for me to go to people here now and ask them for help, as opposed to me maybe not being so close to them, I may not have asked them for much help.

Thus, positive interactions, through dialogue, time for getting acquainted, and building friendships allowed Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie to feel a sense of trust among their peer coaches at the summer institute.

Comfort with Familiar Peers. Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all reported a sense of trust among peer coaches when they felt comfortable with one another. All three participants were able to attend the institute with people they knew. They shared with me that they felt that coming to the institute with someone whom they already knew made them feel more comfortable because they already felt a sense of trust in these peer coaches until they could develop other relationships. Gene talked about his interest in the summer institute because of the enrollment of a couple of his colleagues from his doctoral cohort, "There were some students, Cody and Joy, specifically from my cohort, when they said 'we're doing it,' I was like 'sweet, I'm gonna be right there with you." Sassparilla was able to attend with a colleague from her school campus and elaborated on the trust that this provided her: "I think part of what helped is having someone I know come to this project with me. And so you're able to kind of lean together until you find that hey, everybody else is pretty awesome too." Marie talked about the importance of having a relationship with one of the co-directors who had been a former professor during her undergraduate studies:

> I think it also helps that I go back with her. She was one of my first professors in my undergrad and even during that time when I first got to know her, she made it very safe to talk to her about things. And in fact, I did go to her when I had other issues.

These statements reveal that Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie felt that attending the summer institute with someone they trusted was helpful in "breaking the ice" with other peer coaches, leading to a foundation of trust from which to build.

Belief that Peers are Non-Judgmental. Once they were able to establish other relationships, Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie indicated that they considered their peer coaches to be non-judgmental. For all three participants, being able to pose questions and share their writing was possible because they felt that their peer coaches were non-evaluative and trustworthy. In contrasting his beliefs about the ways that his students and his peer coaches at the summer institute worked together during writing groups, Gene said,

> The adults are better at this peer revision thing within this community. Well one, because they trust each other, and they go I can tell you how this actually made me feel and I know you're not gonna make fun of me type thing."

Likewise, Sassparilla reported feeling that her peer coaches were non-judgmental, "I feel safe. I honestly feel like I could tell them anything and there wouldn't be any kind of judgments." The following example highlights the trust she felt with her peer coaches in her writing group. One of her peer coaches asked her to reconsider using the f-word in her piece, and although Sassparilla ultimately decided to leave that word in for emphasis, she had the following to say about this interaction, "Having [previously] shared the personal stuff with them, I felt perfectly safe in taking that comment, I felt the same way, because it wasn't an attack per se on me or my story. It was just 'think about.'" Finally, Marie talked about how she felt that her trust in others had evolved through the course of the institute:

> You know, I'm not embarrassed anymore about a concern I may have about my paper. Usually I would get nervous if someone would look at my paper. And I'm just, hey, would you just look at it? Just tell if it's wrong and fix it, you know? Tell me what to do, yeah, so now it's just, it's so much more just comfortable setting.

These examples illustrate that Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie allowed themselves to be vulnerable in front of their peer coaches and that this happened because they felt that their peer coaches

were open and non-judgmental, providing knowledge and suggestions to move their writing to a higher level.

Establishing Trust Takes Time. According to Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie, trust was something that took time to establish at the summer institute. All three shared that trust was achieved relatively quickly during the four weeks of the institute. Gene reported that for him, humor played a large part in being able to trust people quickly:

> It takes about a week for everybody to kinda go, alright, I think I know what I can do here with these people. And then it shifts and changes a little bit more. Maybe that person you thought was a little bit "stuffy" ends up not being stuffy, and they're just, you know, someone that's just a riot. And the more that you share laughter and silliness and the body functions of people, the more you're able to do. You know? Like man, everybody's just like me. They just look different.

Similarly, Sassparilla reported that it took her just a few days to feel comfortable with her peer coaches, crediting this to the selection process of participants, stating:

> I mean, whatever the process is for selecting people to be part of the project; I think it definitely had something to do with it. The people who are serious about it are here, so, yeah, definitely not having to, this is gonna sound weird, but not having to weed through 'ok, no, not this person,' or 'not this person,' but, 'yes, this person is great,' not having to do that saves a lot of time in feeling that level of comfort.

Important to note, Sassparilla talked about her perceptions in developing new relationships with other group members, "There's something just about some people and it might just be personalities or character or something that draws me more to them."

Additionally, Marie spoke of the contrast in the time it took to establish trust at the summer institute versus her own campus:

> You share so many things maybe you would probably take a whole year to share with some teachers in the classroom, but this place has allowed us to, I guess, discuss more personal or background or childhood, or all those

> connections that we've been able to make, and then kinda built relationships really fast, as opposed to waiting all year and just talking in the lunchroom, you know, everyday just a little bit, so….

These examples demonstrate that for Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie, trust was established quickly at the summer institute. Because of the short time (four weeks) of the summer institute, establishing this trust and rapport was necessary in order to conduct the peer coaching that they carried out during various groups and activities.

Director and Co-Directors as Peers. It is important to note that of the three participants, both Gene and Marie talked about the director and co-director's participation in the activities of the summer institute. They both felt that this helped with feelings of inferiority and increased their level of trust with the personnel that were in charge of the program. Gene talked about his impressions of the director and how, by the simple act of being able to call her by her first name, rather than her title, participants could take the lead in activities and not become complacent under the direction of the person in charge:

> And why does Rita ask to be called Rita during this? Because if she's the expert on the roster, now it's not somebody you can talk with. Now it's somebody, tell me what to do, maestro. And for now she's just another person sitting at the chair.

Marie shared her feelings about trust when she talked about her perceptions of both director and co-directors and their participation in the activities of the institute. She shared her feelings about peer coaching sessions. When I asked her about her feelings of trust and why she felt this way, she responded:

> The professors are participating in it, as if they're folks. I know that they're supposed to be, kind of, leaders in it, but there hasn't been a point, for example, that the co-director hasn't participated in the activities that we're doing, hasn't went along and done the writing assignments with us. And it's the fact that were all doing essentially almost the same things.

I know that she'll lead it more, but even the director is doing the activities.

These statements demonstrate that Gene and Marie felt strongly about the fact that the director and co-director took part in all of the activities of the summer institute. They established a sense of trust for these participants, thus allowing them to view peer coaching sessions positively.

During our discussions, Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie described their perceptions of hierarchy. All three participants indicated that they perceived the summer institute to be an environment in which hierarchy did not exist. Interestingly, through other interviews and observations, it became clear that all three participants perceived a sense of hierarchy among the diversity of its members. In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss the codes that are pertinent to each of these categories, along with excepts from participant interviews.

All Members are on the same Level. Closely related to establishing and building trust were Gene's, Sassparilla's, and Marie's statements regarding hierarchy. All three participants claimed that they perceived no level of hierarchy within the summer institute. They reported feeling this way because of certain actions and observations of the management of the summer institute. This led to feelings of trust, in that they felt that everyone was there for the same reasons – to work on improving their instruction in writing in order to better serve their students. In this respect, I observed Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie to be comfortable with their peers, trusting them to be both honest and critical in assisting them in their improvements as writers and writing teachers.

Gene spoke at length about his feelings of what peer coaching meant to him and how it related to a sense of equality among the coaches: "It's not master and student. It's about you and me, we're in this together, instead of, I'm only gonna listen to the teacher, nobody else." In speaking about the nature of his relationships with his peer coaches at the institute, Gene said:

> I try to be collegial and I'd never want to set it up as, I don't want to...some people want to structure a hierarchy everywhere they go, a competition, and it's not a competition, it's everybody altogether - the musketeers.

Additionally, Gene spoke about his feelings related to his pre-demonstration coaching in which a co-director worked with him to prepare his lesson for the group:

> Pretty much anybody in the course I feel pretty comfortable with because they're all here more or less with the same goals in mind and being a co-director or not, I don't look at it as "I better be really formal with them" We're all here to work and learn with each other, and if you're setting up these barriers between one another, you can't have a frank and open conversation about what you have to do, and that's kinda the comfort level of it. I had done some stuff with her [co-director] earlier in my writing group, so it's I already knew hey, she's really easy to speak to.

Sassparilla elaborated on her expectations of peer coaching relationships and how they should involve a level of equality. She believed that every peer coach should give just as much as they were taking from each coaching situation, stating, "it's a two-way street. Like anything in life, you can't just take or you can't just give one hundred percent of the time." Similar to Gene's example, when I asked her how she felt about her peers at the institute and the interactions related to coaching one another, she explained that everybody was there to support each other, regardless of experience or title:

> It's almost, like, if somebody feels uneasy about any aspect, particularly technology, everybody else is there for them. And it doesn't matter, sort of, how long they've been teaching, or if they're Dr. whomever, it almost makes the environment feel like, I mean, in a way, I guess, it's good that we're all equals and we all have something to share, and we're all here for each other for a reason.

Sassparilla also elaborated on an interaction between her and a co-director during her pre-demonstration lesson coaching. She explained that the qualities that this person exhibited - her patience and willingness to just listen - put her at ease from the beginning of the coaching

session. She elaborated on her feelings of equality and trust with this person when she said, "I just sort of went into it, like, I'm sharing what I'm doing with someone, just like I would with a friend or a colleague, and whatever feedback I get will be helpful."

Marie, a novice teacher, initially shared her thoughts on what peer coaching meant to her, stating "the word 'peer' itself is someone that I would say is 'equal' to you in some type of knowledge or experience, but that they're able to connect with you and share it." She explained that even though she knew some of her peer coaches had more experience, she felt that this diversity among group members was something that everyone had to offer each other. She stated, "Even though I know that some of these people have more experience, than me, with certain things, we all bring our own experiences in the classroom and so I feel legitimately like I'm with peers." She also talked about one of the co-directors who had been a former professor of hers during her undergraduate studies. She shared with me that the dynamic had changed between her and this person once they were at the institute:

> It's interesting because [Polly] was my professor for a course that I took in undergrad, and so it's weird to see how the dynamic has changed from her being my professor, to someone that I felt unequal with, to coming to the [summer institute] and being her peer, and we're now, everyone's on an equal playing field.

Based on these examples, Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie perceived the summer institute to be an environment in which no hierarchy existed, leading to a feeling of trust.

Contradictions. Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all reported that they perceived the summer institute to be an environment in which they considered everyone to be equal. They all provided examples that showed their comfort level with the director and/or co-director, as well as other group members. However, there were some comments that they made during our conversations that contradicted their perceptions of equality.

In his demonstration lesson feedback, Gene noted that he perceived a difference between the comments he received from directors and co-directors as opposed to those he received from the rest of his peer coaches. When I asked him to explain the differences between the comments of these two groups, Gene stated:

> The difference mostly is, maybe something that they're looking at specifically, but, no, it's, I mean, I saw it all kind of the same. A lot of times, the directors might have a more pointed point that they're making, than what maybe one of the students is saying. The students a lot of times tend to be more general in what they're making in their comments, and the directors, a little bit more. Sometimes they might be more general, but most of the time it's a pretty, 'here's one specific thing that I saw' type deal.

In observing the video of Gene's feedback after his demonstration lesson, I noticed that, in addition to the co-directors, other peer coaches did provide Gene with specific feedback. In responding to Gene's lesson on cover songs as a means to addressing a prompt in multiple ways, Marie suggested providing students with the lyrics, rather than just listening to the recording, "Well I think also that somewhere showing that lyrics from song, so that they see it as poetry. So they make that connection that rap and music that they hear on the radio is what this is. It's poetry." Other participants suggested specific ways of integrating Gene's lessons into other content areas, "I suppose for math if you're doing cover songs, you could find versions in different time signatures. And see how does that change the feeling if it's a waltz versus 4/4 versus 6/8. And then bring fractions in." Additionally, in talking about the applicability of this middle school lesson to the elementary classroom, one of the group members suggested:

> I think the only place where elementary school aged children would have a little bit of a hard time would be coming up with their own prompt. This would require a lot of modeling. Giving them the choice of maybe 3 or 4 different prompts and say okay you're going to write about whichever one fits, whatever the song made you think of. That would be a way to just tweak it a little bit for, for the little ones.

Compared to the comments of the director and co-directors, peer coaches did offer specific feedback, rather than the general validation that Gene perceived to be characteristic of peer coaches.

Marie also revealed additional perceptions in relation to hierarchy. She had originally reported feeling that everyone at the summer institute was equal and that she felt that it was a "level playing field." Although she described feeling a different dynamic with a co-director now that they were both at the summer institute, she did state, "I still don't know how to take it sometimes. I can't call [the director] Rita, I just can't!"

Additionally, during the feedback following her demonstration lesson, Marie noted that she felt nervous about receiving feedback from Joy, a teacher who was known for her knowledge of science content. In a follow-up interview, Marie spoke about Joy, "I was nervous because she is the scientist of the group. I was nervous that she would find something. And I say I was nervous because I was presenting to peers or people who are in different content areas." Similarly, when she received positive feedback from Cory, a math specialist who wanted one of the math vocabulary posters that Marie had created for her lesson, she spoke about feeling pleased:

> I was excited that someone who, cause my own math specialist is, I held her up higher than me you know? She's a specialist. So that was exciting to see that another math specialist from my district took interest in using my posters.

Statements such as these demonstrate that although Gene and Marie felt that all group members were equal, there were a variety of factors ranging from feedback to specific knowledge that challenged these ideal feelings of equality.

Of the three participants, I observed Sassparilla as having the most contradictions in her perceptions of the summer institute as a non-hierarchical environment. Sassparilla noted from the beginning that she perceived the group members of the summer institute as being of "high quality." When asked what "high quality" meant for her, she elaborated:

> I don't often get to mingle with a lot of people who have doctorates or who have published books, or who are considered master teachers or who have thirty, forty years of experience. I find that to be so valuable.

Even though Sassparilla had previously shared her perceptions that the institute was non-hierarchical in nature, the above statement illustrates her underlying perception that those peer coaches with advanced degrees, professional publications, and a large amount of teaching experience stood out in comparison to other group members.

Also related to her underlying perception of hierarchy were her responses about the difference in receiving feedback from a co-director and a teacher fellow. She illustrated her perception of these differences in the following example:

> On the cards that we give each other on Thursdays, the ones that weigh a little bit more are, for example, I mean obviously more people I know more like you, Polly, uh Rita, but when I see Deena (published author) writing something to me that's kind of incredible, oh my gosh! Because sometimes it really feels like what am I doing here? There's all these people that are such leaders, they're a big deal.

In providing feedback, I noticed that she also perceived a hierarchy among the variety of group members. In the following example, Sassparilla described her difficulty in providing feedback to one of the published authors in the group:

> I feel like, well, what do they have to learn from me? I mean, they've been like Deena in education for forty years. She's been a principal. She's written books. What could I possibly say to Diana to make it better? But you never know…I mean hopefully, it's mutual, and I'm not just taking.

Regarding professional status, Sassparilla's response in a morning journal explored the question of group members' purposes in attending the institute. In her response, Sassparilla used an example of an activity that group members had participated in the day before. The activity had partners interview each other as a way of building connections. After getting to know each other, each partner completed a write up of the interview as a way of introducing their partner to the group. Sassparilla's partner (a published author and journalist) appreciated her write up so much that the following day she brought Sassparilla an autographed copy of her most recent book. In her journal response Sassparilla stated, "My purpose here? Well, it's already been accomplished or met or completed. I moved someone with my writing. I reached a legit author enough to have her near tears." That she distinguished this particular peer as "legit" suggests that she placed peers such as this published professional at a different level from the other authors that were among her peers.

These examples demonstrate that Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie perceived a certain level of hierarchy within the institute. Gene and Marie had slight contradictions, while Sassparilla's responses demonstrated a definite perception of the accomplishments of different group members. Although all participants talked about the trust and safety that they felt at the institute, these deeper perceptions of hierarchy are certainly a factor to consider in the establishment of trust within the institute.

Perception of Peer Coaching as Potentially Impacting Instruction

Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all felt that their peers offered a different perspective on teaching writing. All three participants discussed the value of being able to observe each other conduct their demonstration lessons. In relation to this finding was the participants' value of the kindergarten through university connections made during the feedback portion of the

demonstration lesson. Each participant reported that these connections were of value to their respective teaching levels. These demonstration lessons encouraged participants to possibly use these teaching practices in their future instruction.

Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all reported that they felt the peer coaching they received at the summer institute would impact their future writing instruction. When I asked each of them what they felt would most influence their writing instruction in the coming school year, they elaborated on the demonstration lessons that they were able to observe as being valuable to their writing instruction. Additionally, Marie reported that she would continue a peer-coaching model for writing in her classroom. In the paragraphs that follow, I present these categories along with examples from participant interviews.

Demonstration Lessons. Gene spoke of the demonstration lessons as "flavoring future instruction." He shared that he didn't consider himself to be particularly creative in planning lessons, and so being able to observe his peer coaches as they modeled their best writing instruction helped him to take what he learned and change it to accommodate his own students:

> I have all these different people that have seen all these different things, and all these different experiences, that I have to put into my own thoughts. When I'm creating [a lesson], I'm like 'oh here's where I can incorporate a little thing of what Cory did, or here's some of how Pete may think about this.

Similarly, Sassparilla reported that she would take the information she learned from the demonstration lessons and incorporate some of these practices into her writing instruction. Additionally, she valued the access that she would have to the Google site where peer coaches posted their demonstrations:

> Having access to that Google site and all of the demos is going to be good because I can't remember everything but I know that I liked some things, and I liked some demos that were just almost perfect you know for my classroom, so I'm definitely going to revisit that, and it's going to be

> something new that I do in my room. So hopefully, it will reflect on the children and the things that they can achieve. So yeah, those demonstrations of how other people in the field, other professionals in the field handle their writing instruction, and so many different areas I think will definitely impact my teaching, thus my students and because we're seeing kind of the best of everyone. Then I don't see why it wouldn't impact their success.

Marie shared that she saw the demonstration lessons as helping her obtain different ideas on where to incorporate writing in her classroom. She spoke about utilizing what she learned from her peer coaches in different content areas:

> Having different ideas of where to put it in the classroom makes it so much more you know, fun, and less of a daunting task of trying to figure out how could I do it in math. They want us to do it in math, and I don't know…And now I see how I could do it in math. And I know science lends itself very well, but like even a social studies lesson. And I loved Michelle's demo, and just all these fun ideas that would make writing more fun instead of it having to be a cumbersome task.

Clearly, these examples illustrate that Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie valued the demonstration lessons as potentially impacting their future writing instruction.

Developing a Peer Coaching Model

Marie talked about previously using peer coaching in her classroom. She spoke at length about how she had incorporated peer coaching with her second grade students during writing, encouraging dialogue and reading their stories to each other as part of the editing process. She also talked about her struggle with not having enough time to share writing in her classroom. After attending the summer institute, she shared her feelings about peer coaching:

> I think of my writer's workshop, and as I'm here sitting, constantly I think of, I regret not having my students coach each other as much. But I got more into it at the end of the year. I wish I would've started the year off running like that.

Additionally, she shared her desire for students to share their stories in the same way that her peer coaches had shared their stories during the summer institute:

> I wish I could have more of an author's chair. I had it but it was just not enough, and I think that I need to set a specific, like every Thursday when we [peer coaches] get up there to share, you know I'm thinking, well, maybe every Friday in my classroom.

Statements like these show that while attending the summer institute, Marie reflected on her own practice as a facilitator of peer coaching in her classroom. Although she did not mention ways that she would improve on peer coaching with her students, her statements demonstrate her perceived need to incorporate the sharing that was prevalent during the summer institute.

Marie also reported feeling more passion for writing and she felt that this, along with a better understanding of how to incorporate writing in the content areas, would improve her students' achievement:

> We're gonna take what we've learned as educators and teachers, take it to our own students. I think that I'm gonna show much more of a love for writing than I did before. And I think it's gonna affect my students in a positive light. So maybe my students' achievement in writing hopefully and I think other teachers will take a different perspective. And I have so much more plans to write so much more. Like in math. And I think that if they're writing in different subject areas, it's gonna improve.

Although Marie was the only participant who elaborated on improving the peer coaching in her classroom, through the summer institute, she reflected on areas that she needed to improve her writing instruction.

What was Learned from Peer Coaches Regarding Writing Instruction?

All participants reported learning about writing and writing instruction from their peer coaches at the summer institute. Participants talked about learning about writing instruction through peer coaches' demonstration lessons, meaningful feedback about their personal writing, and the encouragement to take risks in their personal writing.

Demonstration Lessons: Peer coaches presented demonstration lessons twice daily at the summer institute. These lessons involved the integration of writing in different content areas and Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie reported learning about writing instruction by observing their peer coaches model their best classroom practices.

In a follow-up interview, Gene talked about taking portions of the lessons he observed and making it his own, based on his students' needs. Although he specifically mentioned incorporating Pete's demonstration lesson on the use of overcoming obstacles through storytelling, he elaborated more on his concern for the socio-emotional aspect of interacting with students. For example, Gene reported that through the demonstration lessons more than anything he tended to observe the temperament of other peer coaches:

> As you sit there and watch other people you go, you know, that's an interesting way to think about that as you're dealing with a student. You know, I was patient before. Good grief, you have to be patient when you work with seventh graders. I think as I kind of watched other peoples' temperaments, and how they described what they did, I was like you know, I can bleed a little bit of that into my own personality. If it was successful, I kept it and if it wasn't, it wasn't.

Sassparilla talked about the demonstration lessons as a time when she would pick out pieces of what she felt she needed for the students in her classroom. Observing these demonstration lessons helped her to reflect and refine her teaching practice:

> With one of our colleagues' demos she did something with science journals, and she incorporated color. She always gave them time to really reflect and write things in their own words rather than just copying down definitions and glueing different things in them. I gave them a lot more freedom, it is their journal after all. I used especially some of the technology pieces I saw, I really like doing that type of thing into these kids' lives.

The demonstration lessons were something that Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie learned from and reflected upon, taking what they needed for their own work with children.

Feedback

Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all felt that feedback was a welcome and necessary part of what they learned as writers. Although Gene felt comfortable in receiving constructive criticism from peer coaches, he felt that, as a coach, he learned about the need to be constructive in a positive way. As he reflected on his coaching style, he explained his need for continual reinforcement as a peer coach:

> You know like I've said before, I need somebody to tell me what I've done wrong, but at the same time, I have to be reminded frequently that I have to do more than say 'well this right here, you don't want to do that.' I do have to be reminded to talk about the good things too. I mean, I do, but for me it's purposeful. I have to go, 'Remember to tell them what they did good.' So it's, it's a continued reinforcement and seeing how other people have done it.

Sassparilla shared that the various forms of feedback helped her not only in her classroom, but also in her new position as an instructional coach for her school district. In a follow-up interview, she elaborated on the different types of feedback that she learned from the summer institute and how she implemented these practices with her own students because she had learned them from her work with her peer coaches in the writing group:

> Feedback while we were writing, when we were in our writing groups. I think they call it two stars and a question, or something like that. But I had never actually done it in my classroom. And so a child would share their writing and I would ask the class, 'ok let's give them some positive things that you like about their writing and what are some questions we still have about their writing?' And as much as it helped me, it helped the kids, hearing what their friends had to say, and I think it almost gave it more value than me just saying 'well what do you mean when…?'

It is important to note that following the summer institute, Sassparilla taught through the month of January. At that time, she left her classroom to become an instructional specialist for her school district. This new position requires her to assist

campuses in planning instruction for writing, coaching a variety of teachers. She elaborated on her duties and how she felt that the feedback she provided at the summer institute had prepared her for this new position, making it less daunting for her as an instructional leader:

> It's funny that the summer institute happened when it did because I feel… I think the most important thing, now that I think about it is the fact that I was able to do this with adults over the summer. Being able to do this for an entire month with adults, people who I kinda thought were like way better than me and then still hearing that my feedback was appreciated and implemented many times. That now, I feel that it doesn't make it as scary to go into a team of teachers that I don't know. And still go in there with that attitude of we're in this together, but I'm here to help.

Through feedback, Marie learned from her peer coaches that she comes across as being self-critical, apologizing too much. Although she initially spoke of this self-criticism jokingly, her reflection took on a more serious tone when she agreed with her peer coaches. This self-realization provided an important connection to some of her former students:

> They pointed that out and I think that's actually quite important because then I sat down and realized sometimes I am too critical and I do do good work and I don't see it. And that makes me think of those students who are perfectionists in my class you know?

Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all reported that feedback was important to their learning in different ways. For Gene and Sassparilla, the feedback they experienced from their peer coaches helped them improve their coaching skills, while Marie felt that the feedback that she received helped provide her with a connection to the children that she feels have the same perfectionist personality that she often portrays.

Taking Risks

Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie all reported that their peer coaches at the summer institute taught them the importance of taking risks in their writing. As was noted in a previous section, all three participants appreciated what this meant for their personal writing. Interestingly, Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie were encouraged to take risks in their writing in very different ways.

Gene was encouraged indirectly by observing his peers read and discuss their writing. Through these observations, Gene took it upon himself to incorporate particular writing styles of his peer coaches that he felt were applicable to his own writing, using these styles as a form of mentor text.

Sassparilla was encouraged directly by her peer coaches to pursue different genres of writing. Before attending the summer institute, she had always written light, humorous stories. In talking with her peer coaches from her writing group, she was strongly encouraged to pursue different genres and styles of writing, which she presented to the whole group. This new direction was met with praise and validation, further encouraging her to explore different areas of writing.

Marie, was also encouraged directly by her peer coaches within her writing group. As she reported in an earlier section, validation was important to her as a budding writer. Having only written for academic purposes, personal writing was something that she felt uncomfortable doing. As her peer coaches continually encouraged her, I observed her to be more at ease in reading her writing, as well as responding and expanding on it.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented findings from semi-structured interviews along with digital responses from Gene, Sassparilla, and Marie. I identified and described broad themes that cut across all three case studies. The broad themes reveal that participants considered both formal

and informal interactions as lending themselves to peer coaching. Additionally, the themes reveal how peers help each other learn and how an establishment of trust enhances that learning. Finally, these themes reveal what participants felt they learned most about writing instruction from their peer coaches at the summer institute. In the following chapter, I discuss the findings of this study in relation to current research, contributions of this study to this research, and implications relevant to peer coaching and teacher education.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of peer coaching as it related to interactions, trust, and teacher perception of its impact on their learning and writing instruction. Participants in this study included three in-service teachers enrolled in a National Writing Project (NWP) summer institute. The data set for this study included semi-structured interviews, stimulated recall interviews, and digital responses to include reflections related to prompts and observations of peers' demonstration lessons in writing instruction. To identify the themes, categories, and codes within these three data sources, this study employed the constant comparative method.

My analysis revealed that participants perceived both formal and informal interactions as important components of the summer institute. Within these interactions, peer coaches assisted each other's learning in a variety of ways, such as validating each other's instructional practices and personal writing. Peer coaches also questioned each other in order to promote a deeper level of thinking. Additionally, peer coaches encouraged risk-taking in writing, and reported feeling that writing was more doable when they compared their writing to their peer coaches at the summer institute. My analysis also indicated that although establishing trust among their peer coaches took time, participants felt a sense of security because of positive interactions, comfort with peers whom they were already familiar with, peer coaches who were non-judgmental, and the perception that directors and co-directors structured the summer institute as non-hierarchical. Finally, my analysis indicated that participants perceived peer coaching as potentially impacting their writing instruction.

Discussion

The discussion section of this chapter is organized around the ways peer coaching at this

summer institute aligns with existing research. I also present extensions to the current research and contributions of these findings to the existing body of peer coaching literature.

Peer Coaching Interactions

Teachers learn by participating in mostly formal interactions such as training, meetings, conferences, etc. (Van Eekelen, Boshuizen, and Vermunt, 2005). Summer institutes affiliated with the National Writing Project include formal interactions as part of their course of study (Kaplan, 2008). Participants of this NWP summer institute engaged in formal interactions similar to those across the nation that included journaling, presenting demonstration lessons, responding to peers in a digital format, writing about experiences, and reading and researching what educators and practicing classroom professionals say regarding the teaching of writing. These types of interactions were purposefully structured for its participants to share their knowledge and experiences about the teaching of writing. Participants in this study took part in these formal activities that required them to share their success stories and frustrations about teaching writing. This finding adds to the current literature by confirming that the interactions at this summer institute were examples of the self-reflective practice that is central to the NWP summer institute (Kaplan, 2008).

Informal Interactions

The research on peer coaching points to a need for networking and trust-building events because these types of informal interactions can encourage bonds prior to the implementation of formal peer coaching (Cox, 2012). The participants in this study reported that they were indeed able to bond through these types of interactions; however, they also were able to discuss writing and the teaching of writing through an informal structure. This aligns with research stating that informal interactions such as asking for a colleague's opinion or explanation and having

conversations with a colleague over coffee are ways that teachers learn from one another (Van Eekelen, Boshuizen, & Vermunt, 2005).

Previous literature also suggests that for trust to develop, it must have a beginning, but that this beginning is subject to the individual's background experiences with trust (Jeffries, 2002). Similarly, Fells (1993) identified the "incremental, evolutionary nature of trust" (p. 34). He claimed that trust "can only be established in the context of the interactions between the parties in situations which call for trust," (p. 34), suggesting that trust evolves over time and is based on cumulative experience. In accordance with this statement, Cox (2012), found that non-cognitive, values-based attachment was related to a foundation of trust between peer coaches.

My findings show that implementing informal interactions throughout a peer-coaching event assisted the establishment of trust among peer coaches at the summer institute. Through my observations and conversations with my participants, I believe this happened because of the contrast between the intensity of the formal interactions and the relaxation that the informal interactions provided. Most peer coaches at the summer institute were seemingly social in nature. They appeared to look forward to the down times and the opportunity to socialize with other peer coaches. Based on my data, I observed participants enjoying these times, talking and joking with each other, becoming more familiar with one another, thus laying a foundation for the continuity of trust. This additional trust helped them to expose their vulnerability through the range of formal interactions that were a large part of the summer institute. As a result, making themselves vulnerable helped participants to "let each other in," in order to learn from each other during formal interactions such as presenting their demonstration lessons, sharing seemingly personal stories, and allowing peer coaches to analyze and criticize both their personal writing and their writing practice in order to elevate their literacy instruction.

This finding uniquely contributes to the literature by demonstrating that through the daily implementation of these informal interactions throughout the summer institute, directors and co-directors were able to facilitate an establishment of trust that was necessary for peer coaches to work with each other. Based on my data, these informal interactions led to more than just preliminary bonding that laid a foundation for formal peer coaching. Through these informal interactions, participants were able to continually bond with each other, thus paving the way to continually learn from each other.

Based on the findings of this study, school and program directors should be aware of the importance of incorporating daily informal interactions into their peer coaching models. Although formal interactions need to be scheduled in order to implement specific curriculum, it is the informal interactions that can help ease the transition for peer coaching within the spaces of these formal interactions. Without this downtime, peers may not have the time to get to know each other in order to efficiently work with one another during more formal interactions.

Additionally, the time that teachers spend getting to know each other during these types of interactions can lay a foundation for trust and relationships. Program leaders of professional development should be aware of the power that these types of interactions have for relationship building, establishing rapport, and trust. It is important to note that consistently building these interactions into professional development is necessary and vital to a peer coaching model's success. The good news is that this should be fairly easy to implement. Informal interactions take place quite naturally during the school day and especially during extended types of professional development. Breaks and lunch should be looked at as opportunities for teachers to develop relationships with each other. This particular summer institute also incorporated an extended lunch on the last day of each week. These "potluck Thursdays" were an opportunity

for participants to come together for fun, camaraderie, and relaxation. Additionally, participants at this summer institute reported that they talked informally throughout the day during breaks, breakfast, lunch, and daily "Starbucks runs." Participants stressed the importance of these interactions as a time of not only getting to know each other, but also continuing to build on the foundation of relationships that they had already begun to establish. Future studies could look at the integration of informal and formal interactions and how participants negotiate space to build relationships and how this rapport building leads to learning throughout formal interactions. Through the implementation of informal interactions, school leaders and program directors can create an environment of trust and safety in which participants can continue to build this rapport throughout peer coaching events.

Finally, the implication of this finding for peer coaching in classrooms is that students of all ages need to have built-in time for informal interactions. This can be much easier said that done when the full curriculum of a school day is taken into account; however, it is through these types of interactions that bonds can be formed, allowing strangers to come together and become familiar with each other, to allow for a social construction of knowledge.

Comfort in Familiarity

In relation to comfort, peer coaches need to have a choice of whom they want to be involved with in a coaching relationship (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012; Arnau et al., 2004). Additionally, the routine of working with colleagues provides an initial comfort to promote future participation in a peer-coaching program (Arnau et al., 2004).

My findings demonstrate that participants felt an initial sense of comfort in attending the institute with colleagues they knew. This relationship provided a sense of safety until further relationships could be established, thus providing for future coaching interactions involving the

variety of peer coaches at the summer institute. It is important to note that the peer coaching at the summer institute differs from other studies that analyze peer-coaching programs over longer periods of time. Additionally, coaching interactions at the summer institute involved not only one peer coach, but also, a variety of peer coaches that worked with each other through different types of formal and informal interactions such as writing groups, pre-demonstration lesson coaching, and anthology groups. According to my data, these prior relationships gave participants a heightened sense of comfort at the beginning of the summer institute.

This finding adds to current literature in that it sheds light on the importance for peer coaches to attend extended staff developments with a colleague they are already familiar and comfortable with. This initial comfort allowed participants in this study to lean on each other until becoming familiar with other peer coaches they might be working with in the future.

The findings of this study point to a need to consider the influence of peers who are already familiar with each other. Based on this finding, school leaders and program directors could encourage teachers interested in programs that utilize peer coaching to recruit colleagues to attend with them as a way of establishing trust quickly at programs such as a summer institute.

Establishing Trust Quickly

A number of peer coaching studies have demonstrated that establishing trust in peer coaching relationships takes time (Zwart et al., 2009a; Arnau et al., 2004). These studies point to the need to plan for time for these relationships in order to enhance the trust needed for successful peer coaching relationships. Interestingly, participants of this study reported that although trust took time to establish, it was built relatively quickly during the summer institute.

Based on my data, I believe that this trust was built quickly because of the sustained time that participants were in attendance at the summer institute. All members of the institute were

there for seven hours a day, four days a week. During the regular school day, teachers are not together consistently for this amount of time. Many teachers, if not team teaching with a colleague, may see each other at the beginning and end of the day, possibly during lunch, and possibly for planning sessions during their forty-five minute conference period. It would seem that relationship building at a regular school campus would take much more time. Because the summer institute is structured for intense instruction in a condensed amount of time, I believe that my participants were able to establish trust quickly.

Additionally, participants perceived other peer coaches as being there for the same reasons. Having the same goals and purposes for attending the summer institute and making these purposes known to each other, helped participants to establish trust quickly.

These unique findings add to the current research in that they demonstrate that although peer coaching takes time, it has the potential to develop at a faster rate when participants are involved in a program that is time intensive such as a summer institute or educational retreat. Additionally, trust was built quickly because participants perceived that others were there for the same reasons. Participants saw other peer coaches as having this commonality, adding to their trust in a relatively short amount of time.

Because trust was established quickly at the summer institute, this brings to light the importance of school leaders to provide extended time for their teachers to work together in a peer-coaching model. This extension, if structured according to the needs and interests of teachers, could potentially build trust more effectively than the time that teachers are allowed to work with one another during a regularly scheduled school day.

Perception of Unequal Status

According to Showers (1985), "By placing the major responsibility for coaching with

peers, status and power differentials are minimized" (p. 47). The NWP summer institute is structured to minimize the power differentials that may exist, and in alignment with the NWP's goal of teachers teaching teachers, participants initially reported a perception of equality among peer coaches at the institute. This initial finding corroborates the NWP's belief that teachers learn best when they are taught by practicing teachers (Huber, 2001; Cox, 1999). Participants reported feeling this way because of the efforts of the director and co-directors to create an environment that minimized status as much as was possible.

Through later interviews and observations, it became apparent that participants contradicted themselves in relation to these perceptions of equality. The data revealed that participants did not perceive all peer coaches as equals. Interviews and observations revealed participant perceptions that some peer coaches were held at a higher level compared to other peer coaches with less education and experience. Even though I found my participants to have these perceptions in common, I observed their ability to coach a variety of their peers regardless of their perceived status.

This unique finding adds to the current literature on peer coaching by demonstrating that although participants perceived different levels of status among their peer coaches, they were still able to coach each other through the structured activities of the summer institute. This was evident when participants conducted their demonstration lessons, when they worked together in their writing groups, and when they provided feedback to each other in oral and digital format. Through these activities, participants' specific expertise was considered, and at times, accepted, thus validating their knowledge about writing and writing instruction.

School leaders and program directors should acknowledge that hierarchy exists, and in setting up a learning community where open discussion of feelings and perceptions about status

is addressed, they, along with teachers, can create a space for these necessary conversations. Additionally, structuring a peer coaching model and/or program for different activities and groupings of peer coaches may further establish trust in that group members can become more familiar and trusting of each other. This finding demonstrates the necessity to shift the focus from documenting what behaviors teachers display to understanding why these actions happen. Finally, it is imperative that school leaders and program directors continually review the core beliefs of an organization so that everyone involved understands its expectations.

Writing Groups – Comparing Writing to Others Makes Writing a Possibility

Previous literature suggests that students can improve their own writing by working with peers without the supervision of a teacher (Elbow, 1973). Students should share their writing in a safe environment where peers provide feedback to make writing better. One of the core principles of the NWP is the belief that teachers need to be taught to write rather than expected to write in order to be able to teach their students to write (National Writing Project, 2006). Additionally, writing activities are important in addressing issues of trust, status, and identity (Whitney, 2008).

The findings of this study are in alignment with current research stating that a major outcome of the summer institute is increased confidence for teachers and the self-assurance to trust (Whitney, 2008). My findings demonstrate that participants worked to improve their writing within the writing groups of the summer institute. The participants felt safe in this environment and felt validated as writers, while at the same time, giving themselves permission to use their peers' writing styles as mentor texts for their own. Based on my data, however, I found that when participants compared their writing to that of a peer, the task of writing became more of a doable task, one that was less daunting when completed as a solitary act. This finding contributes

to the current literature by confirming that as teachers continue to work on the craft of their writing within a writing group, they are able to learn, influenced by the writing group and the feedback they receive from these peers (Whitney, 2008).

This finding holds important implications for peer coaching in the area of writing. The implementation of the writing group as a peer coaching interaction has the potential to address different areas of peer coaching. It allows for peers to establish and build trust. Through the sharing of writing, peer coaches can become familiar with one another, setting a foundation for future coaching. As peers work in writing groups, risk-taking may be encouraged. Additionally, when peer coaches work together in a writing group they have the opportunity to hone their skills in feedback, offering both validation and constructive criticism to help move their peers' writing forward. Finally, peers can learn from each other's writing processes, style, and genres, in order to push their own writing in different directions. As the NWP states, one of its core principles is that "teachers of writing must also write" (National Writing Project 2006). Implementing writing groups, therefore, can serve multiple purposes for peer coaching and professional development. Investing in the development of this type of interaction can assist relationship building among peer coaches, as well as helping to improve upon teacher practice and writing skill. Future research should analyze the process of writing groups in order to better understand its many purposes in potentially transforming teachers' writing and instruction.

A Call for a Revised Model of Peer Coaching

Revising a model of peer coaching at the NWP summer institute should be a consideration because of the way that the institute is structured. In designing this model, it is important to understand that certain models that work in the regular school setting may not work for an extended professional development such as a NWP summer institute. In a school setting,

peer coaching usually involves pairs of teachers that work together for a certain period of time. At the summer institute, teachers could potentially have many different peer coaches, as was evidenced by the data in this study. A variety of peer coaches at the summer institute are found in both the daily formal and informal interactions. Different peer coaches can be found in the table groups, pre-demonstration lesson coaching sessions, writing groups, book study groups, anthology groups, and informal interactions. It is therefore important to provide time for participants to become familiar with each other during each of these different groups. Once participants become more familiar and bond with the different people within each group, they could choose peers to coach them within each of these groups, based on their specific purpose. As a variation, some participants may utilize the coaching of all members in each of these groups.

Future research should study the coaching interactions within each of these groups, noting participants' gravitating toward certain people in a group or seeking the guidance of more than one group member, to allow for several peer coaches within the group. Understanding this preference on the part of the individual should be one consideration in revising a peer-coaching model within this type of professional development.

Additionally, the duration of most NWP summer institutes is normally four to five weeks, about seven hours per day. This is very different from a teacher's regular school day. During a normal school day, teachers may interact with each other before school, after school, at grade level meetings, and lunch. If peer coaching is implemented, teachers may get together for additional time such as modeling lessons for each other and providing feedback. Teachers at the summer institute are together for seven hours a day, leading to a potential for faster bonding with each other. Future studies could compare the bonding between teachers at the summer institute

and how quickly and easily teachers establish familiarity and trust with each other. From the information gathered between analyzing time for trust and gravitating toward specific individuals or the group, a model for peer coaching interactions at the summer institute and/or extended types of professional development could be created, and, eventually, refined.

Finally, in calling attention to and stressing the importance of peer coaching in a professional development such as a NWP summer institute, participants would be more able to realize its importance to their learning and writing instruction. The focal and non-focal participants in this study most likely realized the added component of peer coaching within the summer institute because, as a researcher, I explored and questioned their thoughts and interpretations of these types of interactions. It would seem that, as teachers work and help each other throughout the course of this professional development, it would be automatic for them to think of peer coaching interactions as a natural part of their learning at the institute. This may not always be the case, so, in acknowledging the power that these interactions hold for teacher development, summer institutes could add to John Gray's original vision of "teachers helping teachers."

Conclusion

Studies incorporating a peer-coaching model as a means of professional development in which the objective is substantial improvement in knowledge, skill, and transfer of training into the classroom have been shown to be promising (Joyce and Showers 2002). Although studies have identified the advantages of peer coaching to professional development, few studies have addressed the connection between peer coaching and NWP summer institutes. This study sought to extend the research on the assistance that peer coaches provided to one another as they learned to negotiate spaces as writers and teachers of writing. The findings from this study can be useful

for the professional development of both in-service and pre-service teachers, as well as for directors and co-directors of NWP summer institutes, and other types of professional development.

The findings of this study also suggest a need to incorporate daily informal interactions into professional development in the beginning and throughout its course. Regarding trust, the findings of this study also point to a need to consider the influence of peers who are already familiar with each other. Based on this finding, school leaders and program directors could encourage applicants to recruit colleagues to attend with them as a way of establishing trust quickly.

The findings of this study suggest a need for leadership personnel to understand the power of the writing group as a formal interaction that serves a number of important purposes. The writing groups in this study allowed peer coaches to encourage risk-taking, provide feedback in the form of validation and questioning to promote a higher level of thinking, and allowed peers to compare their writing with each other in order to perceive writing as a task that was doable. Additionally, participants were able to look to each other for insight. Understanding these advantages can establish the writing group as paramount and purposeful for both composing and teaching writing, goals that are closely connected to the NWP's core beliefs.

Additionally, the findings of this study also point to the need for participants to see each peer coach at the summer institute as authors and authorities in the teaching of writing, a central belief of the NWP. Without this understanding, peer-coaching relationships with several peer coaches may not be developed, thus removing the advantage of being exposed to different perspectives, writing processes, writing styles, and a variety of teacher practices in writing instruction.

Future research in the area of peer coaching could analyze the impact and influence that the summer institute course had on its teachers as they continue their work with students. Additionally, a follow-up study could look into the individual classroom practices of teacher consultants in relation to student achievement. Future research could also analyze how teacher consultants create a trusting environment in their own classrooms and whether this relates to the trust that was built at the institute that they previously attended. Finally, future research should continue to address the interactions within each type of formal activity at summer institutes in order to better understand and address the needs of its peer coaches. Through this analysis, a revised model of peer coaching at the summer institute would assist program leaders in developing and enhancing the interactions between participants.

The National Writing Project has been in existence since 1973. Forty-two years later, as I reflected on John Gray's vision of "teachers teaching teachers," I observed this philosophy through a variety of peer coaching interactions within this particular summer institute. Although different from models found in other organizations and environments, I observed peer coaching at different times and within different groups, both formal and informal. This research has identified peer coaching as being both valuable and vital to participating teachers' professional development as it relates to their writing instruction and personal writing. In addition to developing the continuity of ideas previously suggested, my future research endeavors will include further analysis of peer coaching at the NWP summer institute in order to develop a model that is both appropriate and conducive to its teachers' professional development.

APPENDIX A

Research Questions and Data Matrix

	A: What types of peer coaching interactions are perceived as helpful to teachers at the NWP summer institute, and how does trust factor into these interactions?		B: What regard do teachers hold toward peer coaching as it relates to their instruction?	
	A1. How do the types of interactions among the summer institute participants lend themselves to peer coaching relationships?	A2. How is trust established within these relationships?	B1. How do teachers perceive peer coaching as impacting their writing instruction?	B2. What did teachers say they learned from their peer coaches regarding their writing instruction?
Writing Group Interactions*	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe
Demo Lesson Feedback*	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe
Interviews**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WIKI Entries***			Yes	Yes
Pre-Demo Coaching*	Yes	Yes		

*Videotaped and coded
**Audiotaped and transcribed
***Content coded

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

Introductory script:

Hello and thank you for taking the time to meet with me to talk about your experiences with peer coaching. I am conducting research as part of my doctoral studies in the peer coaching that occurs within the summer institute. You have been selected as a focal participant due to your unique qualities as both a teacher and learner.

This afternoon I am going to ask you questions about peer coaching. Please feel free to share your point of view. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your opinions.

Please be assured that our conversation is confidential and no names or any personally identifiable information will be included in my findings. Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty.

I would like to record this session for accuracy. I will secure the recordings and no one will have access to them. Do I have your permission to record the session?

As an interviewee, you have the right to review and edit your interview transcript before the final version is secured.

If you have no questions, we will begin.

1) Please begin by describing your teaching experience.

a. What is your current role?
b. Were you involved in any peer coaching prior to your experiences here? How did you feel about this experience(s)?
c. What is your experience as a writer?
d. How do you perceive yourself as a writer?
e. Have you ever served as a peer coach? Have you ever been served by a peer coach?
f. Why are you interested in the summer institute?
g. Why are you pursuing this degree?

2) Please describe your perception of **the peer coach's role** in his/her work with you as fully and completely as you can. Anything that you consider relevant or interesting is important to include.

3) Now, please describe your perception of **your role** as a peer coach as completely as you can. Anything that you consider relevant or interesting is important to include.

3) I would like to know more about your current coaching experiences. How would you describe a typical coaching session?

4) What feelings do you associate with coaching sessions?

5) How would you describe the nature of your relationship/interactions with your peer coach?

6) What do you consider the best aspects of the current coaching relationship?

a. If you could alter the coaching relationship, what, if anything, would you change?

7) When others ask you what peer coaching is like, how will you typically respond?
a. What concrete comparison could you make to help people understand the experience of coaching and being coached?

8) Do you perceive peer coaching as impacting future student achievement in writing? If so, in what ways?

9) What have you learned from your peer coach?

9) What else do you think is important to share about peer coaching relationships?

10) What question(s) did I not ask that I should have?

APPENDIX C

Questions for Stimulated Recall Interviews

What did you notice about…?

What are your thoughts?

Do you feel that particular comment help you? How did it help you? If not, why?

Did you feel comfortable being coached? Coaching?

What made you feel that way?

What did you learn?

What more would you have liked to receive feedback on?

APPENDIX D

Excerpt From Coded Interview

I: And so the coaching that you've gotten from your peers in here, do you see that as effecting student achievement in writing?

P: I think so, b/c now we're gonna take what we've learned as educators and teachers, take it to our own students. I think that I'm gonna show much more of a love for writing than I did before. And I think it's gonna affect *my* students in a positive light. So maybe *my* students' achievement, in writing hopefully and I think other teachers will take a different perspective. And I have so much more plans to write so much more. Like in math. And I think that if they're writing in different subject areas it's gonna improve.

I: What have you learned most from your peers in here?

P: That apparently I apologize too much. Nah! (laughing)

I: You do do that! Yeah.

P: I do. My mom says I'm my own worst enemy. I am. I'm so critical of myself. No, they pointed that out and I think that's actually quite important b/c then I sat down and realized sometimes I am too critical and I do do good work and I don't see it. And that makes me think of those students who are perfectionists in my class you know? I've learned that I am ok at what I do. (laughs) You know, it was very nerve-wracking in the beginning to teach to other educators b/c you wanna be good. I've learned that I can do other things. And they've helped me and they've inspired me. I've actually gained confidence I think in my own teaching abilities.

I: And now you said you're going to teach your kids that love of writing.

P: Yeah

I: Did you not have that before?

P: I don't think so. I think it was more of me being scared of it. And how to…b/c we all have to do it. We just don't know sometimes how to.

I: What do you feel changed those feelings about…

P: Being able to see that everyone struggles with writing or writes in their own way, you know as adults. And having different ideas of where to put it in the classroom, makes it so much more you know, fun and less of a daunting task of trying to figure out how could I do it in math. they want us to do it in math, and I don't know … And now I see how I could do it in math. And I know science lends itself very well, but like even a social studies

APPENDIX E

Excerpt of Codes

Different perspectives on writing

Usefulness of peer's knowledge

Suggestions for improving writing

Encourage Risk-Taking

Comparing writing to peers

Peers are analytical

Encouragement of writing

Encouragement of teaching

Grade-Level connections

Listening first

Non-judgmental

Trust leads to constructive criticism

Trust takes time

Positive interactions lead to trust

Comfort with peers

Collaboration among peers

Validation of work

Informal interactions lead to peer coaching

Formal interactions lead to peer coaching

Hierarchy

Equality with others

APPENDIX F

Excerpt of Categories and Codes

Category: How Peers Help

Codes:

Peers encourage risk-taking

Peers question writing

Questioning promotes deeper thinking

Peers are analytical

Peers offer a different perspective on teaching writing

Peers offer suggestions to improve writing

exposure to different writing processes

comparing self to peers makes writing doable

Category: Trust

Codes:

Trust takes time

Trust leads to community

Affirmations lead to trust

Lack of hierarchy leads to trust

Familiarity with coach

Comfort with peers

Peers are nonjudgmental

Bonding with peers through writing

APPENDIX G

Excerpt of Emerging Themes

Theme: Establishing and Building Trust

Category: Positive Interactions Lead to Trust

Participants talked about positive interactions at the summer institute and how they led to feelings of trust. Positive talk about teaching and children helped participants establish a a sense of trust. Additionally, participants talked about sharing stories in the writing group as a positive experience that helped them to develop a connection with each other.

Category: Belief that Peers are Nonjudgmental

Participants felt that their peer coaches were there to help them in their writing groups. They described feeling safe within these groups to ask questions about their writing, with a common understanding that they would support each other and offer honesty in their discussion about each other's writing pieces.

Category: Director and Co-Director as Peers

Participants shared their appreciation that the director and co-directors participated in the majority of activities at the summer institute. This involvement helped participants to feel a sense of trust among all members of the institute.

APPENDIX H
Approval From Institutional Review Board

Approval Without Expiration		
Document No.:	**Date:**	**Page:**
HRP-521	**13 June 2014**	**Page 210 of 240**

Sylvia Minton
Faculty Sponsor: Misty Sailors, Ph.D.
Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching
Sylviaminton8@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Minton:

On June 13, 2014 the IRB approved:

Type of review:	**Request for Modification**
Title:	**The Nature of Peer Coaching Within the San Antonio Writing Project's Summer Institute**
Principal investigator:	**Sylvia Minton**
Faculty Sponsor:	**Misty Sailors, Ph.D.**
IRB number:	**14-177E**
IND or IND number, if any:	**N/A**
HHS grant title and ID, if any:	**N/A**
Documents reviewed:	**Modification Application, Summary of changes, Revised Initial Application, Revised Protocol, Study file**

Copies of any approved consent documents, consent scripts, or assent documents are attached.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements in "INVESTIGATOR GUIDANCE: Investigator Obligations (HRP-800)."

Sincerely,

IRB Office

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VITA

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