Influences of Writing Project Involvement on the Professional Development of Teachers

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INFLUENCES OF WRITING PROJECT INVOLVEMENT ON THE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Influences of Writing Project Involvement on the Professional Development of Teachers

Writing is a powerful learning tool that allows students to connect critical thinking across the curriculum. Good writing skills are necessary for students to succeed in higher education and on the job. Teachers, however, are avoiding teaching writing, in part because it has not been included until recently in high stakes testing, and in part because they may not understand how to teach writing and how to grade it. Central West Virginia Writing Project, a site of the National Writing Project, conducts an annual Invitational Summer Institute for teachers of grades K-Adult to teach teachers to teach writing across the curriculum. This 20-month qualitative study examined ways in which the 2007 Summer Institute influenced the professional development of 11 teachers who represented grades K-12 in ten schools within two county school districts. The study addressed five questions: participants’ perception of writing project professional development, influences of the professional development program on teacher classroom practice, the extent to which participants perceived the Summer Institute program as fitting parameters of quality as defined by Backus, factors that might be useful to other designers of professional development, and the perceived enthusiasm that participants showed toward writing project professional development. It included emerging themes of technology use in the classroom, influences of school administrators, and teacher growth as peer leaders. The study found that writing project professional development was effective for some but not all participants. It inferred that the program fit parameters of quality, and that certain essentials of design and implementation may be useful for other providers of teacher in-service. It found six elements that appeared to influence the positive feelings reported by participating teachers for this professional development even if they did not transfer desired content to their classrooms. It also demonstrated the appropriateness of a collaborative, qualitative study such as this for researching questions of teacher practice.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this doctoral dissertation to my husband, Daniel Wallace Holmes. For seven years, he selflessly accepted responsibilities for our personal lives to enable me to pursue this degree. This meant that he took over all household chores: shopping, cooking, cleaning, caring for pets (that I wanted), and even chopping wood and picking blueberries. He made breakfast for me every morning, cooked meals when friends and relatives came to visit, and washed dishes after they left. He made early-morning coffee for every Summer Institute and for Young Writers’ judging days. After suffering a head-on car crash some years ago, I am not fond of driving, so he also took on this chore, serving as my driver for most occasions. During this time, Dan spent countless hours listening to me and supporting me in whatever it was that I chose to do. I continue to be amazed and thankful that he is my life’s partner.
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I acknowledge and give thanks and appreciation to the following people:

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Dr. Luke Eric Lassiter, my committee member, who agreed to step out of his field to guide me, with Dr. Rudy Pauley’s blessings, on my journey of collaborative ethnography.

Dr. Bizunesh Wubie, my minor chair, who directed me through three independent studies in early childhood education and offered support and advice that were significant to my doctoral degree.

Dr. Fred Pauley, my committee member, who read every dissertation draft and offered continual encouragement.

Dr. Jo Lambert Blackwood, my committee member, colleague from the University of Charleston, and friend, who inspired me to begin the doctoral journey. She continued to take time from her busy schedule and full life to provide invaluable advice as she read and corrected multiple drafts of this dissertation.

Dr. Sue Hollandsworth, my friend and colleague, who was my role model for accomplishments that are possible with hard work and perseverance.

Patricia Myers, my classmate and colleague, who stepped up as my cheerleader when I faltered.

For faculty and staff members of Marshall University Graduate College who supported and helped me through the years in ways too many to count.
To see that your work that works with your students was working with other students, and to see that it reached not just your classroom but other classrooms, that was a pretty moving moment. At that moment, I said, “This has been worth it.” The time, the effort… That you can have an impact far greater that just your own classroom is monumental.

There are so many things about the writing project that it’s hard to encapsulate. Not just what it does for my students or what it does in my classroom, because there are so many secondary effects. To tie it up in one little bow isn’t possible because you can say there are this many teachers impacted and this many contact hours, but that doesn’t even begin to scratch the surface of the true impact of the writing project, especially when it’s managed well.

If you get people to do these things, even if you have to use peer-pressure on them, or enticements with technology, the fact is, if you get them to agree to do these things, you’re making a huge difference in this school system as well as the future because our students are going to be better prepared, and they’re going to go off to college, and they’re going to know a little more than their peers, and they’re going to be prepared to do more. It’s massive. The sprawling impact is hard to comprehend.

(George on peer teaching after Summer Institute)
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CHAPTER I: OVERVIEW

Through this study, I sought to examine Central West Virginia Writing Project’s (CWVWP) influence on the professional development of eleven teachers who sought to improve their expertise as teachers of writing by joining the Summer Institute. Beginning with a night away from home, teacher-participants spent 116 hours engaged in professional development activities. Next, they attended an overnight training session, Workshop on Workshops; then they took part in various activities as writing project members and peer teachers.

Ideas for this dissertation began with the research of Backus (2005) on accepted definitions of quality teacher professional development and how in-service is perceived by West Virginia teachers. Backus stated, “While there are various definitions of staff development, there is one commonality found within all. Staff development, however designed, is created for the improvement of teacher performance and the enhancement of teacher growth to ultimately improve student achievement” (p. 44). Her study defined characteristics of quality teacher in-service as described by ten professional education entities. It attracted my attention because of its conclusions: When asked if the professional development offered to them was effective, most teachers surveyed had no opinion. That is, when asked to rank effectiveness of in-service on a scale of one to five, they chose three.

Teacher comments about their in-service experiences were also notable for their negativity. Backus noted that a negative attitude toward teacher professional development can inhibit its transfer to classrooms for the benefit of students. This finding was echoed
by the work of others on factors that affect motivation to learn (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Kraiger, 2002). Yet, what I heard from writing project teacher-participants contrasted surprisingly with Backus’ findings of teacher perceptions. What I found was a surprising enthusiasm for this particular method of professional development. The enthusiasm had also been expressed by participants during the 2006 Summer Institute. Here is an unsolicited e-mail from a teacher that she titled, *Testimony.*

“I am actually excited for school to begin. I am making notes on when to use certain activities. The lessons are marvelous, so adaptable that any grade level, any subject would benefit. I am very thankful to be attending” (T. G., personal communication, June 19, 2006).

Because it was unusual for teachers to voice such enthusiasm for educational in-service, I was intrigued by their attitudes. With deeper investigation, I found other researchers who noted the positive impact of writing project professional development on teachers (Lieberman & Wood, 2003; Whitney, 2006). Thus, I began a search as to why teachers say the writing project model of in-service is meaningful and what, if any, understandings might add to an ongoing conversation about effective planning and implementation of professional development for teachers.

Five questions guided the direction of this research:

1) How is Central West Virginia Writing Project professional development perceived by teacher-participants?
2) Does Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development design influence teachers’ classroom practice as evidenced by classroom observation and documented by student work?

3) To what extent does Central West Virginia Writing Project’s program fit parameters of quality professional development design and implementation as defined by Backus (2005) and as perceived by teacher-participants?

4) What factors, if any in Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development design may be useful for other designers of teacher professional development?

5) In light of what we know about professional development in general, why do writing project participants in particular seem enthusiastic about the writing project, and how might we account for and explore the deeper experiential dimensions of their apparent enthusiasm?

In this chapter, I described Summer Institute as the gateway to Central West Virginia Writing Project and events leading up to this study, including the problem statement and justification of the study. Chapter 2 was an extensive review of literature of the historical and ongoing necessity for teachers to teach writing in K-12 classrooms and the need to teach teachers to teach writing through effective professional development. It included the design of Central West Virginia Writing Project, a site of the National Writing Project, and how this organization addressed teacher professional development. Following the philosophy and practice of grounded theory (Dick, 2005; Glaser, 1992), I referred to additional literature as it became relevant throughout the study. Chapter 3
described the methods used for this study. Beginning with Chapter 4, I addressed the five research questions that guided the study, plus three themes that emerged during the research. At least two teacher-participants illustrated each question in depth. Emerging themes included issues of technology use, influences of administration on teachers’ implementation of skills, and peer teaching and growth as leaders.

Following the advice of Lassiter (2005), participants were my collaborators for 20 months as they shared their thoughts about teaching and professional development. They welcomed me into their classrooms, gave up their time to read and comment on what I had written, took part in Saturday focus groups, became peer teachers and mentors, and helped guide the path of this research with their contributions. When faced with a choice of paraphrasing a participant’s words or including an appropriate quotation, I have asked each person to speak for him or herself. I also collected or described classroom artifacts and lesson plans when they were available.

Central West Virginia Writing Project was a site of the National Writing Project, a nonprofit professional development community of K-Adult teachers who learned to teach writing to students and colleagues by first participating in Summer Institute. Thereafter, they were welcomed into all elements of the National Writing Project. Although as a teacher I have a long-standing investment in teacher professional development, my interest became a personal quest for understanding when I accepted the position of director of Central West Virginia Writing Project in January 2006. I was soon faced with designing my first Summer Institute to take place in June of that year. It was helpful that I had the input of an experienced and dedicated co-director plus a Summer
Institute model based on National Writing Project requirements and designed a few years earlier by the former director. However, there appeared to be a lack of research on teacher outcomes of Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development program after Summer Institute ended each year. The more I delved into the desirability and methodology of designing sustainable professional development for teaching writing, the more I was impressed by two things: that Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute, following the model of the National Writing Project, was an unusually long and intense in-service experience for teachers and that the experience appeared to engender an enthusiastic awareness among participants of the importance of teaching writing across the curriculum.

Five questions came to fore along these lines. The first four questions were pragmatic, focusing on whether elements of this model adhered to an accepted definition of excellence and whether the CWVWP experience could be useful to other providers of professional development services for teachers. The fifth question was interpretive and experiential, investigating a sense of what it meant to teachers to be participants in writing project professional development. The purpose of the questions was to elaborate meaning.

These were my interpretive questions: What influenced eleven teachers to be not just willing to practice new ideas for teaching writing, but to be excited about doing so? What influenced them to give up hours of personal time to attend training weekends and after-school planning meetings and to do so without remuneration? Why were they willing to teach evening classes for benefit of fellow-teachers? Were they influenced by
the small amount of pay they received or by something else? Why did elements of commitment and excitement appear to be present in their personal professional development? Did writing project teachers influence other teachers to teach writing across the curriculum? What effect, if any, did the writing project experience have on their classroom teaching? Did K-12 writing project teachers, those who completed Summer Institute and became peer teachers, transfer the desired behaviors, that is, more and better teaching of writing, to their classrooms?

I have encountered negative opinions from teachers about professional development in general, beginning with Backus (2005) and emanating from stories told by teachers themselves. Yet many people who attended Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute professional development became passionately enthusiastic about teaching writing. This was documented repeatedly in writing project research literature. Thus, a pragmatic question emerged during this research: Could writing project methods be useful for others who wished to design effective teacher professional development? Elements of this question emerged over time during the research project.

Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute was the gateway to writing project membership as a 17-day, 116-hour intensive professional development experience in teaching K-12 teachers across the curriculum to teach writing. While thinking about ways to increase the sustainability of this experience for teacher-participants, I read two influential works. The first was an analysis by Backus (2005) in which she identified key elements of quality professional development agreed upon by nine educational entities: No Child Left Behind Legislation, the National Staff
Development Council, the U.S. Department of Education’s Professional Development Team, the National Education Association, the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, the North Central Regional Education Laboratory, the Appalachian Educational Laboratory, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the West Virginia Department of Education. From these, Backus summarized six standards of teacher professional development, stating that “each of the above entities agrees that quality staff development should be a targeted, collaborative experience that is ongoing, time-friendly and job-imbedded, and includes elements of reflection and evaluation” (p. 7). I realized that the National Writing Project program of professional development and that of the Central West Virginia Writing Project, had not, to my knowledge, been evaluated by these standards. Considered by many educators to be a successful model of professional development to teach teachers to teach writing, I wondered how its success related to the six design elements identified by Backus’s study.

The second work that influenced my thinking was a text edited by Kraiger (2002) that delved into an additional element that must be considered for professional development design and delivery to be successful -- the audience for whom the learning activity is intended. I planned to look at this audience in depth through a cohort of eleven teachers that I refer to as participants. Together, they completed Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute. They accepted responsibilities of peer teaching, and they continued their jobs as K-12 classroom teachers. I was particularly interested in the effects of this experience on their classroom teaching. Throughout this study, I examined this particular form of professional development delivery for teaching writing that has
been called unique (Lieberman & Wood, 2003) in hopes of adding to the conversation about elements of professional development for teachers that shape effective and sustained classroom teaching of writing across the curriculum.

The study began with a total of thirteen teachers representing ten schools within two West Virginia county school systems; they gathered at rustic Cedar Lakes Conference Center on a weekend in May 2007 to spend two days together. Although most of them were strangers to one another, they arrived bravely to participate in the unknown, the Kickoff Campout of the Central West Virginia Writing Project, that would mark their initiation into writing project philosophy and culture. Ultimately, one dropped out because of chronic illness. A second teacher completed Summer Institute, took part as a peer teacher, and attended several continuity events but was unable to participate in this study for personal reasons. The remaining eleven continued on a professional development journey to become writing project teachers who were involved in peer teaching and continued writing project activities. They agreed to be the focus of this collaborative study, and they chose to be identified by pseudonyms. Thus, their names and the names of their schools and counties have been changed to provide anonymity.

**Problem Statement**

I became aware of problems that eventually guided me to this study when I read Melinda Backus’s 2005 dissertation that included accepted characteristics of excellent teacher professional development. The first problem was that, to my knowledge, there were no studies of the effectiveness of the professional development program provided by Central West Virginia Writing Project. In addition, the National Writing Project model
that guided the programming of Central West Virginia Writing Project had not, to my knowledge, been examined in terms of Backus’s study. The second problem was the negative and self-defeating attitude that many teachers expressed toward professional development programs in general. This attitude impacted teachers’ willingness to learn and to implement new techniques and programs. While people agreed that teachers needed formal professional development in teaching writing, Backus found overwhelmingly negative teacher attitudes swirling around most of the in-service events even though school leaders paid for professional materials, contracted with professional consultants, and released teachers from teaching duties to attend during normal school hours. Backus also found that a majority of West Virginia teachers included in her survey attended the minimum number of 26 in-service hours per year, just enough to fulfill state requirements.

On the other hand, although Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute involved 116 hours and 17 days of intense teacher professional development, teacher-participants seemed to emerge revitalized and eager to implement new techniques in their classrooms. Not only had Central West Virginia Writing Project not undergone a formal study of effectiveness, but also no one had paused to consider the reasons behind the evident enthusiasm of participants for adopting and implementing classroom change and how that enthusiasm might or might not offer suggestions for other designers of teacher professional development. Also, no one had visited the classrooms of Central West Virginia Writing Project teachers to document self-reported classroom change.
Focusing on the classroom was vital since the goal of the writing project was to boost writing accomplishments of K-12 students.

**Justification for the study**

Learning to write well is an essential skill for students to learn across the curriculum, and yet teaching of that skill is neglected in schools (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2006). As a published author, I learned to write professionally by planning, writing, and revising, and as a teacher, I expected my students to do the same. Like many teachers, I was guilty of assuming that students who could read could also write. My ability to write did not mean that I was able to teach writing to others. Through my own experience with Central West Virginia Writing Project in 2004, I learned that writing is a process that we must teach to students.

This study was grounded in a theoretical perspective that viewed learning as a mental and physical activity occurring within a socio-cultural context; it viewed learning to write as the right of every student. The study took root in the social learning theories of Vygotsky (1978) who suggested that individuals’ developmental levels were determined through problem solving in collaboration with more capable peers. A person’s developmental level can be delineated into two parts: the actual level of development and the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky’s studies suggested that learning occurred through social interactions that included assistance of others, demonstrations, and leading questions. The basic tenets of writing project professional development were that teacher-participants learned through social interaction with other members of the group who served as models and mentors for their learning in Summer Institute, in workshops and
other in-service activities that they helped plan and implement as teachers-teaching-teachers and through continued activities with other writing project teachers. Teacher-participants were encouraged to transfer specific writing methodologies that they had researched and practiced into peer teaching and into their classrooms.

In keeping with the socio-cultural theories of Vygotsky, Rogoff (1991) acknowledged that the individual and the social environment build integrally on each other, specifically, that learning took place through activities that promoted the efforts of individuals as well as the efforts of social partners. She stated that cognitive development occurred when individuals took an active role in learning with social partners who provided opportunities for them to observe and participate in desired learning activities. This concurred with Vygotsky’s theory of a zone of proximal development in which the individual reached a point in independent learning where guidance from a social partner enabled the person to develop further.

This study began with an investigation of ways in which Central West Virginia Writing Project, a site of the National Writing Project, adhered to accepted definitions of effective professional development delivery. Yet, for it to have meaning, the total effect of the experience on the teacher-participant must be considered as well. The writing project practiced a model of professional development that goes beyond the norm. As a multifaceted, education reform network whose goal was to teach writing in more and better ways, it was unique among professional development offerings for it infused professional development with personal interests, relationships, friendships, and a sense of safety and trust that writers must feel in order to reveal themselves to others through
writing (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). Participants often described their experiences in Summer Institute as transformative and life-changing (Lieberman & Wood, 2003; Whitney, 2006). Their continued participation as writing project teachers allowed sites to form long-term professional development partnerships with surrounding counties and schools for the purpose of creating communities for teaching writing.

I examined the Central West Virginia Writing Project as a provider of professional development programs and also as a community of learners who supported, challenged, and guided each other as they increasingly participated in socio-cultural activities (Staikidis, 2006). A review of literature indicated that professional development design and delivery were not usually considered from socially-collaborative contexts that fostered motivation to learn, but rather as top-down, one-size-fits-all endeavors (Backus, 2005; Durr, 2007). This qualitative study permitted me to delve more deeply into participants’ perceptions of Central West Virginia Writing Project’s program design.

According to a meta-analysis by Barrick and Mount (1991), it is well-known that motivation affects people’s willingness to improve or change their workplace behaviors. While formally planned and presented in-service is the accepted method of increasing teacher knowledge with the expected outcome of enhanced student learning, many teachers express negative feelings about professional development’s usefulness and may not be motivated to transfer new techniques and skills to their classrooms. Because the National Writing Project is a non-profit, government-supported organization that is noted for increasing the teaching of writing in the nation’s schools, one might assume that the program somehow also increased teacher motivation to learn. Yet few studies have
attempted to delineate its multi-layered program in an effort to understand the successes of National Writing Project professional development programs and how they impact classroom teaching (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). Through this qualitative study, I explored socio-cultural and organizational aspects that may affect participants’ motivation to learn. I utilized thick description to search for motives, meanings, and contexts of actions by visiting participants’ classrooms, examining student work, and interviewing participants individually and in focus groups (Glesne, 1999).
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Central West Virginia Writing Project involvement on the professional development of twelve teachers who formed a community of learners to improve their expertise as teachers of writing through the Summer Institute experience, peer teaching, and taking part in other aspects of the writing project. The following review of literature supported the importance of the study and demonstrated a need for the dissertation.

The Importance of Teaching Writing in Schools

In an effort to focus national attention on the importance of teaching and learning writing, the College Board established the National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges (NCW) in September 2002. The decision to create the commission grew in part from plans to include a writing assessment as part of the Stanford Achievement Test, but also it came from a growing concern among educators and business leaders that the quality of writing in the United States was not what it should be (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2006). The National Commission on Writing asserted that writing is an essential skill for everyone (2003). To illustrate this point, the Commission offered numerous examples emphasizing that students integrated content knowledge through writing (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2005). Simultaneously, Humphreys (2005), reported on the need for today’s students to integrate learning:
After years of compartmentalizing knowledge, leaders across the educational spectrum are renewing efforts to connect fragmented learning. From the workplace to scientific discovery to medicine to world and national affairs – multilayered, unscripted problems routinely require an integrative approach. (p. 30).

Humphreys pointed out that leaders in education and business were calling for integrative learning and capacities for students and workers. Schneider (2002b) discussed how writing that is integrated across students’ entire field of school experience prevents the impression of fragmentation that often accompanies courses in unrelated disciplines. She emphasized that it is important for students to connect coursework across disciplines into an integrated whole that has meaning to the real world beyond the classroom, and that writing provides a valuable tool to link learning among disciplines. She believed that writing across the curriculum provided an intentional connectedness among courses and between divergent disciplines (Schneider, 2002b). Schneider’s essential premise was that good writing is important, that it should not be confined to language arts and English classes but should be taught throughout every discipline (Schneider, 2002a).

Writing across the curriculum is such an effective tool for integrating learning that it is often described as writing to learn rather than learning to write. Kurfiss (1985) indicated that good writing increases student understanding since it helps students synthesize, analyze, and apply course content. There are numerous creative and innovative practices incorporated as part of writing across the curriculum, including reflective journaling, writing critiques of literature research and films, creating poetry,
and collaborative newspaper and book writing (Kraft & Treschuk, 2003). Planning, writing, reviewing, and rewriting were considered essential tools of effective writing. Through writing across the curriculum, students gained diverse and widespread writing experiences. They were taught to practice techniques of good writing in all courses, using the language of scientists in biology courses, for example, and the language of psychologists in psychology courses.

**Writing as the Neglected “R” in Schoolrooms**

The National Commission on Writing referred to writing as the neglected R in K-12 and college classrooms (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2003). Writing well, essential for interpreting and integrating divergent knowledge, is a skill that is not easy to teach or to learn. In fact, Graham and Perin (2007) reported that seventy percent of American students in grades 4-12 were low-achieving writers. In 2004, the National Commission on Writing conducted a survey on the importance of writing skills among corporations that are members of Business Roundtable. Survey results of resource directors in 64 corporations indicated that writing was a ticket to professional opportunity while lack of writing skills was a disaster in the business world. Resource directors stated that the ability to write well is a threshold skill essential both for initial employment and for promotion of salaried workers (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2004). Sawchuk (2008) reported that the ability to write well is essential to success at work and in college, even though the myth persisted that boys do not have to write very much once they leave school. College Board President Gaston Caperton talked about how important writing is
in daily life (Caperton, 2006). He believed so strongly in good writing skills that he was highly instrumental in adding the writing component to the Stanford Achievement Test (Baum, 2003). Since many teachers are test-driven in their curriculum emphasis, this addition highlighted the importance of including writing skills in cross-curricular instruction. Caperton insisted that writing was not optional; it was essential. As such, it is an integral part of the SAT, AP, and PSAT programs (College Board, 2005). “Writing must be kept on the front burner,” Caperton said. “Better learning and teaching must be supported—not just by funds for replication but by dissemination of strategies that work” (Caperton, 2006, preface).

Literature indicated that while it is important for teachers to teach writing across the curriculum in all grades to all students, many teachers were not doing so and did not understand how to do so (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2003). Sawchuk (2008) added that educators may tend to give writing assignments that did not adequately engage boys’ interests. This might have inadvertently contributed to a writing gender gap reported by National Assessment of Educational Progress data that showed boys with writing scores below those of girls. Despite consensus from business and education communities on the importance of writing well, it was commonly recognized among educators and business leaders that a majority of students were entering college and the workplace with limited writing skills (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2003; National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2004; National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2005).
Williams (1997-1998) verified that even gifted students entered residential schools with little experience in writing. A study conducted by Cynthia B. Schmeiser, American College Testing vice president for research and development, found that many aspiring college students were unprepared to tackle the complex reading and writing tasks they would encounter in college (Manzo, 2006). A supplemental analysis was conducted by American College Testing. “The report gives us data and information that confirms what many of us intuitively knew or believed,” said Ilene Berman, program director for education for the National Governors Association, “that strong performance in literacy is critical to strong academic performance, both in high school and postsecondary education” (Manzo, 2006, pp. 15-16).

Yet, the National Commission on Writing referred to writing as the neglected R, adding that throughout school and college years, both teaching and practice of writing were increasingly short-changed (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2003; National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2006). Since its inception, the commission has recommended that writing be assigned across the curriculum and that the amount of time students spend writing be doubled (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2003). The commission supports the goal of teaching writing through professional development activities designed to help teachers understand how to teach good writing and how to develop as writers themselves (National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges, 2005).
Need for Professional Development in Teaching Writing across the Curriculum

The literature was replete with studies of the effectiveness of education in-service in which teachers were offered professional growth activities that were directly related to individual needs and school environments (Backus, 2005.) These activities were commonly called teacher in-service and teacher professional development. Kubitskey and Fishman (2006) stated, “With the increased emphasis on shifting instructional strategies to a more inquiry/constructivist approach, teachers need formal professional development to both buy-in to the changes as well as implement them” (p. 1).

Seeking to further define quality and impact of teacher professional development, Backus (2005) based a survey of P-12 teachers on their perceptions of staff development. Backus wrote:

Investing in the professional growth of teachers is a valuable tool in school improvement. The most effective way to improve student achievement and advance school success is to increase the quality of teaching occurring in the school through quality professional growth activities … that carry the participant through a journey of lifelong learning. (p. 2)

In a study of educational entities, Backus (2005) defined quality professional development as being targeted, collaborative, ongoing, time-friendly and job-imbedded, reflective, and evaluated. The purpose of professional development was to keep teachers abreast of new theories, developments, and programs in education. Teachers were expected to transfer their new knowledge to classroom practice to benefit their students. Kubitskey and Fishman (2006) added that successful professional development focused
on participants’ reactions, learning, use of new knowledge and skills, and organizational support, all of which result in increased student learning.

Despite the need for effective and sustainable teacher development programs, Backus (2005) found evidence that much professional development was not adopted by its intended audience, the teacher. Professional development for teachers was described as stagnant, a mismatch between what teachers are learning and how they are expected to teach students in their classrooms, meaningless for competent teachers, top-down models of packaged prescriptions from outside consultants, one-size-fits-all, imposed rather than owned, and bureaucratic (Backus, 2005). Durr (2007) stated that it was widely understood that top-down approaches to professional development failed to produce meaningful change in the attitudes and practices of classroom teachers.

It was not my aim to imply that all teacher professional development experiences in the United States fail to consider motivators such as personal relationships and collaboration and fail to consider how these variables inform curricula. However, I found through interviewing teachers and through literature review that much of current professional development design continued to miss the relational and collaborative experiences that I sought to describe in this dissertation.

Factors Affecting Teacher Willingness to Learn

A number of factors that affected teacher willingness to accept new ideas and transfer them to classrooms have been identified in educational and organizational psychology (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Colquitt et al., 2000; Kraiger, 2002; Manchin, 2002; Noe & Colquitt, 2002; Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 2008;
Tannenbaum, 2002). Yet, in her research of effective professional development, Backus (2005) came to this conclusion:

While policymakers are placing a more prominent emphasis on the professional growth of the teacher and the implementation of quality staff development, the recipients of such experiences, the classroom teachers, are not as optimistic about the merit of present staff development opportunities. The traditional view of staff development—the one-size-fits-all packaged prescription—still seems to be the valid perception for many of today’s educators. This perception, if unchanged, will more than likely impede the success of the national reform movement. (p. 162)

Kubitskey and Fishman (2006) stated, “Although research has focused on the defining characteristics of quality professional development opportunities, little has been done to examine specific factors involved in teacher learning from a professional development activity and its relationship to practice and student learning” (p. 1).

Meta-analytic research indicated that people must be motivated in order to learn and that a number of individual and situational characteristics that promote learning within an organization can be leveraged to increase this motivation (Barrick & Mount, 1991). In a study of personality factors associated with job performance, Barrick and Mount (1991) found that openness to new experiences was a valid predictor of a person’s willingness to learn. They stated, “Being active, sociable, and open to new experiences may lead individuals to become more involved in training and consequently, to learn more” (p. 851). Colquitt, LePine, and Noe (2000) wrote that a test for “openness to
experience … assesses personal characteristics such as curious, broad-minded, cultured, and intelligent, which are attributes associated with positive attitudes toward learning experiences” (p. 701). This applied to the success of Central West Virginia Writing Project because Summer Institute began with Kickoff Campout, an overnight event at a lodge where teachers spent two days with strangers in an out of the ordinary situation, and they did not know what would be expected of them. Not everyone agreed to do this, and teachers who chose to participate may be people who were open to new experiences.

Increased self-efficacy and positive valence were also related to motivation to learn (Noe & Colquitt, 2002). Self-efficacy was described as a person’s belief that he or she could succeed in performing a job, and increased self-efficacy was shown to have a moderate to strong influence on training motivation and job performance, while valence referred to the attractiveness of training outcomes, feelings that the professional development experience was worthwhile for personal reasons (Noe & Colquitt, 2002). Noe and Colquitt stated that trainers should leverage these motivators at the beginning of training. They found that experience and verbal persuasion were both means of promoting self-efficacy and valence, and they suggested demonstrating targeted skills and behavior to help people feel that they could succeed.

These findings were relevant because Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute leaders took specific steps to build the self-efficacy and valence of participants by providing meaningful experiences, by offering verbal and written encouragement, and by involving them in extensive professional development program hours. Summer Institute leaders helped participants create a demonstration of a good
lesson to teach writing which they presented to supportive peers in an active format. They learned from each other as they gained confidence in their abilities to contribute their own ideas. On the second day of Summer Institute, I further sought to leverage valence by inviting each participant to accept a role in peer teaching through Central West Virginia Writing Project’s planned professional development series, thus giving real world purpose to their demonstrations and literature research. Everyone accepted this offer, agreeing to serve as series coordinator, assistant series coordinator or presenter within their counties during the upcoming school year.

Backus (2005) noted, “Through the selection of their own learning goals and means of accomplishing these goals, teachers become more motivated to participate in the professional activity” (p. 41). This comment described Summer Institute. During the seventeen-day institute, participants created individual demonstrations of good practice to present to peers, they produced three pieces of writing in different genres for an anthology, and they wrote a research paper to address a personal question about teaching writing that applied to their classrooms. They participated in collaborative peer editing, in blogging, and in the National Writing Project’s e-anthology. They used digital cameras given to them by the writing project to stimulate and enhance writing ideas. In addition, they attended an afternoon luncheon with a published author, and they planned an all-day, off-site writing marathon with their research/response groups. Before entering the field as peer teachers, they were invited to attend a weekend Workshop on Workshops to plan their presentations as members of five-person teaching teams. Mount and Barrick (1998) concluded, “Being active, sociable, and open to new experiences may lead
individuals to become more involved in training and, consequently, to learn more” (p. 851).

Colquitt et al. (2000) found that internal locus of control, i.e., a strong feeling that the person has control of his or her learning situation, was related to motivation to learn. They stated that factors that help people adapt to performance requirements included “team commitment and coordination, acceptance of technology, customer focus, and willingness to work in a self-directed fashion” (Colquitt et al., p. 701). Backus (2005) also found that when teachers were able to work in a self-directed fashion through selection of their own learning goals and means of accomplishing these goals, their motivation to learn was enhanced. These factors applied to teachers who voluntarily chose to attend professional development offerings rather than being required to do so, and they were relevant to Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute. Although teacher-participants were offered extrinsic motivators to join Summer Institute in the form of a $1,000 stipend and optional six hours of graduate credit at reduced tuition, once they entered the program, it was up to institute leaders to encourage each person’s intrinsic motivation to stay in the program, to learn, and to apply their learning in their classrooms.

Lieberman and Wood (2003) referred to emerging evidence indicating that interpersonal relationships “provide a powerful context for teacher development” (p.103). Their research on two writing project sites indicated that relationships enabled teacher development and student learning in the classroom. They said, “We saw how … relationships could inspire teachers to become leaders in the continual quest for school
reform” (p. 102). They stated that a web of knowledge and relationships enabled the writing project to grow and change. Staikidis (2006) commented further about the importance of relationships in a learning environment:

Attention to the student as the source of learner-based instruction, negotiations between teacher and student, as well as lived realities of students (giving their personal and cultural narratives room to breathe in the process) are ways in which meaningful relationships can be established between teachers and students. (p. 133)

This was relevant since building and maintaining meaningful interpersonal relationships were integral parts of Summer Institute. Personal connections that began in Summer Institute continued as participants found their place within the writing project organization.

The National Writing Project and Central West Virginia Writing Project

The National Writing Project believes that teachers are the primary source of knowledge, expertise, and leadership for classroom improvement (National Writing Project, 2003). With over 200 university-based sites that span the nation and beyond, the National Writing Project is arguably one of the most widespread professional development programs in the United States (Farizo, 2004). In 2004, its sites provided 195 Summer Institutes, 3,765 professional development programs, 2,204 programs for continued teacher professional development, and 707 youth and community programs for a total of 6,871 programs. Following the original design and intent of National Writing Project founder James Gray, it is a nonprofit organization with each site housed in a
college or university and funded by federal grants, state grants, and local partnerships with schools and school districts. All sites are led by teacher-members, and the majority of funds, over 90%, are spent on teachers (National Writing Project, 2005).

In terms of sites of operation and numbers of teachers served, the National Writing Project is a successful organization whose purpose is to teach teachers to teach writing in their classrooms and to share their practice by teaching their peers (National Writing Project, 2003). The National Writing Project also believes that, in order to teach writing, teachers must be writers themselves. Research conducted by Laub (1996) suggested that teachers’ professional development occurred through personal writing as teachers explored their own writing processes, participated in peer response groups, developed personal themes, learned to write with voice, and developed a willingness to share themselves with others through writing. Other elements of writing project sites have been studied, some in terms of professional development and some in terms of teacher self-efficacy, client satisfaction, and the transformative power of writing. At each site, National Writing Project Summer Institutes are designed as professional development experiences in which teachers of K-Adult gather on a college or university campus for three to five weeks to engage in collaborative learning and inquiry into teaching writing. Summer Institutes share common components in which teacher-participants discuss current research, conduct demonstrations of successful lessons, and share personal writing (Smith, 2006). In addition, participants have multiple opportunities to exercise leadership within a sustained professional community.
The National Writing Project continually evaluates the effectiveness of its sites through local initiatives. The Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project at West Chester University analyzed students’ improvements in writing; they found that student scores in writing project teachers’ classes increased more than comparison group scores at all grade levels (National Writing Project, 2005 February). A comparison study of matched teachers and their students conducted by the Gateway Writing Project at the University of Missouri-St. Louis found similar results. Researchers observed qualitative differences in writing instruction in three areas: range of writing tasks, extensiveness of writing instruction, and teacher modeling of reading/writing connections (National Writing Project, 2006, February).

Smith (2006) wrote that the National Writing Project Summer Institute plunged teachers into writing through an intensive immersion process. She stated, “In NWP, participating teachers prepare for leadership roles by demonstrating their most effective classroom practices, studying research, and improving their knowledge of writing by becoming writers themselves” (p. 10). As a result, writing project teachers discovered through personal experience that writing was a process that took time to learn and to implement. Rather than assigning writing, teachers tended to teach writing in an atmosphere where creativity and learning could flourish (Smith, 2006). That a majority of post-Summer Institute teachers tended to teach writing across the curriculum as a creative process has been corroborated repeatedly by annual studies of client satisfaction and program impact carried out for the National Writing Project by Inverness Research Associates (Dickey, Hirabayashi, Murray, St. John, & Stokes, 2005). In a National
Writing Project survey of impact on participants of summer institutes in 2004, teachers reported that they benefited from their experience in multiple ways, specifically by support of research-based practice and by encouragement of ongoing teacher learning and improvement. The study found that a majority of teachers increased their use of multiple practices for teaching writing and their support for student development within a classroom community of writers. Teachers reported that they increased their use of conferencing with students to encourage revision; they also reported giving students practice in planning their writing. In a follow-up survey one year later, a significant number of writing project teachers reported that they gained valuable knowledge and skills from Summer Institute and that, as a result, they changed their classroom practice (Dickey et al., 2005). This survey of program effectiveness was repeated for participants of summer institutes in 2005 with similarly positive results (Dickey, Hirabayashi, Murray, St. John, & Stokes, 2006).

In 2005-2006, five writing project sites were chosen for National Writing Project evaluation. Choices were made through a process involving a request for proposals and independent, external review. Participating sites received $20,000 and technical assistance to investigate through a quasi-experimental design how key aspects of sites’ programs contributed to changes in teaching practice and in student achievement in writing. All five sites analyzed pre/post student writing samples for seven attributes. The improvement of every attribute for students taught by writing project teachers exceeded that of students whose teachers were not writing project teachers (Friedrich, LeMahieu, Perrow, & Swain, 2006).
Providing Evidence of Effectiveness of Writing Project Sites’ Programs

It is understandable that there is a continuous expectation for the National Writing Project to provide evidence of the effectiveness of its professional development model as administered by every site. In 2007, for example, the National Writing Project commissioned SRI International to conduct a four-year national evaluation of writing project professional development with partnering middle schools to address the question of whether professional development from National Writing Project sites can result in improved student writing performance. R. Sterling (personal communication, May 25, 2007).

It is essential to note that Central West Virginia Writing Project followed the National Writing Project’s model in its design and implementation of the summer institute as a program for delivery of professional development to teach teachers to teach writing. Central West Virginia Writing Project helped participants become peer teachers and provided continued support after the summer program ended. Aspects of the National Writing Project’s program of professional development and of some writing project sites have been investigated (Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Blau, 1993; Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Dickey et al., 2005; Dickey et al., 2006; Durr, 2007; Farizo, 2004; Gomez, 1990; Laub, 1996; Neves, 2001; Pritchard, 1987; Staley, 2001; Whitney, 2006). Pritchard studied effects of teacher professional development in Summer Institute on subsequent student writing. Gomez looked at effects of staff development on teaching composition. Blau examined the writing project as a model for classrooms.
With the exception of Lieberman and Wood (2003), who conducted an in-depth, two-year study of two writing project sites assigned to them by the National Writing Project and wrote a book about the writing project as a learning network, most of these studies were limited in their usefulness. They were site and subject specific to such an extent that they were not useful for my purpose of considering effects of writing project involvement on the professional development of teacher-participants. For example, through a mixed-method, longitudinal study of six teachers that combined questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, Bratcher and Stroble (1994) considered teacher progression toward confidence in writing following participation in Summer Institute. They found that teacher confidence in using the writing process grew stronger over a period of three years. Their six writing project teachers were slow to change their methods of merely assigning writing to students. Gradually, the teachers began using the writing process across the curriculum in language arts classes. However, during the span of the study, the participating teachers were in continuing communication with the two researchers, their writing project directors, who were interested in documenting improvement. I was not privy to their conversations and communications.

I felt that the most interesting element to note was that teacher attitudes toward the writing process during Bratcher and Stroble’s study became much more positive over time, possibly from the continuity activities of leadership attention engendered by the study. By visiting the teachers, interviewing them, and asking them to fill out pointed surveys about the writing process over a three-year period, the authors were taking the role of teachers-teaching-teachers as well as strengthening participant-leadership
relationships. This study reflected the theory of organizational psychology that viewed teachers as active participants in their own learning who chose to bring about change because they perceived it to be valuable (Kraiger, 2002; Patterson et al., 2008). It also reflected the beliefs of Staikidis (2006) that relationships between institute leaders and teacher-participants became vehicles for transmission and construction of knowledge. During this study, I found myself in this position as I provided opportunities for continuity and reflection for participants through interviews and classroom visits.

Many of the studies based on writing project sites were limited by a small number of participants. Durr (2007) tried in vain to gather a number of writing project teachers to study but was able to include only three. Laub (1996) also considered the effect of writing project participation on three teachers. Neves (2001) wrote a general, ethnographic study of a writing project’s professional development. Staley (2001) conducted an ethnographic study of teacher professional development. The Academy for Educational Development (2002) published a final program evaluation report for National Writing Project. Farizo (2004) investigated the essence and meaning of Summer Institute professional development. Dickey et al. (2005, 2006) wrote annual analyses of client satisfaction and program impact. Whitney (2006) chose to study the transformative power of writing that occurred during Summer Institute. This dissertation differed from others since I followed a cohort of eleven teachers who had a similar experience with the writing project for 20 months, and I employed multiple methods of investigating teacher perspectives and professional development outcomes.
According to Kubitskey and Fishman (2006), questions remain as to how formal professional development continues to impact teaching since the sustainability of in-service relies on teachers maintaining alignment with the intent of the initiative as they adapt practices for their classrooms. They stated, “To design professional development that supports long term systemic change initiatives, it is important to understand the relationship between teacher-learning from formal professional development and the resulting practice” (p. 1). While research focused on defining characteristics of quality professional development opportunities, little has been done to examine specific factors involved in teacher learning from a professional development activity and its relationship to practice and student learning (Kubitskey & Fishman).

Teachers’ willingness to learn can be influenced by both individual and situational characteristics that include self-confidence, climate of the learning and teaching situation, and support while participants are learning and when they attempt to incorporate their experiences into classroom teaching (Colquitt et al., 2000; Levy, 2004; Patterson, 2002). Yet Brees (2002) found that teachers’ professional judgment remained largely untapped and ignored, causing teachers to feel unwanted and unappreciated. In contrast, Farizo (2004) found that ten teachers perceived their writing project experience as resulting in increased instructional and pedagogical capacity and increased professional voice. Participants reported that the writing project experience broke down isolation, connected them to the writer within, and facilitated leadership while attracting leaders. Kubitskey and Fishman observed, “Learning that takes place during practice informed by formal professional development proves an integral part of the teacher
learning experience. Learning happens in a context and is extended over time. Teacher-learning is continual and informed at many levels” (p. 2).

**Addressing Professional Development Design and Delivery**

Glesne (1999) wrote that qualitative research can contribute to the existing state of knowledge about a topic, ranging from the descriptive to the theoretical. While researchers can learn generalities from the specific, it is impossible to glean specifics from generalities. She stated, “Qualitative researchers hope for a description and analysis of a case’s complexity that identify concepts not previously seen or fully appreciated” (p. 153). Marshall and Rossman (1989) described holistic ethnography as a domain of qualitative research in which human culture is a crucial element that researchers try to describe and analyze. “Employing participant observation as a primary approach to gathering data,” they said, “holistic ethnographers try to uncover and document participants’ perspectives” (p. 10). They added that the challenge of qualitative research is that there is no formula, no guaranteed recipe that allows a researcher to design and conduct a coherent research paper. A trap to avoid is a paper that lacks focus and purpose of design to such an extent that it appears to have no design. Marshall and Rossman recommended that a design for mainstream qualitative research requires concentrated and open-minded engagement. They emphasized the importance of immersion, relying on interviews as the primary source of data. Marshall and Rossman stated:

- Immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for study …
- values participant’s perspectives on their worlds, …
- seeks to discover those perspectives,
- …views inquiry as an interactive process between researcher and participants, and
…is primarily descriptive. (p. 11)

While other studies of the writing project as professional development considered specific elements in isolation and often relied on teacher interview, this study dealt with the writing project model as a total experience that centered on the teacher for whom the professional development was intended. The purpose of the writing project was to help teachers become better teachers of writing and to enable them to become peer teachers. Thus I sought to understand how the design of Central West Virginia Writing Project, including peer teaching and other continuity activities, affected teachers’ classroom practices as they became writing project teachers.
CHAPTER III: METHODS

This study investigated the influences of writing project involvement on the professional development of eleven teachers. The following questions guided the direction of the research.

1) How is Central West Virginia Writing Project professional development perceived by teacher-participants?

2) Does Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development design influence teachers’ classroom practice as evidenced by classroom observation and documented by student work?

3) To what extent does Central West Virginia Writing Project’s program fit parameters of quality professional development design and implementation as defined by Backus (2005) and as perceived by teacher-participants?

4) What factors, if any in Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development design may be useful for other designers of teacher professional development?

5) In light of what we know about professional development in general, why do writing project participants in particular seem enthusiastic about the writing project, and how might we account for and explore the deeper experiential dimensions of their apparent enthusiasm?

This chapter describes the research design for the study, the participants, methods used for data collection and coding, issues of reliability and validity, and data transformation.
Research Design

This study was longitudinal and multi-site, taking place in ten schools within two counties for 20 months. It was a qualitative and evaluated study, qualitative because it was based on participant observations in teachers’ classrooms, on multiple interviews, participant reflections, and archived documents, and evaluated because it involved the researcher in assembling, coding, and analyzing information to search for meaning in the process. It fit the definition of a qualitative approach described by Glesne (2006) through elements of assumptions, research purposes, research approach, and researcher role. According to Glesne, qualitative assumptions are that reality is socially constructed and “variables are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure” (p. 5). Research purposes involved contextualization, understanding, and interpretation. Research approaches searched for themes and patterns. It used the researcher as instrument, it made minor use of numerical indices, and it used a descriptive write-up. The researcher’s role was that of personal involvement and empathetic understanding (Glesne, 2006). This study focused on the opinions, experiences, and classroom practices of its participants, eleven teachers.

Glesne (2006) wrote that qualitative research may make a contribution to the existing state of knowledge about a topic, ranging from the descriptive to the theoretical. Marshall and Rossman (1989) described holistic ethnography as a domain of qualitative research in which human culture is a crucial element that researchers try to describe and analyze. “By employing participant observation as a primary approach to gathering data,” they stated, “holistic ethnographers try to uncover and document participants’ perspectives” (p. 10).
Interpreting focus group and interview data included deciding which topics should receive emphasis in the concluding report. One way to decide this was to look for group-to-group validation. This meant that whenever a topic was significant to participants, it generated a certain level of energy (either positive or negative) across focus groups (Morgan, 1997). When reporting, I followed the advice of Morgan as well as Seidman (1991) to look for topics of importance to collaborators. I tried to “connect the reader to the participants through well-chosen (vivid) quotations that match the importance of the topic” (Morgan, p. 64).

Qualitative studies may be relevant for investigating larger issues of professional development design and delivery while focusing on details at the individual level (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Following methods described by Kubitskey and Fishman (2006) as well as the National Writing Project, I purposefully incorporated characteristics of good professional development into Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute design. I also followed literature-based research shown to affect teacher motivation to learn. I observed classroom teaching and examined student work as I looked for evidence of transference of writing project practices to participants’ classrooms. I sought participants’ perspectives of their experiences in hopes of gaining insight into effective professional development, how it was learned, practiced, and disseminated. Understanding these processes more clearly may help other teacher educators transform the current state of in-service into experiences in which dramatic and long-lasting professional development might occur (Whitney, 2006).
The Participants

The study involved a cohort of certified public school teachers who together experienced writing project professional development for the purpose of learning to teach writing in their K-12 classrooms across the curriculum. I chose the population because the teachers represented kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, and high school. They came together voluntarily, not knowing one another previously, and they all accepted an invitation to teach writing to peers and colleagues in planned sessions within two counties. One participant also taught in a third county. At the same time, I began receiving written reflections from them with unusual praise for their professional development experience, comments such as “enjoyable, totally worth it, magical, and wonderful experience.”

Because it was unusual for teachers to voice such enthusiasm for education in-service (Backus, 2005), I was intrigued by their attitudes that had been reported by other writing project investigators as well (Durr, 2007; Lieberman & Wood, 2003; Whitney, 2006). After Summer Institute was over, participants continued coming to my university office and telling enthusiastic stories of their classroom teachings that were influenced by their writing project experiences. For this reason, I sought to include these teachers in a study to search more deeply for experiential meanings of their apparent enthusiasm and the possible effects on their pedagogy. In other words, what fueled their positive responses toward a rigorous and time-consuming model of professional development, and in what ways did the experiences of Summer Institute, follow-up activities, training weekend, and peer teaching influence their classroom teaching, if at all?
Eleven teacher-participants from Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute agreed to join this study. They were:

**Anne:** A new kindergarten teacher with six years of teaching experience, including special education and upper elementary. She had a Master of Arts degree in specific learning disabilities K-8. She was a fourth/fifth grade teacher when she joined Summer Institute.

**Daisy:** A high school English teacher who had just completed her first year of teaching when she applied for the Summer Institute. She had a Master of Arts in Teaching degree, was certified to teach English 5-Adult, and was finishing her leadership certification.

**Entity:** A high school teacher with 20 years of experience. She had a Master of Education degree and was certified to teach English and foreign language for grades 9-12. She joined Summer Institute as a high school foreign language teacher. After spending a year as a participant in this dissertation study, Entity moved to Mississippi and began teaching high school English. With the help of the Internet, I located her. We continued our collaboration via telephone, mail, and e-mail.

**George:** A high school social studies teacher. He had a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Social Studies Education degree, and he was working toward a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction degree. He had been teaching for four years. He created an extensive online unit for teachers around the state: *Influences on Voter Behavior: Political Parties, Interest Groups and*
the Media, and created three problem based units for the State Department of Education as a member of a curriculum committee. He was accepted for the Transatlantic Outreach Program by the Goethe Institut and spent summer 2009 in Germany as one of 15 teachers from the United States.

Jane: A high school English teacher. She had a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, and she was applying for National Board certification. She had been teaching for 11 years.

Janna: When we began this study, Janna was a sixth grade English and writing teacher with 26 years of experience. After Summer Institute ended, she advanced to the job of demonstration teacher for her county school system. She had a Master of Arts degree in communication studies.

Robert: A middle school teacher of English and language arts. He had a Bachelor of Science degree in English Education and had taught for five years.

Joanna: A middle school teacher of English and language arts. She had a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Education and had taught for four years.

Rachel: A fifth grade teacher. She had a Master of Arts degree in elementary education and was certified in elementary, secondary, and academically gifted education. Her experience included teaching juveniles in prison. She had taught for 14 years.

Sara: A high school foreign language teacher. She had a Master of Arts degree in leadership studies and had taught for 14 years.
Sissy: A high school special education teacher with 29 years of teaching experience. She had a Master of Arts degree in education with a specialization in specific learning disorders and a certification in behavior disorders. She was applying for National Board certification.

The participants experienced an in-service program of 116 hours that included an overnight stay in a rustic lodge in West Virginia, followed by 15 days of in-service on the South Charleston campus of Marshall University. The purpose of the professional development design and delivery was to teach them to teach writing to their classroom students across the curriculum. For this, they were paid $1,000. They were each given textbooks, a three-ring binder, a digital camera, and later, a digital camcorder. Before the three-week-long Summer Institute ended, they were invited to serve as peer teachers within their own counties in a variety of planned professional development series during the coming school year. As director of Central West Virginia Writing Project, I scheduled seven 15-hour series that were based on professional books to teach writing and were jointly chosen by three counties’ school administrators and by writing project leaders.

Next, participants were invited to the rustic lodge for a second overnight stay on a Friday, followed by an all-day Saturday training session, Workshop on Workshops. All teachers from Summer Institute accepted the invitation to become peer teachers, and they attended the Saturday training. Here they collaboratively planned their series deliveries, receiving no payment for their time. They also attended a required follow-up meeting in November where they reported on ways in which they had implemented ideas for teaching writing that they had learned during Summer Institute or afterward. During the
fall, participants attended a writing project supper and were introduced to other members of Central West Virginia Writing Project. They participated in the West Virginia Book Festival by taking charge of a booth and talking with the public about the writing project. By this time, some of them had become peer-teachers in workshop series, and all were scheduled to do so.

**Data Collection**

As time progressed, I collected the following data for each teacher-participant: archived Summer Institute application essay, two focus group interviews, two classroom observations, individual interviews, archived reflection of a teaching demonstration based on best practices of Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005), final Summer Institute reflection, and e-anthology posting. As shown in Appendix A, I established teacher-participants’ schedules for peer-teaching, focus groups, onsite school visits, and interviews. In addition, I recorded notes and interviews as occasions to do so presented themselves.

A Summer Institute application essay was a requirement for all teachers who wished to attend. It served as an indicator that the applicant could write and was willing to write. The Central West Virginia Writing Project application included an expectation of service for teachers and their supervisors to consider. Teachers were asked to sign a statement that they would participate in peer teaching, and their supervisors were asked to sign a statement of support for the peer teaching obligation.

Glesne (2006) described a focus group as a small number of people who gathered to answer questions on a topic, often in an office or seminar room or in someone’s living
room. She explained that this sort of interview allowed for relaxed conversation as people addressed a topic collectively. Versions of group interviews or focus groups have been in use in the social sciences since the 1920s as a way of understanding knowledge, attitudes, and practices of group members (Morgan, 1997). Morgan observed, “The main advantage of focus groups is the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on a topic in a limited amount of time” (p. 8). He stated that focus groups must be directed to some extent by the researcher, and this lessens their naturalistic social settings. They are also limited to verbal, self-reported behavior, and the group’s dynamic may influence respondents’ discussions. Still, focus groups offered the opportunity to discuss events that were not available for observation, such as people’s feeling about an issue. Morgan added that focus groups were most useful when participants easily and openly discussed the topic of interest. The process of sharing and comparing was one of the most valuable aspects of this type of interview. An initial focus group interview could also provide a starting point for individual interviews.

I conducted two focus groups one year apart, adding an element of longevity to the study. Participants were invited to my home, a familiar place where we held many writing project meetings, to have lunch in small groups and to address focus group questions. If they were unable or unwilling to join a focus group, I visited them in their classrooms when it was convenient for them for individual interviews, using the focus group questions. Although the focus group luncheons were scheduled for two hours, participants sometimes lingered much longer as they became involved in professional conversations with old friends. As Florio-Ruane (1991) states, collaborative research is
“both a social process and a linguistic product” (p. 236). As I collected interviews, I kept in mind the words of Zinsser (2006), “Writing is a public trust. … When you get people talking, handle what they say as you would a valuable gift” (p. 115).

Having had considerable experience in participant observation as a student teacher supervisor with two universities plus a preschool franchise company, I felt comfortable scheduling classroom visits with participants. Following the advice of Glesne (2006), I described events as I saw them within each research setting, adding reflective memos to myself as they occurred. I kept in mind that I was observing only a small part of each teacher’s day, only a few teaching experiences within many hours of the person’s school year. Thus I sent transcribed classroom observations to participants with a request that they take ownership of them. I wrote:

Please take this observation which represents only one small moment in your entire school year as seen by an outsider, and change, delete, add…whatever you wish to do. I will gladly use your version. You are the teacher, after all, and you know your class and your teaching methods, while I do not. I value your insight into your professional development as a teacher of writing.

During spring and fall 2008, I visited the participants’ classrooms twice when this was possible. One teacher, Entity, moved to Mississippi after my initial visit to her classroom. She had participated in peer teaching, one focus group, and two individual interviews, and I kept in touch with her through e-mail after her move. Although she made arrangements to visit me in March 2009 so that we could talk about her professional development experiences in her new school, she was unable to do so. I sent
her the final focus group questions, and she answered them extensively. George, who repeatedly threatened to drop out of the study but never did, soon became head of his high school social studies department. Citing professional overload, he declined to take part in second year visits and focus group interviews, but instead offered a great deal of insight into writing project professional development through individual interviews and written reflections. Janna accepted an invitation to become a county model teacher, allowing her to influence other teachers to teach writing. Janna and I eventually spent an extensive amount of time together as we traveled to Nebraska, Texas, and Michigan, invited and encouraged by the National Writing Project to share our site’s story of a successful professional development model.

I conducted at least one individual interview with each participant, using a small, unobtrusive Sony ICD P320 digital recorder that soon became a familiar sight to everyone. All interviews were sent to participants for collaborative response, and soon the teachers agreed that they should be anonymous contributors. The remaining information gathered during the study consisted of individual archived reflections of a teaching demonstration based on best practices, final Summer Institute reflections, and e-anthology postings. Often, these pieces yielded useful information on participants’ thoughts and experiences during Summer Institute.

Coding

While Morgan (1997) felt that some quantitative uses of coding were useful in analyzing transcripts from focus groups, Glesne (2006) advised looking for themes to increase understanding. Morgan added, “When it comes to analyzing focus groups, those
who can answer their research questions without counting code should feel well justified in doing so…. (Researchers) should feel secure enough in their approach to pursue it without … doing quantitative analysis on the same data” (p. 62). I found that developing a code was necessary as multi-paged interviews, observations, and memos began filling three, three-inch binders.

Following the advice of Glesne (2006) and Miles and Huberman (1994), I created a three-page code spreadsheet that began with the five questions guiding this research as I planned activities and collected evidence. The spreadsheet soon expanded to include three additional emerging themes of influences of writing project professional development on classroom practice that were outside the parameters of the five primary questions:

- Evidence of increased use of technology in the classroom and other technology issues;
- Evidence of increased participants’ valence and self-efficacy as teacher-leaders;
- Evidence of administrators’ encouragement or discouragement as participants attempted to negotiate changes in pedagogy.

I included Appendix B: CWVWP In-service Delivery for 2007-2008 in Three Counties, showing the time and place of each participant’s in-service delivery as a peer teacher. I also included Appendix C, the three-page spreadsheet used for coding participants’ contributions to the five questions and three emerging themes. I assigned an individual coding spreadsheet to each participant. After all data were collected and coded, I
combined the research data by participant totals into a single spreadsheet, Appendix D: Research Findings by Participants’ Totals.

Reliability and Validity

Using Appendices C and D, I triangulated information about each research question and theme by using a variety of data collection methods: participant observation, interviewing, and document collection for purposes of validity (Glesne, 2006). Glesne describes several verification procedures often used in qualitative research, including extended time in the field, triangulation, and member-checking. Participant observation for this study included two onsite classroom visits at the invitation of the teacher-participant during which I sat quietly observing and writing in a notebook. I sent the transcribed notes to the teacher and invited his or her collaboration (member-checking). Interviewing involved two focus groups held a school-year apart, plus at least one individual interview; transcribed interviews were sent to participants for collaborative responses. I used archived documents from participants’ Summer Institute experiences, as well as classroom documents when they were available for me. Since this study involved consistent collection of multiple forms of data from eleven participants at multiple sites over a period of nearly two years, reliability and validity of the results were confirmed through consistency of the findings. Glesne (2006) noted that time spent building sound relationships with participants also contributes to trustworthy data.

Data Transformation

According to Glesne (2006), after data is collected and coded, researchers “must find ways to make connections that are ultimately meaningful to themselves and the
reader” (p. 164). She recommended using description, analysis, and interpretation as three methods of transforming data from organization into meaning. Description involved staying close to the original data, letting interviews and field notes speak for themselves to address questions of meaning by selecting details that illustrate the study’s purposes. Analysis was the next step in data transformation, typically extending description in a systematic way that may include data displays and “other means of identifying patterned regularities” (p. 164). The third step in data transformation, interpretation, occurred when I reached beyond the confines of description and analysis, distancing the data from the reality from which it was taken to make the data sensible and accessible. “Data transformation,” wrote Glesne, “is the prelude to sensitive outcomes that describe, make connections, and contribute to greater understanding” (p. 166).
CHAPTER IV: DESCRIPTIVE DATA

This study was designed to investigate the influences of writing project involvement on the professional development of eleven K-12 teachers in two West Virginia counties. Data for the study were compiled over a 20-month period and consisted of nine pieces of evidence collected for each individual: Summer Institute application, two focus group interviews, two classroom visits, individual interview following a peer-teaching experience, reflection after conducting a teaching demonstration, end of Summer Institute reflection, and e-anthology posting. I also collected or described classroom artifacts and lesson plans when they were available. The purpose of this chapter was to describe the eleven teachers, their classrooms, and the experiential data presented by each teacher.

In an effort to make contemporary educational research meaningful, Florio-Ruane (1991) stressed the importance of including teachers as collaborative authors in both the deliberative and expressive phases. Most participants in this study were eloquent contributors who spent many hours helping me understand their professional perspectives. Thus, when faced with a choice of paraphrasing a participant’s words or including an appropriate quotation, I have allowed each person to speak for him or herself. My goal is to enable the reader to see the person rather than a statistic. The knowledge each one offers is tentative, couched in his or her personal experience and is valuable for that very reason. Who better to talk about the influence of professional development on teachers than the teachers themselves?
**Demographic Data**

The participating teachers represented two counties and eleven grade levels, including kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, and high school. One was a special education teacher. Two were in the process of applying as National Board Certified Teachers. Six teachers earned masters’ degrees. Teaching experiences ranged from one year in the classroom to 29 years. For the purpose of this study, these data are significant only in showing the diversity of educational backgrounds and classroom experiences of these participants in terms of learning to teach writing across the curriculum. Table 1 shows the classroom assignment of each teacher in this study.
Table 1

*Classroom Teaching Assignments of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-participant</th>
<th>Classroom Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>High School English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entity</td>
<td>High School Foreign Language/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janna</td>
<td>Middle School English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Middle School English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>High School Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>High School English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sissy</td>
<td>Special Education and Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>High School Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna</td>
<td>Middle School English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Initial Meeting**

The setting for the initial meeting for this dissertation research took place at the Summer Institute follow-up supper. During the evening, I invited everyone to take part as follows:

The summer fellows met on November 10 for supper at the Ramada Inn. The restaurant was centrally located, easy to find and a comfortable place for all. This was the final meeting in which attendance was required. It also had money attached -- $400 for
completing final syllabus requirements and for coming to the supper. Nine of the eleven were present. Janna was excused because she and her husband were offered a weekend at a cabin to celebrate their anniversary. I always say that family comes first, so she turned in her work early and left. Joanna was also excused so that she could attend a trip to Washington, DC, with her eighth grade students. They had permission to visit the White House, and it would be an exciting experience. The remaining fellows filled the tables, set up as a closed box so all could be seen. They chatted happily, catching up since last seeing one another at the writing project supper meeting in September. When George arrived late because of school obligations, Jane and Sissy, members of his small group, moved chairs and plates to sit next to him. Entity stood up and gave him a warm hug. He grinned happily as a result of this female attention.

As people ate, we went around the table with each teacher reporting on classroom successes and/or concerns related to his or her students and writing. I made no attempt to take notes or record since my prospectus was in the approval stages at the university. All teachers, however, described ways in which they were incorporating the writing process into their classroom curriculum, and they passed around samples of their students’ writing.

With ten minutes left in the evening, I handed out forms for them to fill out for their final stipend. Then, I explained my dissertation study and invited them to participate. “The subject is professional development,” I said. “Most professional development is not well received by teachers.” They all nodded and murmured agreement. “But around this table,” I continued, “you tell wonderful stories of
enthusiastic implementation of professional development for writing, and I need your help to figure out why writing project professional development is so different. You don’t have to do this,” I repeated so many times that they began mocking me, “but I hope you will.”

I told them the study would involve my coming to their schools at a time scheduled with them, observing in their classrooms, looking at student work, and interviewing them. I would also hold a focus group meeting with each summer small group if possible, I explained. They liked that idea since the small groups have established friendships and trust. “My plan,” I told them, “is to have small groups meet individually at my home for a Saturday lunch followed by a discussion that I will record.”

They were hesitant about the recording until I explained to them that they would be collaborators in the study and as such would review, approve, and have the opportunity to change transcripts and classroom observations. I then passed around the summer enrollment list, asking them to sign their initials if they were willing to take part in the study. Eleven teachers agreed to participate. Thus we embarked on our journey together into the influences of writing project involvement on their professional development as teachers and how it ultimately affected their classroom practice, beginning with Question One.

**Question One**

**How is Central West Virginia Writing Project professional development perceived by teacher-participants?**
While discussing parameters of successful professional development with participants, I found considerable overlap between this question that examined participants’ perceptions of Central West Virginia Writing Project professional development and question four that sought possible factors that may be useful for other professional development designers. Frequently, when participants talked about their professional development experience with the writing project, they also expressed a desire that more professional development could be designed and delivered in the same way. Every participant voiced an opinion regarding this question. To give it order and substance, I referred to Noe and Colquitt’s (2002) list of features of the instructional environment that facilitate learning and transfer, and I included perceptions of two participants: Sara, a high school foreign language teacher with 14 years of experience and a Master of Arts degree in leadership studies, and Anne, a kindergarten teacher with six years of experience and a Master of Arts degree in learning disabilities. Noe and Colquitt’s seven features are:

1) Participants understand the purpose and expected outcomes of the program;

2) Program content is relevant and meaningful;

3) Participants are given materials that help them recall the program’s content;

4) Participants have the opportunity to practice the new skill;

5) Participants receive feedback on their learning;

6) Participants have the opportunity to observe and interact with their peers;

7) The program is properly coordinated and arranged.
At the same time, Noe and Colquitt made clear that effective training required a systems approach that focuses not only on the program’s design, but also on four characteristics of the attending teachers. Their research indicated that a professional development program would be compromised if the individual participant did not meet requirements of readiness, motivation, ability to learn, and opportunities to transfer learning to the workplace.

1) **Participants understand the purpose and expected outcomes of the program**

While it was obvious that Summer Institute focused on aspects of writing, each participant created his or her own expected outcomes, beginning during the mandatory Kickoff Campout. The schedule shown in Appendix H, Kickoff Campout Agenda, indicates topics of purpose and outcome that were addressed with participants nearly two months before Summer Institute began. They spent time observing a demonstration of a successful lesson for teaching writing conducted by a fellow teacher, discussing their personal experiences with teaching writing, and thinking about a literature review research topic they could pursue that directly related to their teaching situations and their students.

Participants discussed the course syllabus and textbook. They were also asked to read the textbook and be prepared to discuss it before reconvening at the university in July. Small group meetings led by facilitators allowed time for questions and discussion. In addition, since everyone stayed overnight in a small lodge, leaders and participants experienced the weekend together, allowing time for open communication among all.

Some type of pre-institute meeting is used by numerous sites of the National Writing
Project; some are called “boot camp,” but we preferred taking a lighter approach with our title of Kickoff Campout. The combination of events plus the syllabus and textbook enabled each participant to begin Summer Institute with a sense of purpose and understanding of expected outcomes. During the first day of Summer Institute, participants were given Summer Institute’s writing requirements, Appendix I. They were also invited to serve as peer teachers during the upcoming school year. Although participation was optional, each person accepted. Jane described her reaction to being invited on the second day of the institute to be a peer teacher:

I was still overwhelmed from the original assignments, so it didn’t bother me at all (laughter). Honestly, it was good (that you asked early-on) because if you had waited another day, I would have thought, ‘OK, I know what I’m supposed to do now,’ and I’d had time to digest all the information, and then you came at me with that assignment, and if I had to go back through that emotion (of being overwhelmed), I would have thought, ‘What am I thinking? I thought I had it. What’s going to happen the next day that I come in?’ (Laughter) The actual idea of getting up in front of people that teach really didn’t bother me. I was more concerned about, what’s the project, and how am I going to do it, and what topic am I going to teach?

Anne also described feeling overwhelmed for the first few days. “The amount of writing required seemed impossible,” she remembered. But after the initial shock, as she described it, everyone was able to settle down and write.
Toward the end of the institute, all participants were invited to return to Cedar Lakes Conference Center for another overnight in September, this time to work together in teaching teams with experienced leaders to plan their peer presentations. Once again, everyone accepted even though they were not paid. They did, however, receive an unexpected gift, a digital Flip camcorder. The weekend’s title was Workshop on Workshops, and the agenda is included as Appendix J. Other sites of NWP also use some form of this training experience before teachers take part in peer teaching.

2) Program content is relevant and meaningful

In Sara’s Summer Institute application, she stated that her goal was to learn how to teach her students to write more extensively in the foreign language she was teaching. While her students were able to learn grammar and vocabulary, she described writing as being “quite difficult” for them, and she wanted to change that. Although she hoped the content of the institute would be relevant and meaningful, she had doubts. She talked about not believing that Summer Institute could offer anything that would apply to her classroom because she felt she had a unique experience going on, that of high school students writing at an elementary school level. She could not conceive that she would gain anything from the institute or that it would be relevant and meaningful to her particular situation.

Indeed, the demonstration that she shared with her peers during Summer Institute, an example of writing that she practiced with her foreign language students, consisted of cartoon characters with blank bubbles above their heads where students could write
snippets of dialogue. “Too often in my classes,” she wrote, “if students cannot use a sentence exactly as it is in the textbook, they are at a loss.”

When I visited her classroom one year later, Sara handed me the day’s assignment. It consisted of the following open-ended directions followed by space to write a complete page:

Write a letter in (foreign language) to your (imaginary) female pen pal. Be sure to tell her who you are and where you’re from. Indicate your nationality and where you are a student. Describe yourself…what you look like and your personality. Ask questions about her. Then describe your teacher to her.

This was clear evidence of an expectation of significant writing that required thought, creativity, and detail. On November 6, 2008, Sara reported meeting her personal goals of getting her students to write more in the foreign language, saying,

I have a lot more writing going on than I ever imagined I could, to be honest, at this level. Even right now, (beginning level one) students are working on a photo album, and I showed them some examples of what students had done in the past. They asked to read it, and I told them they couldn’t because they are writing ‘way more than those kids ever wrote. It’s all coming together.

She added,

The awareness finally clicked. Somewhere along the way, I remember you telling us that teachers just assume students can write. I realized that I had been teaching a foreign language, not writing. This year I started teaching writing processes right off the bat. It’s paid off already because the students are beginning to see
how the language works.

Sara credited her involvement in the writing project with these classroom successes:

It was definitely life-saving. Right of the top of my head I can think of four or five things I learned that I experienced through the Summer Institute and that I’ve implemented in my classroom. Even my Summer Institute research emphasized the whole idea of the need for writing in the foreign language classroom.

Anne agreed that the institute was relevant and meaningful to her classroom. She observed that, while she concentrated on teaching her kindergarten children to read, writing was an important part of each day in her classroom. “The writing process and language arts are tied together,” she observed. She stated that she learned a lot during Summer Institute, and as a result, she felt inspired to try new things in her classroom.

3) Participants are given materials that help them recall the program’s content

In addition to being given the Kelly Gallagher (2006) textbook, participants were given handouts pertaining to each demonstration presented by the other participants, by institute leaders, and by visiting writing project teachers. They attended Lunch with an Author presented by author Colleen Anderson, during which they were given ideas for writing and publishing. All were invited to attend a day with author Barry Lane who gave attendees a large amount of materials for classroom writing, including an entertaining DVD of activities that several teachers reported using in their classrooms. Not everyone was able to attend this event, however, because it required that they be released from their classrooms during a school day.
Emerging Theme of Issues of Technology Use

Participants were given a Canon or Kodak digital camera and a Flip digital camcorder to use in their classrooms to encourage their students to write. As mentioned earlier, George used both pieces of technology in his high school social studies classes. Anne used the camera to create a classroom website through which she communicated with parents. She photographed the children as they worked on math patterns, read books from her classroom library center, and wrote in their journals. Then she posted them on a secure website for parents to see, along with the weekly newsletter. She also offered to send parents photos of their own children if requested. Rachel gave the camera to her students to take class activity photos. She later transferred the photos to CDs so the children could add them to classroom PowerPoint productions. Sara and Entity used the digital camcorders to encourage their foreign language students to combine speaking and writing through peer interviews and puppetry. Sara reported:

We were given digital cameras and Flip camcorders (in Summer Institute), and the computer lab was readily accessible. (My school) actually ordered a class set of 12 that we’ll share between all the world language teachers. (My students) recorded a conversation in class with partners, and then they exchanged the Flip camcorders, and they had to write a paper about the other group’s conversation.

Sara sent me a sample of her students’ writing and an enlightening DVD of interviews that were produced and recorded by four of her students.

4) Participants have the opportunity to practice the new skill
Participants practiced their own writing skills daily in Summer Institute. Sara reported that the experience made her realize that she had been teaching grammar and vocabulary, not writing. Actually becoming involved in writing helped her understand a better way to teach her students. Sara said,

Before Summer Institute, I was so focused on grammar and syntax, on minute details, that I missed the big picture. I missed having my students talk about who, where, how. Now my philosophy is, ‘Let’s just communicate, and we can fix the details later.’ Now (my teaching) is more of a whole language approach. The school year has been fun because I’m slowly changing gears. We’re doing more writing and more speaking, and as a result of the whole language approach, I can say to my students, ‘OK, this is what you need to do with this part of your story to make it work in (the foreign language).’

The following year, Sara recalled:
We lived the professional development instead of just being there. We were doing the writing. We did the demonstrations. We used the professional development on a daily basis extensively. With the Summer Institute, I could be using something one day, or even two or three days later, and I would think, oh yes, that would work well here. The duration of the Summer Institute is obviously beneficial, but living it and experiencing it instead of just watching it makes a huge difference. I think it’s more engaging. It fits what we need to learn. Writing fits everywhere. At whatever level you are, you write.
Sara reported using specific ideas in her classroom that she garnered from Summer Institute:

In Summer Institute, we learned about the silent debate, but for (my foreign language) we did a silent conversation (between two people). It was really interesting what the students were able to do. So here they were, six weeks into learning (a foreign language), and they’re writing a silent conversation. So that was fun.

Other techniques that her colleagues had demonstrated during Summer Institute and that I witnessed her using were writing about pictures, peer-editing, modeling for her students, and individual conferencing. “It’s really paid off,” she said, “because the students are beginning to see how the language works.”

Anne agreed that practicing the skills presented during Summer Institute was important. She stated,

When professional development is hands-on and when a presenter says, ‘I’ve used this in my classroom, and I know it works,’ I am much more likely to try it rather than if someone just passes something on to me and says, ‘Here, just do this.’

Anne felt that her writing project summer peers were experienced, dedicated, and knowledgeable. She talked about the power of not only hearing about another teacher’s classroom successes with particular ideas, but also with having an opportunity to try the ideas during the professional development meeting. She felt that Summer Institute was very hands-on and that she had an opportunity to become involved in the training. Anne testified:
In Summer Institute, colleagues presented successful lessons they used in their classrooms. Then we were asked to write our ideas of how we could use these lessons in our own classrooms. That was beneficial to us because now I have this whole list of ideas I can refer to. I also feel that if this teacher had success with this idea, perhaps I could have success as well.

5) **Participants receive feedback on their learning**

Participants received daily feedback not only from institute leaders but also from members of their revision and research groups. Anne found this collaborative feedback to be beneficial:

We truly collaborated because not only did we share ideas, but we also talked about what we didn’t understand or couldn’t do, and there was always someone who could offer another way to do something. So I felt it was more of a group effort. That’s what I felt that I got the most benefit from, teachers helping each other, not just saying, this is what I do. We not only showed what we do in our own classrooms, but we were also given the opportunity to make personal improvements. I think if you’re a good teacher, you know there’s always room for improvement.

On the third day of Summer Institute, Sara described returning from lunch and meeting with her revision group for their first peer revision. “Apparently, revision methods vary from group to group,” she observed, “but everyone seems sufficiently happy to have peer insight into their papers.”
When Sara talked about Summer Institute, she often spoke in terms of “we” emphasizing the collaborative spirit that was integral to the writing project professional development program:

We moved through the writing together for three weeks. We were engaged in it. We were not just told what needs to happen (in our classrooms), we were engaged in it. The hands-on approach is important. I’m excited because I’ve changed my approach (to teaching) this year, and the kids are getting more out of it.

6) Participants have the opportunity to observe and interact with their peers

Statements included in feature five also address feature six since valuable feedback came from peers. Participants reported learning a great deal from each other while interacting for 116 hours in professional development endeavors. “We also worked together on planning peer-teaching,” Anne added.

Participants were given an additional opportunity to interact with RS, a teaching peer, for hands-on learning. This person was a middle school teacher and doctoral candidate and was hired to teach everyone safe and appropriate classroom blogging. He spent three hours in the computer lab with participants on day three of the institute. Sara posted an entry to the online e-anthology that day, describing his visit. “Yes, we want to learn how to blog,” she wrote. “Thank you, RS, for sharing such wonderful insights into the world of blogging. We are all very excited to join the 21st Century online journal. Excellent information….It appears we are making progress in the right direction.”
7) The program is properly coordinated and arranged

Sara expressed the importance during Summer Institute of being exposed to a constant theme that was revisited over time. She stated, “When we were in Summer Institute, we moved through the writing, working on that for three weeks, and we were engaged in it. We were not only told what would happen, but we also experienced it.”

Sara commented on the importance of the program’s timing and continuity:

Summer was a great time (for this professional development). So many different ideas were presented. Then we followed up with the Workshop on Workshops, and pretty much everyone participated in (teaching) the workshop series. And even just coming here (to a focus group) and talking about things…It gets you thinking about what you do and what you haven’t done and what you will do. It gave me the chance to realign my thinking.

Anne agreed, saying,

I liked the time frame that it was in—through the summer. We put a lot of time into it, but I felt it was definitely worth my time to do it. I learned that there are just a whole gamut of ideas out there, that there are so many ways of teaching, and if one idea isn’t working, then there are a hundred other ways to teach (a skill) to keep it fun and fresh and new.

Sara felt that the Summer Institute program and follow-up activities, including evening writing project meetings, gave her time to consider what she did in her classroom. She said,
It gave me a chance to reflect and to give consideration to the activities and their effect on what I’m doing in my classroom, my thoughts about it, and how I’ve responded to what I’ve done. During the course of the institute, I was always thinking about how I could use the ideas in my classroom. (Even) the presentation I did sparked ideas of how I could better the assignments for my class.

Summary

The stories of two participants, Sara and Anne, one a high school foreign language teacher and one a kindergarten teacher, illustrate the perceptions that participants had of their writing project professional development experiences. Their stories were unerringly positive, and their impressions appeared to conform to Noe and Colquitt’s (2002) list of features of an instructional environment that facilitated learning. Their stories also described participants who joined Summer Institute by applying voluntarily, thus indicating readiness and motivation to learn, and who showed an ability to learn in that most of them made use of skills taught during the institute. In addition, both Sara and Anne documented that they were able to transfer what they had learned to their classrooms.

**Question Two**

Does Central West Virginia Writing Project professional development design influence teachers’ classroom practice as evidenced by classroom observation and documented by student work?

Kubitskey and Fishman (2006) define quality professional development as including sound approaches to instruction that result in improved student learning. As a
researcher, I was unable to access student assessments or conduct testing to show improved student learning. However, as indicated in Appendix D: Research Findings by Participant Totals, I collected a substantial number of events of influence on teachers’ classroom practice from classroom observations, teaching plans, student assignments, and student work samples. I also collected participants' stories that were told in individual and group interviews. All participants gave credit to their writing project experiences for increasing their use of writing across the curriculum and their awareness of teaching the writing process.

While the literature indicates the importance of teaching writing across the curriculum in all grades to all students, the National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges (2003) reported that many teachers are not teaching writing because they do not know how to do so. Thus, from its beginning, the National Writing Project has stipulated that the purpose of Summer Institute is to teach teachers to teach writing to their students as evidenced by teachers’ classroom practice. During Summer Institute, participants researched and designed numerous resources for teaching writing during an initial three-week period. An important element to consider was that the lessons and demonstrations of good practice came from the participants themselves who were coached by leaders as necessary and from several writing project teachers who were invited to return to share successful demonstrations of good practice from previous years. None of us posed as an authority on teaching writing. It was clear from the outset that participants would teach successful classroom practice to each other.
as teachers teaching teachers, a model of the National Writing Project that is practiced at every site.

Noe and Colquitt (2002) found that features of the instructional environment that facilitate learning and transfer of training include three elements: 1) that participants understand purpose and expected outcomes; 2) that exercises, assignments, and concepts are relevant; and 3) that participants are given specific goals for learning so they have specific skills to strive for. Thus, on the second day of the institute, participants were invited to become teachers of non-writing-project teachers in evening classes planned for the approaching school year. They all accepted the invitation with the understanding that they would teach in a school in their own county during an evening session as team members. While they could present their Summer Institute demonstration of a successful method to teach writing, they could also design a new demonstration with the help of their students. Conceptualization, refinement, and presentation of these demonstrations were elements of the writing project Summer Institute. The assignment of teaching their peers in an open-invitation, evening setting gave each person a relevant, real work purpose with specific goals for learning.

The decision to invite participants to become peer teachers early-on during Summer Institute was made in an effort to increase their motivation to learn. A teacher wryly commented that the invitation gave each of them an additional incentive to design an effective demonstration of good practice. It also gave them an opportunity to develop their self-efficacy as peer teachers, influenced by “opportunities to observe and interact with other trainees” (Noe & Colquitt, 2002, p.57) as they worked toward a common goal.
After Summer Institute, participants’ professional development experiences continued with an invitation to attend an overnight Workshop on Workshops training session in September at Cedar Lakes Conference Center before taking over peer-teaching responsibilities. During an all-day Saturday session, participants collaborated with assigned team members to plan and prepare for their peer-teaching presentations. These were to take place as an integral part of 15-hour professional development series prearranged by the writing project director and school leaders within the participants’ counties. I have indicated their peer-teaching schedules in Appendix B: In-service delivery plans. Additional professional development opportunities for participants included an invitation to spend a day with educator author Barry Lane and to attend CWVWP supper meetings with other writing project teachers who gave presentations and shared their experiences of teaching writing lessons that were successful in their classrooms. As part of Summer Institute’s required follow-up, participants took part in the WV Book Festival; they also attended a meeting in November for the purpose of sharing their reflections and classroom experiences, accompanied by samples of their students’ writings. Each event was designed as continuity to add to the teachers’ pedagogy for teaching writing across the curriculum.

When considering transference of learning or influences of writing project professional development on teachers’ classroom practice, I found that classroom visits scheduled during consecutive school years and sometimes in different schools with the same participant were particularly enlightening. My role during the visits was that of an invited observer who said little and took notes. Between classes, after school hours, and
during other breaks in teaching, participants granted recorded interviews, and they shared assignments and student work with me to corroborate and verify my observations. As part of our collaborative relationship, I shared transcribed visits with participants and invited their impressions of what I had written. During an initial visit to each classroom in May 2008, they appeared eager to make a good impression. In fact, one teacher-participant staged a series of techniques for teaching writing for a 45-minute lesson to which I was invited. The charade, of course, was obvious and ineffective. But by the date of my second visit in October 2008 and later, the newness of participating in a research project had worn thin, and I caught a clearer glimpse into each teacher’s pedagogy.

To address research question two, I have included in-depth information, including interviews and classroom visits, for four participants: George, who represented enthusiastic and successful transfer of learning; Joanna, who began with passion and creativity but appeared to lose her enthusiasm for teaching when she encountered lack of administrative support; Anne, who began the institute as a fourth/fifth grade teacher but switched to kindergarten after one week; and a participant (who must remain unidentified) who seemed unable to improve her/his pedagogy even though s/he thought that s/he was engaging students in good practices for teaching writing. Together, they represented different aspects of writing project professional development impact on classroom practice.
George: Adding writing in the discipline to social studies

“I would classify the emphasis on personal writing as the Writing Project’s distinctive branding, setting it apart from the educational morass awash with lackluster professional development.” (George)

George was a high school social studies teacher who had been teaching for four years. He had a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Social Studies Education degree, and he was working toward a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction degree. During this study, he created an extensive online unit for teachers around the state: Influences on Voter Behavior: Political Parties, Interest Groups and the Media, and created three problem based units for the State Department of Education as a member of a curriculum committee. After teaching three years, he was selected as department chair of history for his high school. He was accepted for the Transatlantic Outreach Program by the Goethe Institut and spent summer 2009 in Germany as one of 15 teachers from the United States. In his Summer Institute application, he stated that while he enjoyed many successes with writing while teaching social studies, he examined his instruction and felt a need to focus on preparing his students to write at college level. George added:

Many of my honors government and 20th century history students have an aptitude for writing but are woefully ill-equipped to progress to the next level. During this institute, I want to refine my writing assignments as well as my methods for critiquing finished work so that my students can move on to higher education with a strong foundation in writing.
George began working toward this goal by improving his own writing skills during the institute. He especially appreciated the grammar mini-lessons, explaining that the mini-lesson on semi-colon use was his favorite:

In my 26 years of life, I’ve never been a real big user of the semicolon, never been really comfortable with it. After the summer writing project, now I actually think about using the semi-colon. I had to get the whole picture of writing… complex and compound, simple sentences. It all meshes together, but I had never really used the semicolon. Those mini-lessons were important, especially since they were tailored to the needs of our group. If you see deficiencies in the writing process, you can say BAM! with a mini-lesson. This is how we can improve people.

When his students matriculated to college and returned to tell him that they lacked expertise in using citations, he realized that he needed to teach them how to use citations when they wrote research papers. He began practicing this skill during Summer Institute, saying:

With citations and those kinds of things, Summer Institute made me realize: Hey! I’m inadequate. I’m not really good at citations. And when my graduates came back to visit me, what they said was, they were not prepared to write (college) papers. Now I’m not the English teacher, but I don’t believe a person should go around saying, ‘It’s not my problem.’…So that challenged me. I found out I need help with citations; they need help with citations. So I added that into the curriculum so that my students don’t have to go to college and learn citations and
learn how to write.

Yet due to many school obligations that extended into summer, he had only the Kickoff Campout and two additional weeks to spend with his Summer Institute fellows. At first, he resisted trying to improve his personal writing style. He insisted that social studies had little to do with writing. “The fact is,” he insisted, “I’m not an English teacher. I don’t have a degree in that field matter. I did not go to college to gather expertise in teaching writing.” However, because he did agree (on day two of the institute) to serve as assistant series coordinator for a peer-teaching series with CM, and he was a man of his word, he found himself enmeshed in writing project activities for an extended period after the school year began.

Months later, George talked about his peer-teaching experience:

When you asked me to co-lead a series, I thought, ‘Did I sign up for a writing institute or for a new best friend?’ That’s exactly what I thought. Exactly. I expected the writing assignments, and I was determined to get those done, but it was the extra additional. It didn’t really end. It continued in perpetuity. I was like, ‘Give me a break!’ Was that too truthful? And yes, I did it. I don’t know. What did the Godfather say? ‘I thought I was out, and they drewed (sic) me back in.’

His series attracted nearly twenty secondary school teachers. On the evening of the first meeting, series leader CM was near tears when her PowerPoint failed, and George was angry at me even though I was not there. “That first meeting, I was mad at you. I was like, ‘I said I couldn’t do this and look…!’”
In fact, at the Workshop on Workshops weekend, George admitted coming close to walking away, reporting, “I was ready to pack myself up in the car and leave. I was like, ‘Forget this! I don’t need this!’” However, he stayed for the training weekend, and on the evening of the first series meeting, he took over the class when CM needed his support. He taught a lesson that he used with his high school social studies students, one that I was to observe during an onsite visit to his classroom. His included a packet of material for each attendee and directions for three writing strategies. Then, he and CM asked the attending teachers to adapt the lesson to their classrooms and to report on the results when they returned to class. George reported,

Two weeks later when attendees brought the lesson back, they said, ‘This is what I’ve done, and this is how my students’ responded.’ To see that my work that works with my students was working with other students, and to see that it reached not just my classroom but other classrooms…that was a pretty moving moment. At that moment, I said, ‘This has been worth it.’ The time, the effort…that I can have an impact far greater that just my own classroom is monumental.

Shortly after that first series meeting, I received an e-mail from a high school social studies teacher at the behest of her principal. The principal specifically asked if there were any way that his school could pay George to come and speak to the social studies department teachers. “They (CM and George) did a great job!” extolled the attending teacher. “Let me know if we can work out a staff development.”

George declined because of his busy schedule, but it was important for him to receive this recognition from high school peers. Had he not become involved in peer-
teaching, he would not have continued as a writing project teacher when Summer Institute ended. By the time I visited his classroom in March 2008, he had completed peer teaching and had participated in a focus group interview. I was interested in seeing how much writing his students were doing and what kind of writing they were doing. When I asked to visit his classroom, he invited me to come anytime. I observed two block-scheduled classes from 7:50 a.m. until the students left for lunch at 11:00.

**Onsite visit**

George began the morning with a writing prompt called a bell-ringer that he wrote on the board before students arrived. There were two for AP Government class and two for 21st Century Civics. Both were open-ended review questions. When I entered the room, 18 students were furiously writing. George quietly explained to me that they were practicing to take the advanced placement (AP) test which is a timed free-write or essay. He began with a group discussion of politics, congress, and bureaucracy and invited oral responses, asking, “What did you learn about congress from your reading?”

Next, he handed out a practice AP test, reminding the students that they could spend about 25 minutes on each question. “Don’t use filler,” he admonished. “They want to know what you know.”

As students wrote, I looked for more classroom evidence of their writing. They had created paper concept cubes. We used these during Summer Institute, but George said he had been using them before that. He strung the light-weight cubes together, creating loops that draped across the full length of the bulletin board. Five essays were
tacked to the board in an attractive display. There was little space to put student work around the room.

Heads bent over their work, students concentrated on their writing in absolute silence except for an occasional sigh, perhaps of frustration. Although George had a podium up front with his notes on it, he walked the room nonstop. He set a timer for their writing. “Twenty-five minutes,” he said. He handed me one of his primary sources, an 1835 essay by Tocqueville. Time was up.

I observed George asking his students to describe the mental processes they went through to answer the questions. He then modeled his answer to the question and how he approached it as he wrote his own paragraph, describing how he started with bullet points of major themes and then added specific examples. When he asked the students if they used bullet points, a lively discussion ensued with students talking about their essays. George continued to draw out the reticent ones, asking them to describe their thought processes as they wrote their answers. Then, he reviewed the rubric and invited students to discuss why they did not receive points according to the rubric and to share their relevant answers. It was an outstanding example of modeling, sharing, and review. Although he did not teach the writing process per se, he engaged students in extensive writing that was meaningful to them because it was applicable to what they were trying to accomplish in his class. This reminded me of Zinsser (2006) who said that in order to learn to write, one must write. George’s students wrote. Sorenson (1991) pointed out that writing in the discipline, also called writing to learn, encourages each branch of learning.
to use its own conventions of language and style so that students might successfully participate in academic discourse.

During the next class, 12th grade history, I witnessed adaptations George made to a project he learned at a social studies conference; he included the addition of extensive writing. He began with a mystery sign on the classroom door: Westward Ho! The sign directed students to the computer lab across the hall to await instructions. They were amused and intrigued by this different beginning as they complied. Next, George closed his classroom door and quickly arranged learning stations within the room’s confines. He set four tri-fold display boards, prepared and labeled as A, B, C, and D, on tables around the room, pulling student desks around each board and placing lined journal pages at the stations. He added a digital camera to one and a CD player and digital camcorder to another. Then he crossed the hall to the students waiting in the computer room; they received instructions and packets for rotating through the four stations.

As students entered the classroom eager to begin, George encouraged them to “round up their wagons” (move desks) as close to the boards as possible. Their assignment was to collaborate to write one journal page for their group at each station. I witnessed an atmosphere of school support for innovation when the vice principal entered and walked around the room, carefully reading each station’s instructions as students worked on assigned tasks. George quietly discussed the purpose of the lessons with her. Every student was interested and engaged. The vice principal appeared interested as well and supportive of George’s innovative approach to teaching the history of westward expansion and the necessity of budgets. Surprisingly, this was an economics lesson; the
groups had to decide how much money they needed to buy equipment and supplies for
the entire trip.

Later, the principal came in and stayed nearly 15 minutes. He talked quietly with
George. “Great,” he said about the interactive lesson. Each group of four to six students
rotated to the next station every 15 minutes. At each station, students were required to
read, decide what to do, and then collaborate on writing a group journal page. The first
station instructed students to use masking tape and a yardstick to design a full-size
Conestoga wagon on the floor and then stock it with construction paper provisions for the
journey. At the second station, students chose their destination and route and then
gathered for a digital photograph of the group before they set out on their trek since,
“they might die tomorrow.” They used the digital camera George received during
Summer Institute.

At the third station, students listened to Sweet Betsy from Pike, wrote their own
journey lyrics, went into the hallway to sing it, recording it with the digital camcorder
that George received from the writing project during the Workshop on Workshops
training weekend. “Make sure it’s school-appropriate,” George reminded them. “The
technology was seamless and made the lesson so much better,” he commented later.

At the fourth station, students collaborated to write a journey journal, a diary of
their trip westward. This was accompanied by primary source readings of three
adventurers and a blank, lined page on which they were required to write their own
“primary source” journal of their adventures, based on parameters within the assignment
packet.
Every student was highly engaged in each station, even those who at first just stood back and observed. The song group went into the hall to record. The wagon group taped a wagon shape on the floor, sat in it to make sure there was enough room for all, and stocked it with paper shapes representing provisions. The route group planned their route amid much discussion. George constantly walked the room, but he did not help. It was up to each group to accomplish the tasks. The students ran out of time during the last rotation, and George instructed them to return to the classroom at specified times to complete their assignments.

The significance of this lesson is that George added a great deal more writing to a ready-made unit. He also added digital technology since he utilized the digital camera and Flip digital camcorder that were given to him by CWVWP. The original version of this unit asked students to analyze travel journals, songs, and so on, whereas George asked his students to design, create and write at each station. George talked about adding writing to his social studies classes because of Summer Institute:

With the writing project, what I got from that is that I thought, ‘Hey, what can they write about here?’ So I took a good teaching strategy and made it better. I considered how are they writing? What are they writing? When you look through the packet (created for each student), you can see that they’re writing in several places.

George specifically credited Summer Institute with his new emphasis on classroom writing:

Now I’m planning a week ahead, and I’m looking objectively, and I’m thinking,
are they writing? I mean, I used writing strategies before, but now I’m thinking, if I do *this*, I can have them write, and this will bridge the learning and help drive a point home or explore a new topic. I purposefully think about writing experiences now that I didn’t necessarily before. Before my writing project experience, it was just one other thing that I considered. But now I think, OK, this is what I can do, and these are some of the techniques. I think what I took away from the writing project is that now I purposely think about how my students write, if they’re writing, how can I make this a writing assignment. As you can see, I don’t necessarily throw everything else out, but I try to make sure they’re writing somehow, somewhat. So that’s what I took with me.

Finally, George added that there was one more thing he took from his writing project experience:

The free-writes that we had in the mornings during Summer Institute…most of the time I would just share but I was thinking about these things, and I thought, yes, it’s good to write. Even if I don’t collect it and give points, it’s good to write. And it’s good to share. I could see so many people wanting to share their work. I tried to work that into my classes, have a little bit of writing and sharing, even if I don’t collect those kinds of things. So there were several things, little things, that I carried with me from that experience.

**Joanna:** *Beginning with enthusiasm*

“The writing project has given me an arsenal of possibilities to use. Not only do I use the activities the fellows shared in Summer Institute, but I also refer to our (Gallagher, 2006)
Joanna was a middle school teacher of English and language arts. She had a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Education and had taught for four years. Her story was complex because it involved two schools with different styles of leadership that dramatically affected her teaching practice. She began by explaining her motive for giving up three weeks of summer vacation to participate in an extended and intensive professional development program to teach writing and what she learned from it. “My honest reason for joining Summer Institute was to earn graduate credit to renew my license, but I gained so much more than my graduate hours. It wasn’t easy, but I learned a tremendous amount,” she commented.

During Summer Institute, Joanna chose to do a literature review of the role of creative writing in secondary education. From this, she concluded that opportunities for creative writing were important for students and that creative writing should be incorporated in all grades. She also found that secondary school students are not given sufficient time to express themselves creatively in writing, that their teachers are often confined by concept maps designed to prepare students for the workforce. Her report was significant because of what it taught her – that it was important to engage secondary school students in the process of writing creatively. Joanna was introduced to literature circles by her Summer Institute colleague, Anne. She learned how to use literature circles effectively, including a four-square method of studying vocabulary. This also played a role when she transferred to her next school.
Joanna finished Summer Institute with a great deal of enthusiasm for teaching writing. In her last day’s reflection, she wrote:

The past three weeks have been both challenging and fun. The CWVWP challenged me as a writer to explore expressing myself in different genres. Also, listening to others’ classroom writing activities sparked new ideas for me to include in my classes! I’ve grown tremendously as a writer and teacher.

By the time she attended the required follow-up meeting four months later to report on her students, reality had set in, and she realized that writing was a challenging proposition for middle school teachers and students. She wrote, “This fall has been a challenge. I did not dream that my students would put little effort into their writing and school work. I thought they would come to class ready to write masterpieces.”

She persisted, however, realizing that she needed to start with simple assignments and work up to paragraphs. “The first time I asked them to write a paragraph, I received two sentences,” she said. She reported using modeling, encouragement and hints to guide them. To make writing assignments interesting for her students, she tried different techniques and novel assignments such as writing a complete story in 55 words. Her efforts bore fruit. “They have proven to be great writers with their own unique style,” she reported.

She said that CWVWP opened her eyes to a new way of thinking about writing that influenced her teaching:

I have always believed that a piece of writing is never finished, and the writing project only reinforced my belief. However, the major lesson I learned at Summer
Institute was that I needed to be writing with my students. They cannot see the purpose of writing if I do not demonstrate the importance. Plus, the wonderful (demonstrations) the fellows provided over the summer have worked wonders with my students. They were excited to put together their writer’s notebooks. They also know that I plan to make writing more interesting if they open their minds. My students now understand that everyone must write on a daily basis in order to grow as a writer.

First onsite visit

Toward the end of the school year in May 2008, Joanna had completed peer-teaching, and I was invited to visit her middle school classroom where I hoped to see evidence of creative student writing. I was not disappointed. She greeted me at the door with five brightly-illustrated, creative samples of her students’ writing based on a George Ella Lyons poem. Scotch tape lingered around the edges of the papers, evidence that they had been mounted for display. Joanna excused herself for a moment to speak with her partnering teacher, leaving me alone to settle into a chair as her eighth-grade students entered. They were immediately curious about my presence.

“Are you our teacher?” they asked. “We’d like for you to be. Would you make us write like Ms. Joanna does?”

“I’m director of the writing project,” I responded. “What do you think?”

“Oh.” They sounded disappointed.

Joanna soon had them working in collaborative groups on large sentence strips that needed commas for meaning. Under her direction, each member adopted a role that
impacted on the final presentation. Using their grammar books as a resource, they copied sentences onto the strips, glued on dry macaroni commas to clarify meaning, and then illustrated and presented their finished sentences. “Remember,” she instructed them, “a comma directs the reader to pause.” Every student appeared engaged in the task of translating, illustrating, and presenting their sentences; they took an interest in seeing the work of the other groups, too. When the lesson ended, they asked permission to display their work on the now empty bulletin board. Then they carefully stapled their sentence strips for all to appreciate. Thus, within a short period of time, I witnessed evidence of Joanna successfully using two specific lessons that had been presented during Summer Institute: A collaborative technique for teaching grammar and the George Ella Lyons poem to inspire creative writing. I also noted the student’s comment about writing.

Joanna added:

I wanted new ideas to take back to my classroom. I definitely got those from other teachers plus other things that I can use. …Everything we used (in the institute) is readily available for me to pull off my shelf either at home or at school, depending on where I’m doing my lesson plans.

Eight months later in January 2009, Joanna reported that she continued to use her writing project materials, despite a constraining lack of school support:

My kids are amazed sometimes when I pull out my writing project notebook, and they see that it’s so thick, and I pull ideas out of it. And they ask, ‘Are we going to do that?’ And I say, ‘Yes, we are.’ They get excited, and they ask, ‘Where did you get that big notebook?’ And I tell them that I took a class, and they’re
intrigued that I took a class to learn new ideas.

Joanna initially sought to influence her peers, including her partnering teacher who had been using the same writing ideas for ten years. “I was her student in middle school,” she explained, “and I remember one of my projects from her class. It was yellow with giraffes on it. She’s still using the same project.” She reported trying to inspire her partner by sharing successful lessons with her and by putting writing project ideas in her school mailbox. At the beginning of the fall semester, Joanna was encouraged to become a school leader by her assistant principal who invited her to do a presentation to the faculty after hearing that she peer-taught in a Central West Virginia Writing Project workshop for county teachers. Thus, she presented a lesson with handouts to two groups of 25 teachers each, based on the book used in her professional development series, *Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test*. Although nervous at first, she soon became a confident peer-teacher, even creating a new lesson involving concept cubes that she field-tested with her students and then presented to fellow teachers, saying, “I did this with my kids.” I asked her how she felt about peer teaching when it was over. “I felt like I had accomplished something,” she responded. “It was a good feeling. Even though I was nervous, it was always a good feeling. I wasn’t intimidated or overwhelmed.”

Peer-teaching also benefitted her students. “My kids think it’s cool that I’m taking their work out of the room to show to other teachers as an example, as exemplary pieces. They thought they were big time.”
**Second onsite visit**

One year after Summer Institute, Joanna found it necessary for personal reasons to transfer to another school. My second visit with her was in October of that year. I found her teaching 8th grade English in a large, brightly-lit classroom with student desks in the center and computers with chairs lining the walls. An Intelliboard Whiteboard, curiously draped in heavy, clear plastic, dominated one end of the room behind the teacher desk. Although no student writing samples were on display, I was glad to see Joanna engaged in a hands-on activity with her students. They were making book jackets on which they would write an abstract of *Sounder*. “You may work on your book jacket,” she told them, “and then work on your literature circles that are due Tuesday.” Students chose to continue making book jackets or to move their desks into groups where one student in each group read the book aloud until the class ended.

When the next group entered, a pre-advanced placement (pre-AP) class of 27 students, I was surprised to see Joanna handing them grammar/vocabulary, fill-in-the-blank worksheets. She warned them that they would all have detention hall unless they were quiet and on-task for the rest of the day. After twenty minutes, she instructed them to move their desks into literature circles and read three chapters in class. This group repeated the process of grouping three or four chairs that I had seen earlier as they read, discussed, and summarized *October Sky*. It was very noisy.

Joanna explained that the literature circle was an idea she adapted from Anne during Summer Institute, but this version was necessary because she had only 17 books for 30 students, and so they took turns reading to each other. They did not have enough
books because she and her partnering teacher were required by their principal to assign sixty to seventy students to read the same book and do the same lessons at the same time. There was no money to buy additional books, and the principal would not agree to the teachers’ request to allow one class to read one book while the second class read the other book. He insisted that Joanna and her teaching partner submit a single lesson plan based on workbook pages for all the students. She shared with me the fill-in-the-blank worksheets and grammar pages assigned to the students. She commented on “the monotony of this routine,” adding:

We were told that our plans would match, so we turn in one set of lesson plans that has both of our names on it. Basically, it’s the same format each day. We have to do the vocabulary, and then we move to grammar, and then we move to reading with some writing in there.

During an interview later that afternoon, Joanna explained that her classroom was actually a working computer lab. If another teacher needed to use it, she took her students and materials and switched classrooms with that person. She reported that this was disruptive to both her and her students, and it happened about once a month. “The expectations (of this school) are a huge adjustment for me,” she added. When I asked her why the Intelliboard Whiteboard was covered with plastic, she explained that it was stored there in the computer lab, its laptop and data projector were someplace else so that it was inoperable, and she would not use it with her students at any rate because she was afraid they would tear it up. She had nothing in her classroom on which she could write…neither boards nor flipcharts. She explained that sometimes she created lined
paper with a prompt at the top for the students to write about, and sometimes she used the overhead projector.

“So,” I summarized, “you have an Intelliboard, but you don’t have enough books for your students to read.”

“Right,” Joanna replied. “And we have an Intelliboard but nothing to hook it up to.”

When I asked about her efforts to guide her students to write creatively, she explained that she had not been able to introduce composition because she and her co-teacher were finding it difficult to teach writing, grammar, and reading daily, and she did not know how to connect creative writing to required assignments. There was no time to implement her ideas. Finally, I asked Joanna how she would like to teach her students. She said:

In Utopia, in my dream world? Definitely, the two classes would be separated. I would focus on writing and grammar, and I would have the other teacher teach literature so that they’re getting everything they need to get. I feel right now we’re slighting the children. They’re not getting all of it, a good foundation right now. And I wouldn’t mind the writing and grammar part. I enjoy it. They would be more focused, and we could get to the creative writing and have more time to work on stories. These kids have been asking to write a story, but my concept maps for everything are tying me down. And it bothers me. It’s very frustrating. So I’m hoping something will give at some point.”

As I prepared to leave, Joanna added,
Last year I sat and wrote with my children so they could see me doing the same process, and they really enjoyed that. I hope I can get there (with these students). I really want to push them to be the best they can be.

**Emerging Theme of Influences of Administration on Teachers’ Implementation of Skills**

Both George and Joanna illustrated writing project influences on classroom practice that reflect the findings of Noe and Colquitt (2002) who state that “employees tend to behave according to their perceptions of the work environment” (p. 68). Their reports of research suggest that trainees (teachers) who work in a supportive climate are more likely to exhibit high levels of motivation to learn and to implement what they have learned. They explain that climate for transfer refers to trainees’ perceptions of the work environment that influence the use of what they have learned. “Research clearly demonstrates that the climate for transfer does influence motivation to learn as well as…transfer of training” (Noe and Colquitt, p. 69).

George received support and recognition from his school supervisors for his innovative classroom practices, several of which were influenced by his participation in the writing project. With the help of the writing project, Joanna gave indications of blossoming into a self-confident teacher and peer leader for writing until she transferred to her second school. It was disheartening to see her enthusiasm, creativity, and love for teaching appear to be hindered by the very problems she had found in her research: that while opportunities for creative writing were important for students and while creative writing should be incorporated in all grades, secondary school students were not given
sufficient time to express themselves creatively in writing because their teachers were often confined by concept maps and constrained by a lack of school support.

Anne: Changing her focus

“Reading is basically what you teach in kindergarten. There’s some math, but basically your days revolve around reading. All morning long we do reading.” (Anne)

Anne began Summer Institute as a fourth/fifth grade teacher who was interested in learning how to engage her students in the writing process. She had a Master of Arts degree in specific learning disabilities K-8 and had taught for six years in special education and elementary. After only one week in Summer Institute, however, she was given a new assignment by her county, that of kindergarten teacher. As a result, she chose methods of teaching emergent reading as her research topic. Although she titled her paper, *How can I teach emergent writing to preschool children*, the resources she used in her five-page report focused almost entirely on teaching reading.

While the early childhood assignment changed her emphasis considerably when it came to teaching writing, she reported that she considered writing to be important and that she emphasized writing much more than she would have had she not experienced Summer Institute and peer-teaching. In May 2008, I observed her leading her 18 students through an exercise of listening to a big book and helping them think of sentences for her to print on the white board. Next, they chose individual sentences to copy onto their papers and to illustrate, and they read their sentences to her. She reported that had it not been for the writing project, she would not have included this writing activity but instead
would have relied on workbook pages that featured fill-in-the-blanks. A year later she wrote about the writing center in her classroom:

Since writing and reading are somewhat new concepts to these students, I keep the word wall and sight word chart available at all times. I use the writing center for morning journals and as a free choice writing resource for students to explore the word baskets and picture dictionary. This also gives them a chance to freely write and illustrate without instruction.

One student looked around the room, checked the word wall and sight-word chart, and found the word, flower that she needed to write on her paper. A second child asked me to spell the word, plant. Since both children needed this word for their papers, I spelled it for them. Writing can be difficult, and students need time to connect to the task. Once the students were finished writing, I asked them to share what they had written with each other.

Although I privately felt that more creative writing could be done with the children (Standing, 1957), Anne was comfortable teaching in a classroom that she called “very structured”. “I’m preparing these children for first grade,” she insisted. She stated that her primary goal for them was to teach them to read. She appeared to be following an education philosophy similar to a pedagogy described by Vaughn (2002) that included a teacher-centered classroom, imposed hierarchies on students, extrinsic and teacher-governed motivation for learning, and non-inclusive curricula. For instance, her first writing center consisted of children assigned to sit at a rectangular table for a specified amount of time and to copy sentences from the board. A year later she described to me a
less structured writing center in which children could possibly create stories with the help of a word wall.

**Another participant: Not all achieved success**

It was necessary for me to add a nuance to this dissertation since writing project professional development did not work the same for all teachers, and not all achieved success. One teacher in particular seemed to have problems transferring appropriate practices to the classroom. As I wrote about this person, it was imperative that I maintained the teacher’s anonymity. Thus, it was essential for me to substitute cumbersome pronoun forms in this discussion when referring to the unidentified participant.

During Summer Institute’s application process that involved writing and interviews, it was obvious that the teacher was a talented and enthusiastic writer as s/he described participating in local writing groups over an extended span of time. The applicant could certainly write, and s/he stated that s/he needed help with teaching her/his students to become writers. In addition, the participant wrote and talked about having many positive writing experiences with her/his students, describing them as developing writers. S/he reported not only asking but also expecting students to write.

After joining Summer Institute, the teacher talked about having serious issues with administrators, including school and county supervisors. During interviews, when asked why s/he joined the writing project, this person expressed a desire to impress administrators as well as her/himself with her/his abilities as a teacher. On a number of occasions, the participant expressed hope that through the writing project, s/he would find
validation for her/his worth as a writing teacher. S/he felt that s/he had been criticized to such an extent that s/he began to doubt her/his abilities to teach.

As Summer Institute director, I caught the first glimmer of a problem when it was time for the participant to present a demonstration of a good method to teach writing. One stipulation for all summer fellows was for the demonstration to include an audience activity that involved more than writing. S/he handed me a required lesson plan, but I found that it consisted of lecturing, even though s/he based it on a book replete with hands-on activities. With the help of extensive coaching by Summer Institute leaders, s/he finally wrote an approved lesson plan that s/he then presented. However, s/he skipped over the interactive elements of her/his plan when presenting it. Instead of involving the audience in an activity, s/he described the activity as something they could do with their students in the future. During the critique that immediately followed the presentation, Summer Institute leaders pointed out this omission, and s/he seemed to understand.

In a number of interviews, the participant expressed enthusiasm for writing project professional development. The experience was helpful to her/him, s/he stated, giving her/him numerous ideas to use with students. Thus, I looked forward to visiting this teacher’s classroom, and I expected to see active and enthusiastic students. When I arrived at her/his classroom toward the end of the following school year, s/he handed me two students’ writing samples with names blacked out, explaining that these were completed papers, one of the best from second period and one of the weakest from first period. The paper that s/he deemed the weakest was less than a page, written in scrawling
pencil. I immediately wondered what the teacher had done to help this student improve. But reminding myself that I was there to observe, not to judge, I did not ask. Instead, I settled into a chair where I could observe her/his interactions with the students. What I saw was a teacher who lectured, read to, cajoled, and admonished a classroom full of young teens.

The participant had engaged in every writing project activity we offered, including Workshop on Workshops, a required fall follow-up with peers, two sessions with published authors, and extensive peer teaching. S/he talked enthusiastically about them all. Thus, I was surprised to observe no evidence of writing project experiences in her/his classroom during my first visit except for two techniques that I felt were being used for the first time because of my presence, and one technique that had been labeled as ineffective by the author of our summer institute textbook.

“Writing is a lonely process” (Glesne, 2006, p.177). I was reminded by Glesne that writing is isolating by its very nature, out of necessity, as the writer sits by herself in an empty room with only a keyboard for company. I felt lonely and sad as I transcribed this classroom observation. I had witnessed numerous examples of excellent teaching when visiting classrooms, and I deeply wished that this visit could have been more favorable. Yet, as an experienced observer, I knew that what I recorded was true. It took four months for me to share an unfavorable observation with my collaborator, and I feared that s/he would quit the study in disgust. Amazingly, s/he did not. Instead, s/he sent me an e-mail thanking me for sending a revealing observation and inviting me to return for an extended visit the following fall. S/he promised that I would see changes in
her/his teaching. Feeling that heavy weights were lifted from my shoulders, I was hopeful that I would indeed see pedagogical improvement during my second onsite visit.

Over the years, I have observed people who have been trained in customer service, as early childhood practitioners, and as university pre-service teachers. Because the span of my observation time is miniscule in terms of a person’s actual practice, I am cautious with criticism. I also invite and encourage rebuttal, asking the observed persons to add their perspectives as the experts on their own behavior. I expect people to come to their own defense, and I was surprised when my unnamed participant did not do so. But I was even more surprised to see no substantial changes during my second visit when I observed for three class periods.

While the teacher did make use of a particular video on writing, obtained through the writing project, I observed her/him spend hour after hour lecturing, giving advice, reading aloud, reading and explaining handouts, and even acting out scenes of the video before showing those same scenes. During class after class, the teacher showed video segments, gave the students five minutes or so to write, and then instructed students to divide themselves into peer-editing groups and give each other advice on required essays. Students moved their desks together, read to each other, and returned to their places before being dismissed for their next class. During one class, two students asked for help with revising an assignment, and their teacher told them to look for ideas in their textbook. S/he also described telling her/his students that s/he was going to let them go through the entire writing process for the next essay on their own as homework during the weekend, adding that they could come to her/him for help if needed.
I did not see a variation of this routine during my time observing, nor did I see a working lesson plan. At one point, I asked the participant if s/he used lesson plans and was told that it was difficult for her/him to write extensive plans because s/he felt that the plans might have to change, depending on student needs. S/he added that s/he had explained this to supervisors. The participant shared with me that s/he continued having difficulties with administrators to the extent that s/he tried to transfer to other schools but was unable to do so. One principal advised her/him to work things out in her/his current situation before thinking about going anywhere else. At the same time, the participant insisted that writing project professional development was “very effective” in terms of her/his classroom teaching, giving her/him “a plethora of ideas” to use with students.

Summary

While seven participants scored a high number of incidences of writing project influence on their classroom practice, the stories of George, Joanna, Anne, and another participant illustrate the complexity that can exist behind the numbers. George began Summer Institute insisting that his work as a social studies teacher had nothing to do with writing; he also threatened to drop out on more than one occasion. However, he found himself, in his words, “drawn back in” by his peer relationships, and before long, he embraced writing in the discipline. Describing his peer teaching experience as totally worthwhile, he became an advocate for writing and for writing project professional development. He also found creative ways for his students to use the digital camera and camcorder to inspire writing.
Joanna left Summer Institute with an enthusiasm for teaching writing that carried her through the next school year. She worked with her students, encouraging them to become better writers, and she ultimately succeeded as evidenced by samples of creative student work. Her creativity included a successful experience as a peer teacher that led to opportunities for her to become a peer leader within her school. Yet when unfortunate circumstances that included serious threats to her health made it necessary for her to transfer to another school, Joanna seemed to hit a brick wall as a writing teacher. She found herself unable to move beyond a concept map of expectations that she had to follow with another teacher. In January 2009, I asked her if her classroom situation had become more flexible for her. Her response was disheartening. “Not yet,” she said. “In fact, it’s become even more difficult and different.”

Anne began Summer Institute as a teacher who taught writing, but her interests shifted to teaching reading when she accepted a kindergarten position. Nonetheless, she reported making efforts to include writing and a writing center because of influences of the writing project. She also used her digital camera, given to her during Summer Institute, to create a website designed to communicate with her students’ parents.

The fourth participant, however, consistently reported being positively influenced by writing project professional development, and s/he talked about specific knowledge that s/he gleaned and specific things s/he was teaching her/his students. However, it appeared that her/his idea of teaching was to lecture, read from a book, show videos, talk to her/his students as a whole group, and expect them to teach each other through peer editing. Although s/he did make use of several books received as part of her/his writing
project experiences, s/he seemed to copy them or read from them instead of using them to spark ideas for active student learning.

**Question Three**

To what extent does the Central West Virginia Writing Project’s program fit parameters of quality professional development design and implementation as defined by Backus (2005) and perceived by teacher participants?

Backus reported six parameters of quality professional development: that it is targeted, collaborative, ongoing, time-friendly, reflective, and evaluated. To investigate this question, I adapted research statements that Backus sent to teachers via a survey and created statements for each participant to address in writing and discussion during the second focus group. Because attitudes have a great impact on motivation and subsequent learning and transfer (Noe & Colquitt, 2002), I added an additional parameter of being worthwhile: “The time spent on this professional development was worthwhile to me.” Then, I presented the statements during a focus group meeting. The attendees first approached the questions independently, jotting their answers and impressions in notebooks. Next, they discussed each statement within the focus group while I taped their thoughts and responses. The focus group statements are shown in Appendix E: Final Questions about Writing Project Professional Development. Every participant agreed that writing project professional development met all parameters of quality as shown in Appendix D: Research Findings by Participant Totals. I selected two teachers, Rachel and Daisy, to represent in-depth participant reactions to question three.

*Rachel: An experienced teacher*
Rachel was a fifth grade teacher. She had a Master of Arts degree in elementary education and was certified in elementary, secondary, and academically gifted education. Her background included teaching juveniles in prison. She had taught for 14 years. She joined Summer Institute as a seasoned teacher who had encountered continual teacher professional development experiences.

**Targeted and collaborative**

Rachel talked about the writing project as an excellent professional development model that was both targeted and collaborative:

When I went through Summer Institute, I already taught lots of writing. But it got me out of a rut because of the new things presented. Although I teach fifth grade, I was able to take some of the high school teachers' ideas and use them to challenge my students. Getting ideas and activities across grade levels helps. It helped me see that we all have these same issues, whether we teach high school or middle school or elementary school writing. It’s nice to share ideas across grade levels to meet those needs.

In the writing project, Rachel recognized a strong collaborative element, feeling that every participant contributed. “It wasn’t just a one-man show or a clique or anything,” she added. She pointed out that teachers in her assigned small group constantly shared ideas that worked in their classrooms. It helped her clarify connections that existed between elementary school and high school by having mixed grade levels represented. She observed that typical professional development did not allow for collaboration between school levels to that extent. “Professional development is usually
divided by elementary together,” she explained, “and even at that, it’s usually primary
together and then intermediate. And middle school and high school are separated.”

Her observation agreed with the findings of Lieberman and Wood (2003) when
they reported: “Networks like the NWP bridge the traditional boundaries that separate
teachers, keeping them from collaborating with each other” (p. 89).

**Ongoing**

The ongoing element of in-service, called “continuity” in writing project parlance,
appealed to Rachel. Continuity activities included lunches and suppers featuring West
Virginia authors and fellow writing project teachers as presenters, as well as a retreat
with a research focus. She began attending monthly leadership team meetings (open to all
writing project teachers) after she was invited to serve as editor of the Central West
Virginia Writing Project newsletter. She became a peer teacher, as did every participant
(shown in Appendix A: Teacher-Participants’ Schedules for Peer Teaching, Focus
Groups, Onsite Visits, and Interviews and in Appendix B: CWVWP In-service Delivery
in Three Counties), and she was invited to return to Summer Institute the following year
to show incoming writing project teachers her method of using Writer’s Notebook. In
addition, Rachel spent three days at a retreat with four other writing project members,
choosing resources for future professional development presentations. While she was
paid a small stipend for her presentations, no one received a stipend for attending the
retreat.

All continuity activities were designed to add to Rachel’s professional
development as a teacher and teacher leader, following Gray’s (2000) teachers-at-the-
center model of the National Writing Project. Rachel’s enthusiastic participation in continuity activities was corroborated by research of Lieberman and Wood (2003) who found that writing project “teachers felt compelled to share their best work, read research and other literature, explore and discuss ideas pertaining to literacy, inquire into their own practice, and take on leadership roles” (p. 89).

**Time-friendly**

While the expectation for typical in-service events is that they are held within the teacher’s workday, thus being time-friendly (Backus, 2005), Rachel expressed her disagreement with that philosophy:

I can’t concentrate on a workshop when I’m pulled out of my classroom. I’m thinking, what are my students doing? I don’t like in-service during school. I’m on a leadership team, and I get pulled out once a month for that and more for technology training…We also get frustrated by early dismissals that we heard were originally set up so teachers could catch up on grades and lesson plans. Now it’s all professional development during those hours.

Each participant agreed that writing project professional development was time-friendly because it did not take place during school hours and thus did not interfere with teaching. They expressed frustration at being forced to attend meetings instead of having time to work on personal issues related to teaching. Joanna stated, “Day before yesterday was supposed to be a teacher workday, and we were in meetings until 2:30. I would love to have cleaned my room.”
Sissy added that she was frustrated with required in-service meetings that took her away from her students, feeling that their needs should come first. All participants conveyed their aggravation as a result of similar experiences. Noe and Colquitt (2002) refer to this element of training impact as organizational justice, or the perceived fairness of decision-making in organizations. They state, “Organizational justice is particularly relevant to the assignment of trainees to training situations. Research shows that trainees react more favorably when they choose to attend training and when they have some input into training content” (pp. 69-70). Lieberman and Wood (2003) also reported that “mandated and prescribed improvement programs for teachers have had weak results over time” (p. 92). This was significant since the design of all writing project professional development activities involved voluntary attendance; content included personal input and choice.

Writing project professional development activities encouraged collaboration through teamwork. “If (teachers) are expected to work in teams,” Noe and Colquitt (2002) found, “they should learn new skills as teams… The training environment should be congruent with and reinforce the work environment” (p. 70). The collaborative spirit of Summer Institute in which Rachel worked for three weeks as a team member and afterward on a team planning for peer-teaching was evident in her pedagogy. When I first visited her fifth grade classroom in May 2008, her students were spread throughout the room, many sprawled on their stomachs on the floor, working together to create PowerPoint slides. All were busily brainstorming and writing, seriously discussing their ideas. Their teacher walked the room, engaging the children in clarifying conversations,
answering questions, and offering advice and encouragement. Rachel explained to me that they were creating a class slideshow, an idea that she adapted during Summer Institute, as a gift for rising fourth graders. Its purpose was to explain fifth grade activities that future students might experience. Rachel incorporated additional technology into this project by inviting her students to use the digital cameras and camcorder that she received from the writing project. The children took pictures to illustrate their slides, and Rachel burned the images onto CDs for them to upload.

Collaborative teamwork continued to be a common theme in Rachel’s classroom. My second visit occurred in October 2008 when school had been in session for two months. On that day, 20 student desks were pulled together into teams of four to six children, and Rachel was leading a class discussion of story hooks. “What do we never, ever use to start a story?” she asked.

Her students responded with answers: “Once upon a time. One sunshiny day.”

“Then what can you use?” she queried.

They called out acceptable beginnings to hook the reader. “Questions. Sounds. Dialogue.”

“That’s right,” their teacher affirmed. “Now spend two minutes writing as many story hooks as you can.”

She set a digital timer, adding an element of believability to the two-minute rule. The students bent over their work, silently writing. Rachel used picture prompts, demonstrated during Summer Institute, to inspire their writing. Next, she instructed them to share their responses within their teams and to choose three favorites per group. One
child in each group was chosen to be the reader who would share the team’s results with the class. Everyone was attentive, showing interest in others’ ideas.

Rachel guided them to save their ideas in the appropriate section of their writer’s notebooks under the heading, “Leads.” She began a graphic organizer for a story, using a photo prompt of an egg and an overhead projector and leading students through the step-by-step process of creating their own five-paragraph essay. As they began writing, she told me that she also used mini-lessons to correct common grammar and writing errors. Mini-lessons and modeling were introduced as effective teaching techniques during Summer Institute.

Reflective

Backus’ (2005) concept of reflection was more difficult for many participants to address. “Do I reflect?” they asked themselves. While some claimed in a cursory, general way to reflect (“Yes, I reflect. Don’t all teachers reflect?”), Rachel added a personal note: “I guess the statement about reflection caused me to ask more questions about myself…did I reflect enough or did I reflect deeply enough to make a difference to my students?” She talked about the new awareness she felt toward research after taking part in investigating a personal question about teaching during Summer Institute. “When my supervisors hand me something and tell me it is research based and so we’re going to implement it,” she said, “I find myself constantly thinking, ‘Who did the research? I want to know about it. Don’t just hand it to me.’”
When I pointed out to the participants that they were engaging in reflection as part of the focus group and interviews, they laughed at the irony of not recognizing their reflections as reflection.

**Evaluated**

When asked if their professional development was evaluated, most recognized my involvement with them through this research as the prime method of evaluation to determine the professional development impact on their learning and teaching. While the National Writing Project conducts annual comprehensive evaluations of impact on teachers’ pedagogy (National Writing Project, 2005; National Writing Project, 2006, February), it is up to leaders at each site to assess the influence of their professional development programs on their teachers and classrooms.

**Worthwhile**

All participants reacted with a strong, positive response to the final statement: “Time spent on this professional development experience was worthwhile to me.” This statement reflects research reported on motivation and career attitudes, including influences of self-efficacy and valence (Noe & Colquitt, 2002). Rachel’s sense of increased self-efficacy was typified by her approach to peer-teaching. For their peer-teaching presentations, participants were invited to use the teaching demonstrations that they had developed and presented during Summer Institute. Rachel chose not to do this but to create a different topic instead. She tested her new idea with her students, and they were delighted not only with the creative lesson, but also with knowing that their classroom examples would be shown to other teachers the next evening. Although Rachel
reported being nervous on the day of her scheduled presentation, she appeared confident as she presented her classroom ideas, and then she went on to become a frequent peer-presenter. She reported that using her students’ work as samples for peers gave her children an added incentive to do well: “If I tell (my students) that I’m going to take their writing somewhere, they write ten times better than if they think I’m the only one who’s going to see it. It gives them real-world purpose.”

Valence refers to the attractiveness of training outcomes, feelings that the professional development experience is worthwhile for personal reasons (Noe & Colquitt, 2002). One of Rachel’s initial hopes, expressed during in February 2008, was that she could make a difference by helping her colleagues move away from teaching writing with grammar workbooks. She specifically credited the writing project with helping her accomplish this, stating, “(My colleague) is still using the grammar book, but she’s also doing more writing. I talk to her about how we teach grammar and skills while we write….So she’s seeing that process now.”

Rachel talked at length about how she went through a writing lesson with her students for the benefit of her fellow teacher. She reported,

I’ve shared my demo idea (from Summer Institute) about Writer’s Notebook with more people than I can count. I helped my fifth grade partner set that up in her classroom, and her kids are writing every day even though she’s still using the grammar book. The other thing I’ve helped her see is that we have to model writing for the children. We have to show them how to do it, every piece of it.
It did not take long for her principal to recognize Rachel’s leadership qualities, and she was invited to join the school’s leadership team, further validating her abilities as a teacher-leader. Helping others, which relates to feelings of increased valence, continued to be an important goal for Rachel. During an interview in October 2008, she reflected, These experiences taught me to move from being a writer to being a teacher of writers. The writing project has given me the opportunity to help others learn how to teach writing…to give back. Peer-teaching, giving back to other teachers, to be able to help others…it’s a great experience.

**Daisy: Building confidence as a first-year teacher**

Daisy was a high school English teacher who had just completed her first year of teaching when she applied for Summer Institute. She had a Master of Arts degree, was certified to teach English 5-Adult, and was finishing her leadership certification. As a first-year teacher, Daisy joined Summer Institute with feelings of not knowing. In her application, she wrote about her initial high school teaching experience and the lack of having a mentor:

I started substitute teaching in the spring of 2005 while I was working on my master’s degree in education. Due to a critical need for English teachers, I completed my student teaching as the classroom teacher. I sometimes wonder if I missed out on learning new strategies because I did not have a supervising teacher…I often feel that because I am a new teacher, what is new and exciting to me may not be new and exciting to a veteran teacher. I want to learn what other teachers are doing to ensure high scores on the writing assessment. I hope to learn
new strategies to use to make my students and myself better writers.

**Targeted**

Addressing parameters of being targeted to her needs, she attributed writing project professional development with helping her meet professional and personal goals:

(Summer Institute) provided me with new strategies to bring back to my classroom. It taught me to teach other teachers, and it gave me the opportunity to learn other ways to teach writing from actual teachers. It related to my students’ needs by providing many unique ways to get them to write — (author) Barry Lane’s strategies, for instance and ideas from (the book), *Blowing away the State Writing Assessment Test*.

Daisy felt that Summer Institute professional development was more targeted to her teaching needs than in-service offered by her school system, saying, “They’re trying to find something that goes across all the courses and, well, you can’t do that.” She described the importance of being able to focus on the single topic of writing:

In the writing project where we are all learning about writing, even though it can be across the curriculum, we were just focused on writing. Everybody that was sitting there was thinking, okay, we’re talking about writing, and how can I use writing in my classroom, in my math classroom?

I witnessed some of the creative ideas for writing that Daisy gleaned from her Summer Institute experience when I visited her classroom in May 2008. Student writing and related artwork decorated the walls: decorative letters in Chinese calligraphy adding
to Haiku poetry; artistic illustrations of vocabulary words humongous, oratory, and
dramatic duo; colorful windsock publishing projects with flowing streamers hanging
from the ceiling. She also used writing prompts, brainstorming, and personal stories
during my visit to introduce an assignment on the death of Julius Caesar from whence
originated the term, back-stabbing. During an October 2008 interview, Daisy talked about
engaging her tenth grade students with creative writing influenced by writing project
professional development:

We have worked with Greek mythology, and (my students) wrote their own myth
about the creation of the acorn. We worked on choosing strong verbs, imagery,
the senses — all from the Barry Lane workshop that I went to with the writing
project. (My students) really enjoyed watching the Barry Lane video… I did a
RAFT (graphic organizer) with them. I also learned that (technique) at the writing
project…We’re going to read *The Great Gatsby*, and they’re going to write
newspaper articles from the 1920s. They’re going to have to research the 1920s
and then write editorials and obituaries tying in literature from *The Great
Gatsby*…They do basic journals and reading logs, and they’re getting ready to
write their own storybooks that will be illustrated by fourth graders.

She also used watercolors, called illuminated pages, to add excitement to a poetry
unit. This idea was demonstrated by a middle school peer during Summer Institute. She
described her students’ reaction to hallway publishing of their watercolor-decorated work
on poetry:

They knew that their poetry summary and analysis (project) was going out in the
hallway, and I wasn’t just going to put a checkmark on it and put it in a portfolio or throw it away. So they took extra care with it.

**Collaborative and ongoing**

When asked about collaborative and ongoing elements of writing project professional development, Daisy responded enthusiastically:

This is the best professional development I have ever received because of the ongoing training and the ability to gain (continued) feedback from others. We all shared our ideas and expanded on the ideas of others. The dinners throughout the year provided a jumpstart for ideas that were given in earlier sessions…All the meetings and activities involved peer sharing.

A year later in February 2009, Daisy continued to feel connected to her writing project cohort. She wrote, “I feel as though I am part of a larger group, and I feel comfortable going to members of this group for help or ideas.”

**Time-friendly**

Like other participants, Daisy felt that writing project professional development was time-friendly because it was held outside of school hours. "The institute was held over the summer,” she stated, “and other activities did not interfere with my school schedule.” Even as a new teacher, she reported disliking required in-service that interfered with her classroom work by being scheduled during school hours.

**Reflective**

Daisy felt that writing project professional development was reflective because of the required meeting following Summer Institute and because of her participation in this
research study. She also mentioned her Summer Institute research, saying, “During the institute, I did research to improve student achievement, and I continue to use research in my classroom.” In addition, Daisy reported searching for new ideas to use with her students by using the Internet while she was leading a peer-teaching series.

**Evaluated**

Daisy credited this research study with her impressions that her professional development experience was evaluated. She said, “My professional development was evaluated during follow-up meetings and visits. I was asked how this experience impacted my teaching. As a result, I encourage and provide many more writing activities in my classroom now than before I attended the institute.”

It is important to note that incentives played a role in teachers’ participation in some writing project activities. Teacher-participants were paid a stipend of $1,000 to attend the Summer Institute. They were invited to become peer teachers who were paid $150 for a presentation, $400 for serving as assistant series coordinator, and $800 for serving as series coordinator. Although most stipends did not begin to pay for the time and effort put forth by these teachers, writing project leaders felt that stipends provided important recognition for teachers’ professional expertise. Teacher-participants did not receive a stipend for attending the optional Workshop on Workshops training weekend, writing project supper meetings, leadership team meetings, and a three-day reading and writing retreat. Motivating factors in their participation in these events appeared to be intrinsic. For instance, even though Daisy was considered to be a new teacher since she had only one year of classroom experience, as writing project director, I felt that she
showed such creative leadership abilities and writing talent that I invited her to serve as an assistant series coordinator peer teacher. I issued this invitation many months before proposing this research study. Daisy’s reaction to peer teaching exemplified that of her cohort peers:

The (teachers attending the series) just really took a lot of ideas back to their classrooms. There’s a lot of writing going on in classrooms across XX County because we held a workshop series. The writing project is doing a lot of great things because we know we’re giving teachers actual strategies. We’re giving them pretty much a recipe on how to teach writing for a lot of teachers who don’t know how and who aren’t writing in the classroom because they don’t know where to begin. So we’re going out and getting 20 teachers at a time. That’s 20 classrooms we’re making a difference in for every workshop, and every year that these teachers teach, (that number) continues to grow.

**Worthwhile**

Daisy repeated the theme of increased valence, or feeling that peer-teaching was worthwhile to her because she was making a difference in other teachers’ classrooms. She continued, “When we’re sitting in a room of twenty-some teachers, everyone can bring something different to the table. We let them share. Not only did we give them strategies, but they gave each other strategies. So it’s really awesome.”

Daisy also expressed feelings of increased self-efficacy as a teacher:

In my classroom, I think that teaching the workshop got me excited about writing.

I wanted to see excited faces in the workshop. I was scouring the internet, looking
for different things we could do and just listening to the ideas that people brought
back from their classrooms. ‘I’m doing this,’ they’d say, and ‘I’m doing that.’ …I
was able to take things you do in elementary school and adapt them to the high
school level and vice versa. So it really made a difference in my classroom…It’s
exciting.

When asked if the time spent on writing project professional development was
worthwhile to her, Daisy responded positively, once again repeating feelings of increased
self-efficacy. In February 2009, nearly 20 months since the beginning of her Summer
Institute experience, she wrote,

I have no doubt that the writing project has made me a better teacher, and
therefore, my students’ learning has improved. The time spent was worthwhile. It
is the best professional development I have ever had. I use the strategies over and
over. I use the materials we received every semester. The research-based
information has provided new goals for me and for my students.

After visiting Daisy’s classroom a second time the following year, I felt that I was
approaching an information saturation point with most teacher-participants other than
recording the continuing evolution of their professions. Most teachers had settled into a
routine of daily writing imbedded in student assignments. Influences of writing project
professional development that I saw in Daisy’s classroom during the second visit
included APA research citations, creative writing, a writing rubric, collaborative student
work, peer evaluation, and grammar mini-lessons.
Summary

The responses of Rachel and Daisy to specific inquiry about writing project professional development and their perceptions of the extent to which it fits parameters of quality design and implementation exemplify the reflections of all participants. I have included statements based on the research of Backus (2005) to which each participant responded (Appendix E), and Appendix D: Research Findings by Participants’ Totals. As I indicated in Appendix D, Question 1, each participant responded affirmatively to each parameter of quality professional development as defined by Backus and as designed and delivered by the writing project. Participants who did not transfer desired content to their classrooms nonetheless expressed enthusiasm for the professional development program.

Question Four

What factors, if any, in Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development design may be useful for other designers of teacher professional development?

Professional development design is a familiar topic of conversation not only for education but also for businesses as organizations are increasingly expected to document that training dollars are well spent and training is effective (Jeppesen, 2002; Kubitskey & Fishman, 2006). While creating a defining picture of what constitutes excellent professional development is an ongoing endeavor for national, regional, and state entities (Backus, 2005; Colquitt et al., 2000; Kubitskey and Fishman, 2006; Lieberman & Wood, 2003), it remains a complex and multilayered issue. Kraiger (2002) states that “the quality and effectiveness of training are not merely a function of how well training is
designed and delivered but also of the attitudes and motivational states of trainees before, during, and after the training” (Preface, p. xvi). Although this research is of inadequate scope to address the creation and maintenance of a learning organization, writing project professional development can serve to illustrate successful practices that are found in research and are included in the design of Summer Institute, in-service goals, and continuity.

Colquitt et al. (2000) found that factors that help people adapt to performance requirements include team commitment, team coordination, acceptance of technology, focus on the customer, and willingness to learn. These factors are integral parts of the National Writing Project’s Summer Institute professional development design and implementation. Members join a team, and plan and work as a team. Technology is infused into the design of writing project professional development. Participants focus on the student as their end-point customer.

Noe and Colquitt (2002) list seven “features of the instructional environment that facilitate (participants’) learning and transfer” (p. 57). They are:

1) Participants understand the purpose and expected outcomes of the program;
2) Program content is relevant and meaningful;
3) Participants are given materials that help them recall the program’s content;
4) Participants have the opportunity to practice the new skill;
5) Participants receive feedback on their learning;
6) Participants have the opportunity to observe and interact with their peers;
7) The program is properly coordinated and arranged.
At the same time, Noe and Colquitt make clear that effective training requires a systems approach that focuses not only on the program’s design, but also on four characteristics of the attending teachers. A professional development program will be compromised if the individual does not meet requirements of readiness, motivation, ability to learn, and opportunities to transfer learning to the workplace, i.e. classroom. Writing project professional development addressed each feature of a successful instructional environment.

1) **Participants understand the purpose and expected outcomes of the program**

Summer Institute began with a syllabus, Appendix G: Syllabus for Central West Virginia Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute plus printed writing assignments that clearly outlined expectations of attendees. The institute started with the Kickoff Campout during which participants spent time getting to know each other. They were given the syllabus and textbook, and leaders further explained the purpose of the program and answered all questions.

To further clarify purpose and outcomes, Daisy added her perspective by suggesting that professional development be targeted and that it include specific strategies for implementation. She said,

I think that typical staff development is so broad because every different genre of teaching or every content area teacher goes to the same staff development. It’s so broad that I have to sit there and think, how can I even begin to use this in my classroom? They usually don’t give us strategies; it’s more like a theory or a concept. We need to be provided with actual strategies to use in the classroom.
Like Twenty-First Century Skills…That’s all we’re hearing about, and the concept is great.

But oftentimes they just tell us, okay, make a creative product, and I’m like, give me some ways. What do you want me to create? What are some ideas where I can actually use this in a math classroom, or an English classroom, or a science classroom? Oftentimes, especially with new teachers, they’re just so caught up in all these other things that sitting down for hours and trying to figure out lesson plans that incorporate all these skills is so overwhelming.

During interviews, lack of understanding of purpose and expected outcomes became a common theme among participants when they reflected on mandated in-service meetings. One participant commented that school presenters often did not seem prepared, making the professional development session appear to be something they pulled out of the air to talk about for the day. Daisy stated that she wanted to know how each in-service meeting was going to help her in her classroom.

2) **Program content is relevant and meaningful**

Durr (2007) stated, “Advocates for professional development reform believe that teacher involvement is a primary tenet for achieving meaningful (classroom) improvement” (p. 2). Individual teacher goals are central to the writing project’s program design. When Jane, a high school English teacher, applied for Summer Institute, her goal was to learn to coach her students to become effective writers who enjoyed writing. During an interview, I asked her whether she felt the time spent in Summer Institute was worthwhile. She answered emphatically,
Oh yes. I would have almost given back the thousand dollars just to have that experience. We had a great group. We learned a lot….I like the idea of writing. I knew I wasn’t doing a good job in my classroom of teaching it, partly because I didn’t know how to do that comfortably.

Jane reported feeling that it was difficult to prepare students for required state tests, to adhere to the curriculum standards and objectives, and to feel that she had leeway for anything else. She stated,

It was very much teach to a prompt because that’s the way students are tested. It was very much, ‘Here are the common errors of our demographic, so fix them.’ If there were time for writing, there was no time to have fun with writing.

She approached her problem during Summer Institute by choosing to explore a literature review of differentiated instruction to help with her inclusion classes of multi-level students. After attending the voluntary Workshop on Workshops weekend, Jane also created an effective technique for peer revision, similar to the revision and sharing routines she had experienced in Summer Institute. As a result of these writing project experiences, Jane reported achieving her initial goal of figuring out how to include the writing process within each of her teaching units. “I’ve integrated writing into lessons in different ways,” she said. She now uses cooperative learning groups and round-robin peer-sharing of written work. “This helps students see where they are in relation to their peers,” she stated. “It really only took those kids one or two times for round-robin peer-editing to change the whole environment of writing. Now they actually try to do better than they did the last time.” I later witnessed Jane, who initially admitted that she did not
teach revision, teaching the writing process to her high school students, including the revision techniques that she had designed and described.

The program content was relevant and meaningful to participants because they chose topics that had personal meaning for them for their research, writing, and presentation, beginning on the first day of Summer Institute. They pursued their topics throughout the institute, practiced them after the institute with their students, taught them to other teachers, and reflected and reported on successes and challenges afterward. Daisy also agreed that the program was relevant by saying,

As a new teacher, the strategies I learned (during Summer Institute) were amazing, but also it showed me that even though the literature actually takes up the majority of the concept map, and writing is small on the concept map, I learned ways that I could include writing, not just one unit of writing, but writing throughout the year. And in each unit, I could pull in different writing ideas and different writing strategies. So instead of one major writing unit or one major grammar unit, I’m incorporating (writing) the whole year. It’s important.

Finally, at the end of each demonstration of good practice presented by each participant, the other participants were asked to “write a letter to themselves indicating their specific intentions to apply the learning” (Jeppesen, 2002, p. 307). This practice, corroborated by research, encourages people to consider the relevancy of the in-service presentation. Eighteen months after the writing project program ended, Daisy wrote, “Summer Institute required me to think about and reflect on the knowledge and skills learned during the experience.”
3) **Participants are given materials that help them recall the program’s content**

Every participant was given the course textbook and another book on writing, and each was provided with a large, three-ring binder in which to assemble materials as they became available during the institute. These things proved to be meaningful when participants returned to their classrooms. During interviews, Robert, Jane, Joanna, and Sissy specifically reported using their Kelly Gallagher textbook when Summer Institute ended. Joanna and Rachel continued adding to their three-ring binders that they kept in their classrooms. As each participant presented a demonstration of good practice for teaching writing, he or she supplied materials to the others, often requiring them to create an element of the lesson such as a newspaper or a booklet. In February 2009, Jane stated, “I continue to keep a folder of articles that I find professionally helpful.” She added, “Summer Institute gave me tons of new ideas and actual lesson plans to use in my classroom. I continue to use those lessons and the materials I was given even now, two years later.”

Daisy testified:

In the writing project workshops and in Summer Institute, we get the actual lesson plan handed to us that we can use, a step-by-step guide. ‘And this is what you’re going to get. You’re going to get your kids excited. You’re going to get your kids writing if you just follow these easy steps.’ So we walk away with a plan in our hand. There are often student samples, too, so not only do (presenters) tell us that it works in their classroom, they have the proof right there in hand.

Janna added,
I try to be open-minded about staff development. But often we get an overview, and we don’t get any meat behind it as to how we can actually use it. Or we’re told that we’ll come back together and address this again, but it’s dropped; there’s no follow-through.

4) Participants have the opportunity to practice the new skill

During writing project professional development, participants took an active role each day in their learning, as indicated in Appendix F: Schedule for Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute. The institute’s design enabled participants to practice the following skills:

- Daily writing similar to the writing they expected of their students,
- Peer editing and conferencing for the purpose of revising their writing,
- Designing an interactive lesson plan for their students and then presenting it to peers during the institute,
- Engaging in literature review and writing and presenting a research paper on a classroom question of their choosing,
- Practicing by peer teaching what they had learned.

Jane stated, “Presenting what I learned at the Summer Institute to my colleagues cemented my knowledge.” Series leader Janna felt that peer-teaching was effective for attendees and worthwhile for her as a teacher. She said,

When I run into people, I’ve gotten feedback where people say, ‘You wouldn’t believe the writing that’s going on in our school.’ I talked with my principal, and she said that teachers couldn’t say enough good things about our workshop. When
I walked down the hall of the school, (students) had made a foldable that we did in class, and inside the foldable, they had written a bio-poem of one of the characters, and they had modified that to go along with a play the class had seen, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and they made a foldable to look like a wardrobe. While I was in the hall looking at those things, another teacher said, “Go down to my room. I want you to see.” She had a whole display of writing going on in her classroom too. And these were all things they had seen in our workshop.

A survey and opinion form filled out by each attendee validated the worth of their peer teaching. However, two participants expressed feeling uncomfortable with peer teaching. Both kindergarten teacher Anne and foreign language teacher Sara reported that they did not feel they had anything new to contribute to their peers, even though they had the choice of teaching from a specific professional book on teaching writing.

Robert expressed enthusiasm for peer teaching, frequently talking about the activities he learned and the number of teaching ideas he noted as he worked alongside experienced mentor teachers for more than thirty hours for two semesters. Yet it was troubling to me that during several interviews, he seemed unable to talk about specific writing activities he was doing with his middle school students, and when asked what activities he was taking from the workshops to his students, he could not answer the question even after it was repeated to him several times.
5) **Participants receive feedback on their learning**

As participants went through each Summer Institute activity, they were monitored, critiqued, and guided by two teacher-leaders and the institute director. Suggestions for improving their work were made through three-point mini-lessons as needed and through small-group and one-on-one conferences. We not only modeled conferencing, but we also recommended that each participant use conferences to help their students with revision. This feedback proved influential for Jane. During my first visit to her classroom, she stated her desire for a table that she could use for student conferences. “I hope I can find one at a garage sale during the summer,” she remarked.

I witnessed the influence of Summer Institute feedback when I returned for a second visit during the following school year. I found Jane conferencing with a student at a small table set in a corner of the room, close to her teacher desk. As I settled nearby, she invited each of her senior students to bring a rough draft to the conference table and sit down for personal guidance. While she talked with individual students, the rest of the class worked on six assignments written on the board. At the end of the period, a young man approached her desk and asked if he could come in for his conference after football practice that day so he could work on his paper that evening. Jane readily agreed.

Participants received almost daily feedback from each other. At the beginning of the institute, they were assigned to a cross-curricular group of three or four people. I designed cross-functional teams by mixing teachers’ subjects, combining teachers of social studies, special education, English, kindergarten, upper elementary, middle school, and foreign languages. This gave everyone an opportunity to learn from the diversity of
others, following the research of Jeppesen (2002) who found that “inviting input from team participants with different functional responsibilities” can result in multiple opportunities for feedback (p. 312). The groups met daily to listen, read, and offer suggestions for improving one another’s work and to take an interest in the progress of one another’s research report. Thus, most of the feedback they received came from peers who grew to be trusted friends and who helped each other learn within a supportive environment.

6) Participants have the opportunity to observe and interact with their peers

As evidenced by Summer Institute’s schedule, participants began as team members who were linked to the larger organization of the Central West Virginia Writing Project and the National Writing Project. They observed and interacted with their peers in everything they did. Writing project professional development design followed the research of Jeppesen (2002) who described teams as “a cohesive group assembled for a purpose” where members can work on personal competencies (p. 316). He pointed out the need for congruence between the learning environment and the work environment, noting that “creative solutions and better decision making often result from a cooperative environment” (p. 317). Jane commented, “We had a great group with whom to share the experience. We still e-mail each other for ideas.”

Daisy wrote, “I learned a great deal from my peers when they demonstrated lessons from their classrooms during Summer Institute. Continuity suppers were also a great tool for new ideas where we shared our ideas and expanded on those of others.”
added, “This is the best professional development I have ever received because of the ongoing training and the ability to gain continued feedback from others.”

7) The program is properly coordinated and arranged

The writing project is a learning organization. Jeppesen (2002) wrote, “Developing and maintaining a learning organization is a huge undertaking. The guidance of leadership must be observable and continuous” (p.308). Summer Institute and all follow-up activities were first of all arranged so they did not interfere with teaching responsibilities. I coordinated the activities, and my team of writing project teachers provided continuous leadership and guidance for participants. Jane observed, “All meetings and follow-ups were scheduled as best as possible around all members’ work and personal schedules.”

Noe and Colquitt (2002) found that people who are given opportunities to perform what they have learned are more likely to maintain their new skills; opportunities to perform can be increased by formal job assignments. As part of writing project in-service, I invited participants to join peer-teaching teams, arranged with school leaders within their own counties, for the upcoming school year. During the 15-hour series in which they agreed to take part, they were paired with an experienced mentor. They were assured that they could present their demonstration that they had developed during Summer Institute, or they were free to create a new, interactive demonstration.

Participants were invited but were not paid to attend a Workshop on Workshops training weekend where they worked in teams to plan their presentations. Each participant responded positively when asked about his or her attendance at the workshop
weekend. This coincides with research indicating that people react more favorably when they choose to attend training, rather than being assigned to do so, and when they have some input into the training content (Noe & Colquitt, 2002). During a focus group interview, Jane spoke for others by saying:

> When you initially pitched the idea and asked us to peer-teach, we said OK, what is it? But what was nice, looking back, was the fact that you didn’t say what it needed to be like, and here’s the little box it had to fit in. It was up to each individual. At the Workshop on Workshops, CM said that we were going to teach chapter four (in a specific book). But that was the only parameter that was put on it. It was up to us to decide the best way, with our background knowledge and our knowledge of our peers, how to present that. And that’s been the same throughout, and that is different from other requests that have been made, where someone wants us to stand up and say basically what is scripted out. So that was nice.

Janna felt that there was an advantage to conducting in-service in small numbers:

> We kept our numbers low (in our workshops), so just having 20 people in the classroom, it’s easy to involve everyone. Everyone’s participating. People are not intimidated so much to share. Oftentimes our staff development is 50 people in an auditorium. More than likely if I did write, I wouldn’t want to share in a large group like that.

Daisy also felt that a smaller group allows an in-service presenter to focus on a single topic. She and others requested repeatedly that professional development be
focused and relevant, that nonsense fillers not be used, and that presenters be knowledgeable in the topic and skilled in its presentation. She said,

I can see why people just shut down (in professional development meetings) because, for one thing, we’re really busy as teachers. We have a lot to do, and we’re expected to do a lot. Then they pull us in for three hours on a Friday, usually when grades are due and make us sit there and listen to someone talk about something we’re never going to use.

Summary

Noe and Colquitt’s (2002) seven features of the instructional environment that facilitate (participants’) learning and transfer may be able to provide significant guidance for designers of professional development design and delivery. The efficacy of the seven features is based on research. It is noteworthy that they are congruent with writing project philosophy and practice.

Question Five

In light of what we know about professional development in general, why do writing project participants in particular seem enthusiastic about the writing project, and how might we account for and explore the deeper experiential dimensions of that apparent enthusiasm?

As Summer Institute ended, participants were given an expectation for their fall classrooms: to take anything they learned during Summer Institute and implement writing activities with their students. They could also use new ideas for peer teaching if they included samples of student work. We planned to reconvene in November when they
would share their classroom experiences, whether they were successes, failures, challenges, or works-in-progress. At the November meeting, they would give me a written report of their activities and would submit paperwork for the final portion of their stipend.

Meanwhile, all participants agreed to attend the Workshop on Workshops at Cedar Lakes to plan their series presentations, and some began teaching the fall series under the guidance of experienced writing project mentors. This gave them an immediate and personal use for their Summer Institute experiences as well as recognition as professionals. As fall classes started and participants began voluntarily sharing stories of classroom writing successes, I realized that I was witnessing teacher responses to professional development that were unusually enthusiastic, and I began formulating this study in hopes of investigating an enigma: I wondered what fueled their positive responses toward a rigorous and time-consuming model of professional development. My initial thought was that it was founded on personal relationships that formed among participants. For instance, Jane commented, “Not that I would want to, but I would have almost given back the thousand dollars just to have that experience. We had a great group of Fellows.” However, I was to discover that it was based on much more. On her last day of Summer Institute, Sara reflected pride in the accomplishments of the group. “We constantly wrote,” she said. “Essays, poems, stories, a research paper. It’s been some time since I’ve been in such an intense environment.” Sara revealed two themes that recurred frequently among her summer colleagues…that not only did she form
meaningful relationships with her peers but also that she learned a great deal of useful information about teaching writing.

Although participants more or less took the leadership of Summer Institute for granted, this element was also recognized by some as contributing to their professional growth. In all, six themes emerged as contributing to the enthusiasm of participants for their professional development experience: time spent in professional development activities, intellectual growth, emotional involvement, leader-participant relationships, peer teaching and growth as a leader, and networking through planned continuity activities.

**Time spent in professional development activities**

It appeared that time spent in professional development activities contributed to participants’ enthusiasm for the program. Initially, the participants spent 116 hours attending Summer Institute. Next, they attended an overnight Workshop on Workshops to prepare to teach their non-writing-project peers. They assumed roles in scheduled series workshops as presenters, coordinators, or assistant coordinators. They attended writing project supper meetings and other events, and they attended a required follow-up meeting to report on their classroom writing activities. As participants in this study, they took part in individual interviews, group discussions, and onsite visits to their classrooms for 20 months.

Backus (2005) found that there appeared to be a connection between a high sense of self-efficacy and the number of hours of professional development that teachers experienced. She said, “As teachers participated in professional development activities
beyond the state mandated hours, perceptions of their teaching competency increased” (p. 157). Backus noted that respondents who participated in 21 or more hours rated their professional development experiences significantly higher than those who did less. Dillard (2004) also found that a person’s belief in his or her effectiveness or self-efficacy as a teacher was a contributing factor to increased student performance.

**Intellectual growth**

Every participant reported learning information that could be applied to his or her particular classroom situation. Joanna, who reported that she joined Summer Institute to earn graduate credit for license renewal, felt that she gained so much more than graduate hours. “I learned a tremendous amount,” she stated. “The graduate hours definitely were a plus, and I wanted newer ideas to take back into my classroom. I definitely got those from other teachers and other things that I can use.”

Anne, who found her goals shifting from teaching writing to focusing on reading, gave credit to her summer experience as she introduced daily writing into her classroom during her first year as a kindergarten teacher and created a writing center for daily journaling during her second year. She also used digital equipment received from the writing project to design a high-interest website for parent-teacher communication.

Sara, who applied for Summer Institute without hope that she could find ways to encourage her foreign language students to write, began applying whole language and writing to learn. She reported teaching specific elements of grammar and vocabulary within the context of students’ writing, as modeled during the institute, and she was surprised that, as a result of her altered focus, her freshmen students learned to write and
speak extensively, much more so than in earlier years. “Before Summer Institute,” Sara testified, “I was so focused on minute details that I missed the big picture…Now my philosophy is: let’s just communicate, and we can fix the details later.” She used her writing project digital camcorder to record students’ interviews, and her school principal consequently ordered camcorders for the language department. Sara credits the many ideas she encountered during Summer Institute with her classroom successes, calling the experience “life-saving.” While Sara felt that the duration of the institute was beneficial, more important was the fact that participants lived the professional development techniques for teaching writing instead of just hearing about them. “We were doing the writing,” she emphasized. “We did the demonstrations. We used the professional development on a daily basis extensively. Living it and experiencing it instead of just watching it makes a huge difference. It’s more engaging. It fits what we need to learn.”

Each participant expressed enthusiasm for the writing project concept of hands-on learning from experienced teachers. To Entity, it was important that Summer Institute writing activities were presented by fellow teachers engaged in successful practice. “Activities were designed around the interchange of ideas,” she stated. “I gained many new techniques from fellow teachers during the presentation lessons that I can use in my classroom such as puppetry, illuminated journals, notebooks, and concept cubes.” Entity felt that being a part of Summer Institute went beyond teaching writing. It changed her perspective as well as her mode of interaction with her students, she said. It helped her see the big picture of using creative strategies to improve writing skills. Entity reported gaining a fresh perspective on writing to learn. “Writing project professional
development has opened doors of possibilities,” she declared. “The more students read, the more they know. The more students write, the more they understand. This is my new paradigm and my new mantra.” She used her writing project digital camcorder to record a foreign language puppet show created by her students and then shared the concept with attending teachers when she became a peer teacher.

Twenty months later, Entity reported feeling a new level of confidence in her ability to measure the validity of her teaching objectives. “It changes the way I think about how we assess student performance,” she reported. “In this new paradigm,” she wrote, “the objective is redefined by the real needs of the students, not the hammered-out directives of the past.” Furthermore, because of her summer experiences with using data driven decision-making to improve student learning, she found herself scrutinizing the validity of the assessment instruments she used. Traditional tests were no longer adequate when used alone, and she began to incorporate formative, experiential assessments such as the foreign language puppet show accompanied by a rubric of expectations.

Jane reported a similar carryover regarding her personal feelings about research. Now when in-service consultants tell her that a new idea or concept is research based, she wants to know specific information about the research. She felt that the summer experience allowed her “to better understand what some of the instructional goals for writing should look like” in her classroom and how to make them a reality. She said that because of the writing project, she changed her opinion about writing which in turn changed her students’ opinion about writing. As described earlier, she devised revision techniques for her students, including individual conferencing and an effective technique
for peer editing, and she shared these ideas with other teachers during peer teaching. She also reported including the “whole writing process” within each English unit. “I’ve taken a bunch of ideas (from Summer Institute), and I’ve integrated them into lessons in different ways. We learned a lot,” she said of her summer experience.

Jane added that, while her school supervisors know she and others brought many ideas to their classrooms because of the writing project, “because we came back from Summer Institute very excited,” they do not understand the depth and breadth of the teachers’ learning. “I don’t think they see how much we learned from the writing project,” she stated. “I wish they could see more of how the kids work.” She said that in their small group in Summer Institute, George inspired them “to raise the bar back up” for students. Jane said that teachers place so much emphasis on raising test scores that they forget about letting students be creative, figure things out, and learn on their own. “Writing is a big part of college,” she insisted. “In order to get students ready for college work, we have to concentrate on writing. (Students) have to be able to tell me what they know.” Jane reported being inspired by Summer Institute to challenge her students to reach more advanced levels of writing. She said,

The writing project can deal with technology and other 21st century skills. It is inspiring because we see other things that teachers are doing that are legitimate, things we could incorporate into our classrooms at any level. We had teachers there from elementary school on up, preschool teachers, and every single teacher who presented…we all got something. No one treated us like we were babies. They did not treat us like college students who had never taught before. It’s a
teacher teaching a teacher, saying here’s what I used; here’s why it worked and why it didn’t work. My kids like this; my kids didn’t like this.

In a closing statement, Jane offered, “Honestly, the writing project has been better for me and better for my kids than any staff development or professional development seminar I’ve been to in the last ten years.”

Sissy found that learning to use reflection to improve her pedagogy was most useful to her, especially when she applied for National Board Certification, because it helped her think about ways in which she could improve lessons to benefit her special education students. A year later, she continued to write notes and put them in a folder. She said,

Before Summer Institute, I hadn’t used reflection. I just kind of knew what I did that worked and what I did that didn’t work, but it wasn’t something that I consciously reflected on. Reflection helped me rework ideas for the kids to make them better. By having the reflection time at Summer Institute, it taught me to take the time to do that. The institute was a positive and freeing experience for me. I made new friends, I can share ideas, and I can be reminded of experiences from Summer Institute.

Sissy also found that her experience with Summer Institute research was beneficial to her when she later applied for National Board certification. During Summer Institute, she had learned to investigate and write about an issue that would help her become a better teacher. While applying for National Board certification, she was expected to work with one student and to write a plan of improvement for a particular
written skill. She said, “By (investigating) activities and programs that are out there, I actually did very well on that entry because I knew how to do the research.” She added, “Just being able to pick a topic that was of interest to me in Summer Institute and then to dive in and use the university library on campus really helped me.”

George, who realized while writing a Summer Institute research paper that he needed to help his students learn to use APA formatting to cite sources, found that he could include writing to learn in every social studies lesson. Because of his summer experience, he introduced a considerable amount of writing and sharing into his pedagogy.

Janna, the most experienced teacher in the group, discovered the importance of sharing one’s writing during Summer Institute, and she carried this concept into her classroom. Two months after Summer Institute, she offered the following testimony:

I just realized how important it was for students to be able to share. I had them engaged in writing, but now I’m having them pair up and share, volunteer and share, or read aloud in whole group. It’s huge. They’re excited about what they’re writing. I realized its importance after the Summer Institute. Here I was doing this writing, and I was exploding, wanting to share it with someone, and oftentimes I didn’t. Because I got a chance to share in a small group first, that encouraged me to share with the whole group. I realized it would do the same thing for my kids. Last year I wasn’t giving them enough time to do that because I was like, ‘We have so much to do. Let’s move on. Let’s go. Let’s go.’ I thought they were just writing for me, and it was so unfair of me to think that. They love sharing.
Daisy, who was the least experienced teacher in the group, joined Summer Institute after one year as a classroom teacher. While the stipend enticed her, she also knew that she was expected to prepare her tenth grade students for the state writing assessment test, and she hoped the institute experience would help her. She felt that the strategies she learned were “amazing.” She realized during the institute that even though the study of literature occupied a major part of the English teacher’s concept map, writing was important, and she began incorporating different writing strategies into every literature unit. Daisy found that Summer Institute was especially helpful because her colleagues presented lesson plans, often accompanied by samples of student work that she could use as a step-by-step guide. “We walk away with a plan in our hand,” she said, “that gets our kids writing if we just follow these easy steps. Not only do they tell us that it works in their classroom, they have the proof right there in hand.” She later carried this pragmatic philosophy into her techniques as a peer teacher.

While Robert agreed that he came away from his writing project experiences with numerous ideas to teach writing, he felt that his relationships with his peers were of most importance to him. He stated, “As I said before, my confidence boost comes from being with professionals who respect me as a professional.”

**Emotional involvement**

When participants talked about writing project professional development, many spoke in terms of “we” emphasizing the collaborative spirit integral to the program. “We moved through the writing together for three weeks,” Sara commented. “We were not
just told what needed to happen in our classrooms, we were engaged in it. The hands-on approach was important.”

Entity talked about the importance of having the opportunity to work with peers to develop writing activities around an interchange of ideas. She said that something wonderful happens when a group of people are allowed to gather and share in the process of an activity. “Amidst the research and teacher modeling,” she said, “there were tears and laughter. Summer Institute was no longer clinical education; it was group therapy.”

Thus, collaboration and friendships became ongoing themes. Entity reported finding friends during the Kickoff Campout, saying they all shared two passions, helping students learn and writing. Friendships beginning that weekend sustained her and others when the institute began eight weeks later. “The peer aspect of this professional development cannot be overstated,” she insisted.

Jane added that it was “nice to be with people that I felt comfortable with, people that I had relationships with, that I could have intelligent conversations with that didn’t have to be about school… like they know what’s going on in the world.”

Robert said, “When I came to the institute, I was surrounded by professionals who became my friends, and they wanted to hear what I had to offer. We really enjoyed spending time together.”

Several participants reported that their enthusiasm for the writing project was taken aback during the first days of Summer Institute by the sheer volume and scope of writing they were required to generate, but their friendships kept them going. “Perhaps it was this that threw my fellows and me into the boat together,” Entity mused. “But write
we did, prolifically. I suspect the sink or swim scenario was an integral part of the bonding process.” Entity described the group of eleven diverse teachers as an exceptional group of people. She continued, “Just being in our group was great…the follow-up…everything. If I could do Summer Institute again, I would.”

Sissy noted that participants came from different schools, grade levels, and backgrounds and yet were able to work together for the purpose of benefitting students. “No matter what we taught or where or what ages, we were able to pool our information and pull from it to benefit the kids,” she said. Sissy also remarked that they all formed friendships over the summer. “We had this bond for the common good,” she stated. For this reason, Sissy enjoyed attending the Workshop on Workshops event. “Just to go to another get-away weekend like that,” she added, “it was nice to be able to sit down and catch up and go from there with a common purpose.”

Joanna also reported feeling especially comfortable when asked to attend the Workshop on Workshops for collaborative planning. “I’d spent three weeks with these people over the summer, including the Kickoff,” she explained. “It was just nice to see them again and feel comfortable enough to give them my ideas and accept their feedback. It was a good feeling.”

**Leader-participant relationships**

While formal professional development experiences influence teachers’ abilities for systemic curriculum change (Kubitskey & Fishman, 2006), leader-participant relationships are also important. Staikidis (2006) found that relationships between institute leaders and teacher-participants become vehicles for transmission and
construction of knowledge. Janna gave credit to the influences of both formal experiences and leader-participant relationships as she evolved into a leader within her county, a journey that began with Summer Institute.

It did not take long for me to realize that Janna was a highly experienced and talented teacher. This impression of excellence was later corroborated during two visits to her classroom where I witnessed a teacher whose lesson plans included a multitude of activities to interest every learning style, and students in class after class who were enthusiastic, eager writers.

Janna initially attended a writing project evening series led by CM; she enjoyed it so much that she decided to apply for Summer Institute. On the second day of the institute, I privately invited her to lead a spring semester series in her county. At first, she was hesitant and told me that she would need to think about it. During an interview, she shared her feelings about my invitation:

When you approached me about leading a workshop, I was pretty apprehensive, so I said let me think about this a little bit. And then I said, maybe I could be an assistant. (But) I really felt like I was given that opportunity for a reason, and I felt that I needed to take this challenge, even though that’s something I sometimes try to avoid. Speaking in front of groups, especially my peers, makes me a little nervous.

Janna decided to accept the invitation the next day, and when spring arrived, she coordinated a 15-hour series for nearly 20 teachers. She also mentored Daisy, her assistant series coordinator, and three colleagues from Summer Institute who worked
with her to plan and present exemplary lessons for writing. Attending teachers gave the series high marks on a survey; more importantly, they wrote comments touting the series’ value and helpfulness. As a result of her work as series coordinator, her principal asked her to become a teacher-leader for her school, and she helped lead lessons for her school staff in addition to leading the workshop series. She reflected,

Had I not gone through the Summer Institute, I would not have done that. I’m really shy, and I just think, had the principal approached me without my having done the Summer Institute, I would have just said, no, I’m not comfortable doing that. I would have passed on that opportunity.

Afterward, Janna felt that her series involvement was worthwhile. She commented,

Look how that (group from Summer Institute) has multiplied. We had that original network of people, and then we went back to our schools, and we shared with our staff. Plus I’ve been able to take what I’ve learned to other schools as a result of leading the series workshop. I’ve been able to touch some people who came to participate in the workshop.

Next, Janna applied for a new job, again crediting her writing project experiences:

I did want to let you know that I got a new job. I am now working out of the board office as a demonstration teacher for Guided Reading. I am very excited about it. I think it all happened as a result of the writing project. First I attended the workshop, then Summer Institute, then led a series and began taking more of a
leadership role in my school and county. I probably would have never applied for this job had I not had the experience of Summer Institute and all that followed.

Central West Virginia Writing Project’s success with melding series workshops, Summer Institute, and peer teaching was reported in the annual report to the National Writing Project in terms of number of teachers reached for in-service and number of program hours delivered. As a result, I was invited to attend a Rural Sites Network Resource Development Retreat the following summer to write about our program, and I was asked to bring a teacher who was involved in the process. I invited Janna to accompany me to spend three days writing in Omaha, Nebraska. Four months later, we traveled to the National Writing Project annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, where we talked with Rural Sites Network leaders. With their encouragement, Janna and I applied to present our model of professional development delivery at the Rural Sites Network Annual Spring Meeting in Kalamazoo, Michigan. As a result of that presentation, we may be invited to write a monograph of successful in-service for nationwide distribution by the National Writing Project.

Once again, Janna attributed her personal successes as a leader to the writing project:

Had I not attended Summer Institute, I feel that I would have missed out on a lot of experiences: the friendships that developed, the professional growth, respect from my colleagues, a career change, and even the traveling experiences that I wouldn’t have gotten to do. This whole experience has truly changed my life. I know that I was a better teacher of writing because of it.
Peer teaching and growth as a leader

Every participant became a leader to some degree by willingly taking part in peer teaching and either presenting his or her Summer Institute demonstration or another lesson created specifically for the new audience of attending teachers. Several school principals capitalized on participants’ expertise by inviting them to design and conduct formal in-service presentations to faculty. Daisy conducted a blogging experience for ninety high school peers, many of whom had never heard of the topic. Joanna taught a workshop based on her peer-teaching demonstration to fifty middle school colleagues; she described the experience as benefitting both her students and herself. Rachel and Janna were asked to lead in-school groups related to ongoing professional development. George was invited to become head of his high school social studies department. Sissy shared an excellent Summer Institute demonstration with other teachers in her school and with writing project teachers the following year. Robert willingly shared writing techniques and books with his colleagues. Even Sara, who did not feel comfortable with peer teaching, exercised leadership within her foreign language department; because of her innovative techniques, her principal purchased class sets of digital camcorders to enable students to plan and record interviews. Anne, who also reported discomfort with peer teaching, influenced others by using her digital camera to design a website for effective home-school connections.

Both Joanna and Rachel reported that they encouraged colleagues to move away from teaching grammar, syntax, and spelling in isolation and to teach those elements within the context of writing. They also designed new writing ideas specifically for peer
teaching. They each created a hands-on project, tested it with their students, found that the students enjoyed it, and then shared it with teachers attending the in-service series. Peer teaching left them with a sense of pride and accomplishment and a feeling that they were making a difference in others’ classrooms. Rachel, who had been exposed to countless in-service opportunities over the years, reported that peer teaching challenged her to be creative. “Of course, we thought when we all stood there making our presentations (during Summer Institute) that we were done, that we could present (that demonstration) at every series. But we’ve all changed it,” she said. “I think we had the courage to change it because we’d already been through (the experience) once. There was no concern about starting from scratch to develop a new presentation.”

Robert enjoyed being in a position to help other teachers by bringing them new ideas for writing. He said, “If I can find an idea that’s new, that’s fresh, or something that I’ve modified and designed on my own, and I think it’s good for other teachers, I love having an opportunity to share that.”

Jane worked informally with department level peers by sharing editing and grading techniques and encouraging them to increase student writing assignments. She told the following story of influencing other teachers to change the way they grade student work:

A couple of us in this building have done the writing project, and within our inner-departmental groups we try to say, ‘You guys don’t have to go through all this stress and trauma of grading each writing assignment. There are ways that you can have your kids look at the works, read the stories, and make comments.
Use this already-prepared rubric to grant students more experience in writing in your classrooms. Let them see what you have to do. It’s not really peer-editing. You’re just letting them use the rubric. The thing is, if your kids know the expectations before they start, that alleviates so much for them.

Although Jane could have presented her summer demonstration as a peer teacher, she also created a new lesson, tried it out with her high school students, and presented it with student work samples. “Presenting to colleagues cemented what I learned at Summer Institute,” she added, saying that the professional development process made her a better, more confident teacher.

When Daisy’s high school principal asked her to lead a professional development workshop for her colleagues, she felt prepared to accept this assignment. She described the experience:

Because I was in the writing project and because I saw this way of teaching teachers at such an early stage in my career, when I was asked to do staff development at my school for the staff, I taught my staff development just like I was taught in the institute. I taught blogging to 90 teachers in an auditorium. I showed them blogging with a data projector. I took them to the site. I had handouts. I had lesson plans with a step-by step guide on how to do it. Then I took all those teachers to the computer labs with their handouts, and they actually put together their blogs just like we did in Summer Institute. So when they walked out of my staff development, they all had their classes set up with blogs.

My teaching style has changed. I learned how to teach teachers in the
Summer Institute. My principal was just…he just talked about how the teachers
gave me rave reviews, and how they’re going to handle it, and how many teachers
walked in not even knowing what a blog was. So he was really thrilled.

In a previous chapter, I wrote about George who joined Summer Institute for the
stipend and graduate credits, but insisted repeatedly that he was not an English teacher
and did not teach writing. Then during his first evening as a peer teacher, he showed
attending teachers an interactive social studies unit into which he had woven a
considerable amount of writing. When the class convened two weeks later, teachers
returned with success stories and student writing samples to share. That night, George
realized that because of writing project professional development that honors the
knowledge and expertise of classroom teachers, he was making an impact on the
pedagogy of 20 other teachers. He reported that at that moment, he realized that his
contributions to other teachers through the writing project were worthwhile. Because of
his continuing influence, one of his colleagues enrolled in a writing project series
workshop and then joined Summer Institute two years later.

Entity’s students used the digital camcorder she received from the writing project
to record a class puppet show. When Entity peer-taught the following semester, she
decided to make her demonstration interactive by bringing the puppet theater her students
had made, helping attendees make sock puppets and write scripts accompanied by a
rubric, and inviting teachers to crawl inside the box theater to become puppeteers. She
then showed the video of her students’ puppet production. She realized that the puppet
project could easily be adapted to multiple skill levels, subjects, and grades. She found
that the attending teachers loved it, and she had fun teaching the class. Attendees were
given their own camcorders at the end of the fifteen-hour series, and they began planning
versions of the puppet play for their students before class was over. Entity reported that
the teachers learned that writing could be an effective vehicle to assess formative
learning. “We go into the world as writing project missionaries,” she said about her
leadership role, “and the digital camera and Flip camcorder bring an element of
excitement and importance to any lesson.”

**Networking through planned continuity activities**

All participants mentioned the importance of networking that is an integral
element of writing project professional development (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). Sissy
found collaboration to be especially beneficial as she began planning her demonstration.
“(My peers) helped me decide what I was going to present and what activities I would
use. It was much easier than if I had been working alone,” she said. Sissy continued,
expressing a desire for networking opportunities during any professional development
event:

A lot of ideas I learned through networking with other teachers in Summer
Institute made such a difference to my kids. They picked up a lot of basic skills
that before they hadn’t mastered. At the writing project supper meetings and when
we got together for the research study, being able to talk about best practices
helped me a lot. I could take new ideas back to my students. When I talked with
teachers from different grade levels during Summer Institute, I could use their
ideas by changing them up or down to suit the needs of my students. So Summer
Institute really worked well. I think that’s what teachers need…networking between subject matter, between grade levels. I could use other teachers’ ideas from a different class in a different way. It may be something I’ve never thought about before. I think collaboration is essential.

Janna felt that continuity events were worthwhile to her since they provided networking opportunities. “It’s always exciting to see fellow teachers and learn what’s going on in their classrooms,” she said. “The follow-up dinners that provided a speaker or presentation were always so enjoyable and beneficial. I have grown a lot from this experience in so many ways.”

Robert also commented on the importance of networking through collaborative groups. He said,

Summer Institute gave us an opportunity to make friends with people that we might not have met otherwise and to find out what they’re doing in their classrooms and what we could learn from each other. Usually, schools work in vertical teams where we meet with the grade level above us, but this was more effective. We worked in cross-curricular groups with different grade levels and schools, and we were still able to learn from each other and help each other since we found we all have similar problems. It (provided us with) an expansive learning community.

Networking through planned continuity events appeared to play an important role among participants during the year following Summer Institute. Several participants talked about the importance of continued communication and friendships and how
writing project supper meetings and focus group lunches related to this study contributed
to their active involvement. After a while, I found that participants who maintained an
active interest in the writing project organization were those who were able to accept
formal roles that included a stipend. When left alone, these enthusiastic teachers who
were brought together through the writing project became enmeshed in their own
personal and professional lives, and they gradually lessened their communication with
each other.

**Implications of the writing project experience**

While participants appeared to be affected in different ways by the multiple
strategies found within the writing project model, their enthusiasm for the experience
seemed to fall into categories of time spent in professional development activities,
intellectual growth as professionals, emotional involvement with summer colleagues,
leader-participant relationships, peer teaching that helped them grow as leaders, and
networking through planned continuity activities that included this study. Participants
directed their professional development paths by deciding what was important to their
students in their classrooms and by deciding what they could offer other teachers. The
result was a positive response for the professional development experience from every
participant, ranging from kindergarten to grade 12, from a first year teacher to one with
29 years of service.

Essentially, the participants taught each other with guidance from leaders who
carefully facilitated the learning experience while staying in the background. This
allowed participants’ involvement in the process to dominate the professional
development experience. One might say they were empowered to access their knowledge and creativity as teachers and then to share it with other teachers. I recognized and promoted the talents of one participant in particular, Janna. As a result, she credited the writing project with her growth as a school leader, county leader, and National Writing Project contributor. Yet, another participant, described earlier, expressed enthusiasm for writing project professional development but seemed unable to transfer writing skills to improve her/his classroom teaching.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE STUDY

Question One

How is Central West Virginia Writing Project professional development perceived by teacher-participants?

This study examined Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development program as perceived by teacher-participants through the lens of Noe & Colquitt’s (2002) seven features of the instructional environment shown to facilitate learning of desired material and transference of learning to the workplace. Writing project professional development involvement was perceived as contributing to learning. The design of Central West Virginia Writing Projects’ professional development program appeared to be congruent with these elements:

1. Participants indicated that they understood the purpose and expected outcomes of the program;
2. Participants perceived the program content as relevant and meaningful;
3. Participants were given materials that helped them recall the program’s content;
4. Participants had the opportunity to practice the new skill;
5. Participants received feedback on their learning;
6. Participants had the opportunity to observe and interact with their peers;
7. Participants perceived the program as being properly coordinated and arranged.
Analyses indicated that Central West Virginia Writing Projects’ professional development program was perceived by all participants as contributing to their learning and to their ability to transfer the learning to their classrooms. Their positive evaluations of the program appeared to be influenced by the presence of these seven features of the instructional environment that allowed them to address a wide range of professional needs through the selection of their own learning goals.

**Participants Indicated They Understood the Purpose and Expected Outcomes of the Program**

The Kickoff Campout that served as an introduction to the upcoming professional development provided each participant with a course syllabus and textbook. It gave participants an opportunity to ask questions, to experience a demonstration of good teaching practice on which they could model their own, and to get to know their leaders as well as the other participants. Expectations were transparent, and all questions were answered in depth. Participants also began working in small, collaborative groups, a pattern that would continue throughout their professional development experience.

**Participants Perceived the Program Content as Relevant and Meaningful**

The program was perceived as relevant and meaningful because each participant tailored the content to suit his or her classroom needs. The individual planning process began during the Kickoff Campout when participants met in small groups with an experienced coordinator to plan, discuss, and revise their personal plans for literature-review research and a teaching demonstration to share with their peers. They reported that the content was meaningful because they learned a great deal of information that they
could apply to their own classrooms. They also felt that the books they received were relevant to their needs as teachers.

Participants Received Materials to Recall Program Content

In addition to being given the Gallagher (2006) textbook, syllabus, weekly schedule, and general writing assignment pages, each participant created handouts appropriate for sharing his or her demonstration and research. They were provided with three-inch, three-ring notebooks in which they assembled materials during the course of the institute. What began as an empty notebook became a highly personal resource for each person. Their accumulated materials included their own three-genre writings, their reflections, and other written contributions they made to the program. During the 20-month study, I observed the notebooks in use in several classrooms, and participants referred to using the books to collect additional ideas and articles for teaching writing.

Participants Practiced the New Skill

An important aspect of writing project professional development was that each participant learned to teach writing by writing. A teacher commented that she expected to learn how to teach writing, but she did not know that she would become a writer. Each day, participants wrote, collaborated on revision, and wrote again, finally submitting three pieces of writing in three different genres, as well as other contributions involving writing. They learned that writing is a process, not an assignment, and they gained empathy for students who need encouragement and guidance and who are tested by high-stakes writing prompts. As one teacher observed, “We lived the professional
development instead of just being there. We were doing the writing. We did the demonstrations. We used the professional development extensively on a daily basis.”

It was important to note that participants practiced their new skill of teaching writing, not only in their classrooms, but also by taking part in peer teaching while supported by experienced mentors.

**Participants Received Feedback**

Everyone received daily feedback from Summer Institute leaders and from each other. They came to trust their research/response group members to help them revise and improve their work. As a result, several teachers reported and demonstrated that they changed their approach to teaching writing and that their students benefitted from the changes.

**Participants Observed and Interacted with Peers**

Participants reported that they gained valuable feedback through peer interaction during the 116-hour Summer Institute. They took part in peer demonstrations of good practice, and they presented their own demonstrations in turn. They worked collaboratively to plan their peer teaching contributions. Finally, at a follow-up supper meeting, they presented the ways in which they had used their new knowledge to engage their students in more and better writing activities.

**Participants Perceived the Program as being Properly Coordinated and Arranged**

Participants appreciated several elements involving the coordination and arrangement of the writing project professional development program: it followed a single theme; it was efficiently organized and led by knowledgeable people; it was held
during the summer; it included a small number of participants that allowed everyone to
develop relationships; it offered six hours of graduate credit at a reduced rate; and it was
held for an extended period of time. As one participant stated, “It gets you thinking about
what you do and what you haven’t done and what you will do. It gave me a chance to
realign my thinking.”

Question Two

Does Central West Virginia Writing Project professional development design
influence teachers’ classroom practice as evidenced by classroom observation and
documented by student work?

Analysis of data indicated that Central West Virginia Writing Project’s
professional development design influenced eight of the eleven teachers to increase the
quantity and quality of writing instruction in their classroom practice. I observed
continued improvement in writing instruction over a 20-month period and selected four
participants to illustrate their experiences in depth. Emergent themes included issues of
classroom technology use and positive and negative influences of school administrators
on teachers’ practices.

Writing Project Involvement Influenced Some Teachers’ Classroom Practice

Every participant reported increasing his or her use of technology in the classroom as a
result of the summer program as indicated in Appendix D: Research Findings by
Participant Totals. Technology use included requiring classroom students to access the
Internet for research and to utilize computers for written assignments and the creation of
a class PowerPoint. Six teachers made use of their digital cameras to add interest to class
projects, and three participants used their digital camcorders to record students in action. Several participants felt constrained by their inadequate classroom computers and lack of convenient computer lab access for their students. They also reported that some students lacked computers in their homes which negatively affected their ability to take part in assignments.

Immediately following Summer Institute, one participant brought writing practices into her classroom and became an enthusiastic leader for writing while teaching at school A. But after transferring to school B, she seemed to lose her motivation when confronted by a principal’s authoritarian requirements for lesson plans. Meta-analytic research indicated that personal motivation helps people accomplish desired outcomes such as transference of new skills to the workplace (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Colquitt et al., 2000). Motivation is influenced by a number of factors including work climate, or how well the person’s place of work supports and encourages the application of the learner’s new-found knowledge (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Colquitt et al., 2000). When the participant was actively discouraged from practicing her Summer Institute program knowledge with her students, she appeared disheartened and seemed to lose her earlier enthusiasm.

A second participant discovered the value of writing to learn (Kurfiss, 1985) for his high school social studies students. He reported and was observed implementing numerous techniques that he attributed to the writing project program, and he became an effective peer leader for writing. His principal encouraged and recognized these
accomplishments by spending time in the participant’s classroom, offering praise, and inviting the participant to lead the social studies department.

**Writing Project Involvement Did Not Influence Other Teachers’ Classroom Practice**

A third participant appeared to lose interest in teaching writing when her job focus changed dramatically. She was transferred from a fifth grade teaching position to a kindergarten position during Summer Institute. Although she stated that she researched writing techniques through literature review and incorporated writing in her kindergarten classroom, I found through examination of documents and visits to her classroom that she shifted her attention almost exclusively to teaching reading.

Several elements possibly contributed to the participant’s loss of interest in teaching writing. While it was obvious to her that her former fifth grade students needed to learn skills in writing, she did not feel the same need for her younger students. She had a master’s degree in special education -- specific learning disabilities, and she had experience as a fourth/fifth grade teacher. With little or no training as an early childhood professional, she appeared to rely on her upper elementary experiences to plan classroom activities, and she made cursory reference to curriculum standards and objectives to teach writing. However, without any background in classroom techniques for teaching emerging writers, she expected the children to sit at an assigned table for an extended period and to copy a daily sentence from the board as their writing lesson. She stated that her job was to teach reading and that the only reason she incorporated a little bit of writing was because of her Summer Institute experience.
A fourth participant consistently reported embracing and practicing classroom writing techniques influenced by the writing project program. However, none were in evidence when I made two onsite visits to the classroom. This phenomenon was addressed by researchers who focused on traditional methods and settings to promote learning during training sessions and found that some people learned and applied more than others even when methods were held constant (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Colquitt et al., 2000). Kubitskey and Fishman (2006) described four phases of professional training: 1) reaction in which the learner reacts to professional content; 2) learning in which the person learns the desired material; 3) transfer, meaning the learner transfers learning to the job; and 4) impact for improved job performance. As was the case with this participant, problems arose when transference did not occur as it was intended. For professional development to be effective, the teacher must have the ability to learn the required material and to transfer the new skills to the classroom for improved student learning (Backus, 2005; Noe & Colquitt, 2002). The reason for this person’s lack of transference was not the focus of this dissertation.

The particular situations of these four participants affirmed the importance of conducting this investigation as a qualitative study that included classroom visits. While eleven participants reported that they were teaching writing as presented during Summer Institute, only eight were observed doing so by the end of the study. It also indicated that while Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development design was effective for some teachers, it was not effective for all. The National Writing Project recognizes this, stating that its method of professional development is not remedial but is
intended to further the professionalism of highly successful teachers (Gray, J., 2000). One problem that I encountered was identifying highly successful teachers and enticing them to attend Summer Institute.

**Question Three**

**To what extent does the Central West Virginia Writing Project’s program fit parameters of quality professional development design and implementation as defined by Backus (2005) and perceived by teacher participants?**

Analysis of data indicated that each participant perceived that Central West Virginia Writing Project’s program fit parameters of quality professional development design and implementation as being targeted, collaborative, ongoing, time-friendly, reflective, evaluated, and worthwhile (Backus, 2005). Teacher perception of writing project professional development differed from commonly accepted descriptions of quality in-service design and implementation in terms of being time-friendly, reflective, and evaluated.

**Targeted**

Both new and experienced teachers felt that writing project professional development was targeted to their needs for teaching writing, and they described the importance of being able to focus on a single topic for an extended period of time. They stated that they learned many ideas that were useful in their classrooms; they expressed appreciation for having an opportunity to learn from other successful teachers who actually used the lessons in their own classrooms before sharing them with others.
Collaborative

A strong, collaborative element was an integral part of the writing project professional development design that was obvious to all participants. It was probably the factor that gave them the most enjoyment as they formed bonds of friendship and trust during Summer Institute and subsequent peer teaching activities and continuity events. Rachel pointed out that teachers in her small group constantly shared ideas that worked in their classrooms. She stated that the collaborative mixture of grade levels within her group helped her clarify connections that existed between elementary and high school classrooms.

Ongoing

In addition to having opportunities to peer teach within their counties and in their schools, planned continuity events created ongoing chances to continue professional friendships and to share successful ideas for teaching writing. Continuity events included supper meetings with agendas for sharing, a weekend retreat to read, discuss, and evaluate professional books that could be used for teacher series, and an opportunity to spend a day with author Barry Lane. In addition, this study added its own ongoing element as participants gathered for focus group interviews that began with a luncheon and often continued with professional conversations long after the digital recorder was turned off. My visits to their classrooms also added an ongoing expectation, unintended, that I would see continued writing project influences.
Time-friendly

Participants did not agree that in-service was time-friendly when it was job-imbedded because it interfered with teaching and other classroom duties during school hours. They praised the writing project program for being held in the summer, after school hours, and on weekends when their teaching duties were not impacted. Participants expressed frustration at lacking choice or voice into elements of professional development that they were required to attend. As reported by Noe and Colquitt (2002), people had a more positive attitude toward training events when their attendance was voluntary and when they were invited to add input to the training content.

Reflective

Although Summer Institute and Central West Virginia Writing Project’s in-service series included expectations of reflection, participants felt that interviews related to this dissertation provided the genesis for most of their reflections. This was an example of the influence that shared relationships between director and participants played in the learning process. According to Staikidis (2006), “When teachers and students hold dialogues emerging from lived experiences…relational bridges are formed that foster mutual understandings that in turn inform the teaching process” (p.133). In this study, leader-participant relationships encouraged participant reflections that seemed to lead to a deeper understanding of concepts of writing and transference of writing practices to the classroom.
Evaluated

Participants recognized that their writing and demonstrations were evaluated by colleagues and leaders during Summer Institute. It was also obvious to them that their peer teaching was evaluated by non-writing project teachers who attended the county workshops. However, the evaluations they talked about during interviews stemmed from my visits to their classrooms as part of this study. As collaborators, they received transcripts of my visits and interviews, and I invited their comments and changes. Several participants noted that they implemented more writing project techniques into their lesson plans because of these visits. Although my purpose was to record observations of their teaching that involved classroom writing, they wanted me to see the writing techniques that they were using with their students. Not only were they proud of their students’ work, but they also felt that my views of them as teachers of writing were important. Our relationships appeared to be positive factors in the transference of writing project techniques into their classrooms.

Worthwhile

All participants reacted with a strong, positive response to the final statement: “Time spent on this professional development experience was worthwhile to me.” This statement reflected research reported on motivation and career attitudes, including influences of self-efficacy and valence, that attitudes have a measurable impact on motivation and subsequent learning and transfer (Noe & Colquitt, 2002). Participants who did not transfer the desired content to their classrooms nonetheless expressed enthusiasm for the professional development program.
Question Four

What factors, if any, in Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development design may be useful for other designers of teacher professional development?

This study pointed toward two resources that may be useful to other designers of teacher professional development: Noe and Colquitt (2002) and teachers themselves. As described under question one, Noe and Colquitt found seven features of the instructional environment shown to facilitate learning of desired material and transference of learning to the workplace, i.e., classroom. The design of Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development program appeared to be congruent with the seven features as follows:

1) Participants understood the purpose and expected outcomes of the program.

Understanding was facilitated by an initial program (Kickoff Campout), an extended program (Summer Institute), and a final training program that prepared each person to work in the field (Workshop on Workshops).

2) Program content was relevant and meaningful.

The program began with a three-ring binder that was empty except for a course syllabus for each participant. They personalized their own professional development by choosing a question to research that related to teaching writing in their classrooms. They developed interactive demonstrations of good practice in teaching writing, and they presented the demonstrations during Summer Institute. Next, each participant wrote about how he or
she could take the demonstrations of others and alter them to apply to their own classroom situations. This made every demonstration relevant for every teacher.

3) **Participants were given materials to help them recall the program’s content.**

Each participant was given a textbook, jump drive, digital camera, digital camcorder, and complete lesson plans and handouts from all demonstrations. Each of these materials was designed to help them recall and use the program’s content in their classrooms.

4) **Participants had opportunities to practice the new skills.**

Each participant practiced the new skills of teaching writing by first becoming writers themselves. Next, they taught non-writing project teachers how to teach writing. Many were invited by their principals to teach other faculty members. Teaching other adults as well as teaching their students added depth to their learning experience.

5) **Participants received feedback on their learning.**

During Summer Institute, participants were evaluated by peers who offered them feedback regarding their writing, their demonstrations, and their research. They were evaluated first by writing project leaders via individual conferences and then by non-writing project educators who attended the teaching series and filled out opinion surveys. Participants were also evaluated through classroom visits that included collaborative feedback as part of this study. Feedback on learning, which was carried out in collaboration between participant and leader, appeared to be a strong motivator for transference of new skills to the classroom.
6) **Participants had the opportunity to observe and interact with their peers.**

Opportunities of observation and interaction with professional, knowledgeable peers were important elements in the writing project program.

7) **Participants felt that the program was properly coordinated and arranged.**

Participants felt the program was properly coordinated and arranged because of the extensive planning that was necessary for its smooth implementation.

Noe and Colquitt (2002) emphasized the importance of using a systems approach that focused not only on features of the instructional environment but also on four criteria of participants: that each person “must be ready to learn, they must be motivated to learn, they must learn the content of the (desired) program, and they must transfer the training when back on the job” (p.56). Analysis of data indicated that Central West Virginia Writing Project’s professional development design addressed each of the seven features and four criteria. However, Summer Institute leaders had to assume that participating teachers would be able to learn the desired content and would be encouraged by school administrators to practice and share their new skills.

The participants themselves contributed to Central West Virginia Writing Project’s Summer Institute design because the program gave them voice and choice. This is in accordance with Gray’s (2000) initial philosophy for the National Writing Project of putting teachers at the center of their professional development. Staikidis (2006) also recommended paying attention to teachers as the source of learner-based instruction. In addition to features described by Noe and Colquitt (2002), nine elements that were part of
Summer Institute’s program came to light during this study that may be useful for the consideration of other designers of teacher professional development. They were:

1. Attendance was attractive and voluntary: participants chose to attend, they were given books and other supplies, and each received a stipend. Graduate credit was available at a reduced rate.

2. Each participant designed his or her work within parameters of the institute’s syllabus, general requirements and guidelines, and daily schedule: this assured that the professional development was tailored to each individual’s perceived needs as a teacher.

3. The program was conducted for small numbers of attendees: this seemed to encourage friendly relationships and active participation.

4. Elements of the program, including follow-up and continuity, were arranged so as not to interfere with classroom activities: they were scheduled during summer, weekends, evenings, and at the teacher’s convenience.

5. Following the presentation of each new skill, teachers reflected, wrote, and then shared ideas: this encouraged them to consider ways of applying new skills to their particular classroom situations.

6. Teachers felt that they received information that was specific and pragmatic, as opposed to general and theoretical, and that they were given multiple strategies and techniques that were tested by other teachers. They felt the program was challenging.
7. Teachers were involved in collaborative hands-on learning that included more than writing.

8. Teachers received recognition from their peers and institute leaders for their work. Many were acknowledged by their principals who encouraged them to share their new skills with fellow-teachers.

9. At the end of Summer Institute, the professional development program continued with planned continuity activities, including paid opportunities to teach other teachers.

**Question Five**

In light of what we know about professional development in general, why do writing project participants in particular seem enthusiastic about the writing project, and how might we account for and explore the deeper experiential dimensions of that apparent enthusiasm?

Reflecting on what we know about professional development in general, this study sought to account for and explore participants’ apparent enthusiasm for writing project professional development. Throughout this program, each person expressed enthusiasm for his or her professional development experience. One participant called the program “life-saving.” Several referred to it as the best professional development they had ever experienced. Still another participant attributed her county job promotion and recognition as a teacher-leader to the writing project program. Six elements emerged as possible contributors to this enthusiasm: time spent in professional development activities, feelings of increased intellectual growth, emotional involvement, leader-
participant relationships, peer teaching and leadership opportunities, and networking through planned continuity activities.

**Time as a Factor in Professional Development Activities**

The amount of time that participants spent involved in writing project activities appeared to contribute to their enthusiasm for the program. A connection between the amount of time that participants spent engaged in professional development activities and increased teacher self-efficacy has been implied by other studies (Backus, 2005; Durr, 2007). Tannenbaum (2002) also reported that up to 70% of workplace learning is informal, and lack of time to learn and practice desired skills can significantly inhibit learning and application. Central West Virginia Writing Project’s program of professional development was an unusually long and intense in-service experience for teachers that appeared to engender an enthusiastic awareness among participants of the importance of teaching writing across the curriculum.

**Feelings of Increased Intellectual Growth**

Participants reported that they learned numerous specific skills that they were able to apply in varying ways to their particular classroom situations. They described the program as a lived experience that fit what they needed to learn. They praised the collaborative and hands-on design of the program and the emphasis on personal research and reflection. This coincided with Barrick and Mount (1991) who found overwhelming evidence that training was more effective when the learner actively participated. Kubitskey and Fishman (2006) called learning that took place during practice as “knowledge in action.” The role of active learning was relevant to Central West Virginia
Writing Project’s Summer Institute because teacher-participants were involved in a multitude of constructivist activities as they moved toward their goal of learning to teach writing. Lieberman and Wood (2003) found the following:

NWP’s form of professional development contradicts traditional practice….Instead of teachers listening passively to a speaker…teachers become active participants in learning as they discover together new approaches to teaching literacy and then apply them in their classrooms. Instead of having to choose between theoretical and practical knowledge, they learn ways to connect the two. (p. 99)

Participants also expressed feeling motivated by writing activities presented by fellow teachers who were engaged in successful practice and who furnished lesson plans accompanied by student work samples.

*Feelings of Emotional Involvement*

Professional development involves human behavior that is significantly influenced by the settings in which it occurs (Kraiger, 2002). Not only must a professional development designer pay attention to extrinsic factors of places, schedules, and rewards and intrinsic factors of motivation and willingness to learn, but he or she must also consider the social framework within which participants form and interpret thoughts, feelings, and actions (Wilson, 1977).

Participants reported that the friendships they formed through the writing project professional development experience sustained and encouraged them throughout this rigorous program. They reported feeling “a bond for the common good” for improving
their classroom teaching. This is referred to as increased valence, the feeling that people have that their efforts will result in outcomes that are important, attractive, and personally satisfying (VanEerde & Thierry, 1996). Noe and Colquitt (2002) reported that valence is positively related to motivation to learn.

Once again, time was an element. Participants reported that the hours they spent together helped them feel comfortable with each other and enabled them to entrust their personal writings to the group. Even though they voluntarily assembled from ten schools and two counties, and even though they represented widely divergent classrooms, years of teaching experience, and differing grade levels, they came to feel that their cohort was composed of 11 exceptional people who became their personal friends. Even the participant who seemed unable to transfer writing project elements into the classroom, consistently gave credit to friendships and recognition by other teachers as being the most important aspects of the program.

**Influences of Leader-Participant Relationships**

Kubitskey and Fishman (2006) reported that three elements resulted in successful professional development leading to increased student accomplishments: teachers learned the new knowledge; teachers used their new skills; and teachers were supported by their school administrations. The leadership of the writing project program, following the intent of the National Writing Project, created an undercurrent of guidance that was responsible for its successes. Participants needed the guidance of respected leaders. As stated by Jeppesen (2002), the leadership of a learning organization must be observable and continuous in order to be effective. For this reason, I took part in all activities of
Summer Institute as director, as did the summer co-director and assistant co-director. We attended the institute just as if we were participants. We took part in activities during the institute and in follow-up activities afterward, including staying in a rustic lodge during the training weekend and sitting around a campfire, sharing stories and toasting marshmallows. As teachers and facilitators, we spent time getting to know each participant. This experience was in accordance with Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of cognitive development, that learning occurs through social interactions with knowledgeable others. While the writing project model of professional development relied on participants assisting others by sharing knowledge, it was guided by planned leadership. Members of the group acted as trusted mentors and models for each other while leaders provided planning, guidance, and oversight. When Summer Institute ended, participants accepted opportunities to practice their new skills by teaching others. Once again, they were placed in a comfortable, social situation during the Workshop on Workshops weekend in a lodge. They spent a day collaborating in teams, planning their presentations with the guidance of experienced mentors. They were also introduced to specific techniques for teaching other teachers. The training weekend provided scaffolding that enabled each participant to become a professional presenter; opportunities to peer teach gave them real work to do for which they were paid a stipend.

One participant in particular gave credit for her professional recognitions and advancements to the relationships she formed with writing project leaders. She had 29 years of classroom experience and was inarguably an outstanding teacher. However, she described herself as being a shy person who typically did not feel comfortable stepping
forward as a leader. Because of the relationships she formed with writing project leaders, she joined Summer Institute and then accepted the role of series coordinator. This led to her recognition as a school leader by her principal. She stated that her writing project experiences gave her enough confidence to accept the lead role for an in-school teacher learning community. She then applied for a job as a demonstration teacher for her county. She agreed to accompany me to a National Writing Project writing retreat and to two NWP conferences where we wrote about and then presented our site’s professional development model. We may have the opportunity to write a monograph for national distribution in the future. The participant credited the writing project with her successes, stating that the whole experience changed her life and made her a better teacher of writing.

I attributed this participant’s successes to an increased sense of self-efficacy, described as a person’s feeling that he or she is capable of doing an expected job (Colquitt et al., 2000). Self-efficacy was further defined by Manchin (2002) as “the judgment of one’s own capability to organize and execute courses of action to attain a certain level of performance” (p. 263). It enabled people to feel that they could succeed at a desired task (Manchin, 2002). Noe & Colquitt (2002) added that a strong feeling of self-efficacy was even more important than knowledge or skills because it motivated a person to try harder in the face of adversity.

Influences of Peer Teaching and Opportunities for Growth as a Leader

Lieberman and Wood (2003) studied writing project directors at two sites and found that the directors “make a concerted effort to find teachers with leadership
potential and provide them with real work to do” (p. 48). As director, I provided organizational support that enabled every participant to become a leader for writing to some degree by assuming a role as peer teacher within a three-county area. Consequently, several were invited by their principals to conduct in-service events on aspects of writing for school faculty members. Ten of the 11 participants reported talking with and modeling for fellow teachers to encourage them to teach writing across the curriculum. Several designed and field-tested new writing ideas to present to peers. Several changed their pedagogy to include writing, sharing, modeling, and conferencing in their lesson plans. Most participants recognized that they were influencing other teachers through their peer teaching activities; they felt that they were “giving back” and were making a difference in others’ classrooms as well as their own. One participant described the experience as going “into the world as writing project missionaries.” Another stated that peer teaching enabled her to reinforce what she had learned in Summer Institute.

**Influences of Networking through Planned Continuity Activities**

All participants attributed networking as playing a role in their professional development, especially through informal continuity activities planned by writing project leaders. They felt that the collaborative spirit of the writing project offered them a group of teachers with whom they had much in common and to whom they could turn for advice and friendship. One participant said that it provided each of them with an expansive learning community. Participants reported that supper meetings featuring sharing among teachers and presentations by writing project speakers were especially beneficial and enjoyable. This networking aspect of the National Writing Project was
found by Lieberman and Wood to “bridge the traditional boundaries that separate teachers, keeping them from collaborating with each other” (p. 89).

**Implications**

*Writing Project Professional Development Influenced Some Participants*

There is a need in education to teach teachers to teach writing across the curriculum in every class from kindergarten through grade 12. In this study, Central West Virginia Writing Project was perceived by participants as an organization that delivered effective professional development to teachers for teaching writing. It was not effective for every participant since success relied on each teacher’s motivation and ability to learn and to implement the desired skills. Success also relied on the organizational support of the participant’s school principal. Writing project involvement influenced eight participants to add more writing to their classrooms across the curriculum and to use the writing process when appropriate. It enabled eleven participants to practice their new skills as peer teachers and leaders to varying degrees.

*Influence of the Writing Project Director as Researcher*

From the beginning of this study, I was apprehensive about my researcher role as director of the writing project and the influence I would bring to bear on the results. However, I was encouraged by several studies in which people outside of the writing project tried to conduct a study like this and had only limited success gaining the cooperation of teachers. Although Lieberman and Wood (2003) conducted a successful study of two writing project sites over a two-year period, they had considerable support from the National Writing Project. In contrast, individual researchers Laub (1996) and
Durr (2007) were able to include only three writing project teachers each in their studies of elements of writing project professional development. This indicated to me that it would have been impossible for me to conduct an in-depth study such as this with any other writing project site. It also indicated that a person outside the writing project would have difficulty conducting an in-depth study of a writing project cohort of participants.

Writing project directors Bratcher and Stroble (1994) followed six of their participants for three years as they sought to determine teacher self-efficacy for teaching writing. It appeared that the researchers’ involvement with the teachers under study influenced the teachers to increase their writing activities with students. I found myself experiencing the same situation. Even though it was my intent to be an unobtrusive observer, I brought influence and expectations into the classrooms of participants as I became immersed in their practices through collaborative onsite visits and interviews, focus group discussions, and follow-up activities that included peer-teaching.

I decided that my influence was not a bad thing. People thrive on personal attention, especially from someone they know, trust, and respect. When I visited participants’ classrooms, they wanted me to see their lessons that incorporated good practice and twenty-first century skills, the creative writings of their students, the writing conference table, the foreign language lessons, and the student-created PowerPoint presentation. They wanted to share their successes with someone they knew would be appreciative of their efforts. They tried to show me their best efforts when I visited them. Some would even say, “This isn’t the lesson I wanted you to see, but…” and they would
tell me about a glitch that occurred in their plans. They wanted me to be impressed with their abilities to teach what they had learned in Summer Institute.

The participants were my colleagues on this professional development journey. They began by designing the direction of their own learning. I treated them with respect as my partners, not as teachers under a microscope of criticism. I invited them into my home for lunches and professional conversations. Several went downstairs to my office to view the file and the multiple three-inch binders where my dissertation study was accumulated and organized. They were impressed with the amount of material the study included and with how I was organizing the information. My purpose in inviting them into my office was to help them understand the seriousness and extensiveness of the study in which they played a vital role. It was more than just a few interviews and a couple of classroom visits. It was a professional study of their successes, for the most part, as teachers because they had participated in a special kind of professional development. We were on a mission together to try and define writing project professional development and its possible effects on writing pedagogy in their multi-subject, multi-grade-level classrooms.

Their partnership with me was a continuation of their collaboration on their own learning. From the beginning, they chose the direction of their learning. Participants repeatedly stated that the writing project treated them as collaborators in their professional development journey. They felt they were treated with the respect due a knowledgeable person, and they talked enthusiastically about the amount of things they learned that could be applied directly to their teaching situations. I witnessed their pride
and enthusiasm as they integrated skills learned during Summer Institute into their pedagogy months after the professional development had ended. They described the experience as life-saving, as the best professional development they ever had, not just because of the friendships they formed, but also because they believed that they gained a great deal of knowledge. I felt that the information they gave me, the classroom activities I witnessed, and the personal and group interviews were authentic representations of their pedagogy, not contrived to impress me or lead me astray. The sheer amount of time taken up by this study also contributed to its authenticity. Over time, I felt that my role as director was an advantage because of my participants openness and the trust they showed by confiding in me. I believe that they confided thoughts, opinions, and feelings that they would not have shared with someone else.

It is widely understood that top-down approaches to professional development fail to produce meaningful change in the attitudes and practices of classroom teachers (Backus, 2005; Durr, 2007). This study indicated that every teacher needs relational, collaborative involvement as well as follow-up as integral elements of their professional development experiences. As Staikidis (2006) found, relationships between teachers and leaders became vehicles for transmission and construction of knowledge.

**Consideration of Personal Motivation to Learn**

According to Patterson et al. (2008), personal motivation to learn must be taken into consideration or a plan to teach new behaviors will fail. Motivation and ability can be leveraged by including a wide variety of strategies designed for success; no single strategy will be effective with everyone. Writing project professional development
brought a number of strategies into play. Each one either motivated or enabled the participant to learn and teach skills in writing. Participants were chosen whom we hoped would be “active, sociable, and open to new experiences” since these qualities indicated that such individuals would become more involved and would thus learn more (Mount & Barrick, 1998, p. 851).

The program encouraged internal locus of control (Colquitt et al., 2000) by giving each person control of his or her learning situation. The program involved “team commitment, acceptance of technology, customer focus, and (an opportunity) to work in a self-directed fashion” (Colquitt et al., 2000, p. 701). These elements have been found to be related to motivation to learn. The program encouraged interpersonal relationships, found by Lieberman and Wood (2003) to “provide a powerful context for teacher development…that could inspire teachers to become leaders…for school reform” (p. 102). Patterson et al. (2008) also found that social motivation, including peer pressure, motivated people to learn and practice new skills. Building and maintaining meaningful interpersonal relationships were integral parts of Summer Institute, so much so that personal connections continued for nearly two years after the program ended, aided by programmed continuity activities.

**Consideration of Personal Ability**

The National Writing Project states that writing project professional development is not remedial. This is one of the reasons that candidates for Summer Institute are required to go through an application process that includes a writing sample and interview. If candidates could not or would not write, and if they were unable to
collaborate as team members, they would not have a successful experience. I also found that people who joined Summer Institute with poor writing skills did not make dramatic improvements. Sometimes people thought they are good writers when they simply were not. However, Patterson et al. (2008) found that success in changing peoples’ behavior can be supported by such things as tools, supplies, work layouts, and reporting structures. The writing project program furnished guidance through individual conferencing, books, notebooks, digital equipment, a summer computer lab, a pleasant meeting place, printed schedules, expected assignments and outcomes, follow-up training, and other things to support success. Participants reported that they benefitted from their experience in multiple ways, specifically citing research-based practices and ongoing teacher learning and improvement through planned continuity activities and opportunities to peer teach. As a result, a significant number of participants had changed their classroom practice one year later. These findings coincided with those of Dickey et al. (2005) and with Dickey et al. (2006) in two surveys of program effectiveness conducted by Inverness Research Associates for the National Writing Project.

Noe and Colquitt (2002) pointed out that despite good intentions, motivation, and an excellent professional development program, the learner must first have the ability to learn the required material, or he or she will not be successful in the program. While Patterson et al. (2008) assert that people without ability need specific training in order to learn, this issue was not addressed by this study.
Role of School Leaders

Most of the school leaders in this study encouraged the participants to implement and share the skills they had learned. One principal bought digital camcorders for teachers to share, several invited participants to conduct in-house in-service for other teachers, and one principal showed considerable interest in a participant’s innovative teaching methods. All but one of the participants felt that the principal at the very least supported what they were doing. However, Joanna’s attitude and the quality of her teaching changed dramatically when she transferred to a second school, and this change appeared to be attributed to her second principal. Not only did he show no interest in her Summer Institute experience, but he also prevented this English teacher from teaching writing or even effectively teaching reading by requiring a strict adherence to a concept map that did not leave room for creativity, by requiring that she and her team teacher turn in a single weekly lesson plan, by not listening to their ideas for decent classroom management, and by not making sure that she had sufficient materials so she could teach. Joanna reverted from a teacher who engaged her students in creative writing activities to one who used fill-in-the-blank black-line masters. More importantly, she seemed to lose her enthusiasm for teaching.

Multiple Strategies and Professional Development

Planning and implementing successful professional development for teachers is a profound and persistent problem. No single strategy will work if used alone. As stated by Patterson et al. (2008), “Bringing a simple solution to a complex and resistant problem almost never works” (p. 75). They pointed out that it takes a combination of strategies
aimed at a handful of problems to achieve success. When planning professional
development for teachers, education leaders have access to advice from organizational
researchers, motivational strategists, and education theorists. While the professional
development design of Central West Virginia Writing Project was not a perfect solution,
it did bring numerous influence strategies into play. It was successful in many ways,
primarily because it places teachers at the center of their professional development. As
Ann Lieberman recommended, “Attend carefully to what teachers say. Teachers are, after
all, closest to teaching” (McDonald, 1992, p. 8).

FUTURE STUDY

This dissertation was limited in that it was based on a 20-month study of 11
teachers who represented a single cohort of Central West Virginia Writing Project. While
the National Writing Project routinely schedules in-depth studies of sites (Lieberman &
Wood, 2003), this was the first for Central West Virginia Writing Project.

- It would be interesting to return to this cohort of teachers on an annual
  basis to see if writing project professional development continues to
  influence their pedagogy. It might also be interesting to follow-up with the
  three teachers who were having difficulty implementing writing in their
  classrooms.

- Additional studies of this site need to be conducted to test this model of
  professional development with a variety of cohorts.
• Future studies could include the application of this model to other types of professional development to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

• Future studies could consider the impact of writing project professional development on student writing.

• Future studies could address remediation, i.e., what to do when the model fails to influence teacher practice.

• A future study could be conducted regarding uncommitted and uninformed school principals and how they might be influenced to better support writing in their schools.

• Since the Central West Virginia Writing Project teacher series were evaluated via surveys of attending teachers, the surveys could be statistically analyzed to determine the perceived effectiveness of the peer-teaching program.

• Additional follow-up could be conducted with the teachers who attended the series; it would be interesting to see if they were influenced by attending the 15-hour professional development series offered by writing project peer teachers.

The strength of this model lay in its agreement with social researchers and in its flexibility of application. It indicated that teachers wished to be treated as professionals by being given voice and choice when it came to their professional development. Participants’ successes appeared to be related to their opportunities to plan and implement their learning pathways. In light of this study, it might be efficacious to
consider a conference approach to professional development for teachers that would
involve them in collaborative planning and give them choices. Such an approach might
include incentives for attendance and recognition for transferring desired practices to
classrooms. If voluntary attendance is not an option, motivation to learn could be
leveraged by planning and arranging programs that are perceived by teachers as relating
to their professional growth.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Teacher-Participants’ Schedules for Peer-Teaching, Focus Groups, Onsite Visits, and Interviews

Appendix B: CWVWP In-service Delivery in Three Counties

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APPENDIX A: TEACHER-PARTICIPANTS’ SCHEDULES FOR PEER-TEACHING, FOCUS GROUPS, ONSITE VISITS, AND INTERVIEWS
Appendix A

**Appendix A: Teacher Participants’ Schedules for Peer-Teaching, Focus Groups, Onsite Visits, and Interviews**

<table>
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<th>Participant</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Peer-Teach</th>
<th>Peer-Teach</th>
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<th>Focus Group 2</th>
<th>Visit 1</th>
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<td>05 23 2008</td>
<td>09 30 2008</td>
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APPENDIX B: CWVWP IN-SERVICE DELIVERY IN THREE COUNTIES
Appendix B: CWVWP In service Delivery in Three Counties

**XX County:**  *Fall*  
Pack ‘N Go with Kelly Gallagher  
CM with George  
Meeting 1: October 11: CM & George  
Meeting 2: October 25: Jane  
Meeting 3: November 7: Sissy  
Meeting 4: November 29: Joanna  
Meeting 5: December 13: CM & George  
*Kelly Gallagher: Teaching Adolescent Writers*  
*Intended Audience: Secondary School Teachers*  
*Digital Camcorder for perfect attendance*  

**XX County:**  *Fall*  
Writing …It’s Elementary  
Janna with Daisy  
Meeting 1: October 11: Janna & Daisy  
Meeting 2: October 25: DD  
Meeting 3: November 7: LC  
Meeting 4: November 29: Rachel  
Meeting 5: December 13: Janna & Daisy  
*Lois Bridges: Writing as a Way of Knowing*  
*Intended Audience: Elementary School Teachers*  
*Digital Camcorder for perfect attendance*  

**XX County:**  *Spring*  
Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test  
CM with Robert  
Meeting 1: January 31: CM & Robert  
Meeting 2: February 14: Joanna  
Meeting 3: February 28: Sissy  
Meeting 4: March 13: Rachel  
Meeting 5: April 3: CM & Robert  
Snow Days: April 17 and May 1  
*Jane Kiester: Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test*  
*Intended Audience: New teachers, Third and Fourth grade teachers*  
*Canon Digital Camera for perfect attendance*  

**YY County:**  *Fall*  
Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test  
LB with Sara  
Meeting 1: October 11: LB & Sara  
Meeting 2: October 25: Anne  
Meeting 3: November 8: BM  
Meeting 4: November 29: Entity  
Meeting 5: December 13: LB & Sara  
*Jane Kiester: Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test*  
*Intended Audience: New teachers, Third and Fourth, Middle School Teachers*
YY County: Spring: Writing Across the Curriculum: Developing a Treasure Trove of Writing Possibilities
SH with Anne
Meeting 1: February 21: SH & Anne
Meeting 2: March 6: LB
Meeting 3: March 20: Sara
Meeting 4: April 3: Entity
Meeting 5: April 17: SH & Anne
Gretchen Bernabei: Reviving the Essay
Intended Audience: Elementary School and Middle School Teachers
Digital Camcorder for perfect attendance

ZZ County: Fall
PE with Robert
Meeting 1: October 4: PE & Robert
Meeting 2: October 18: SB
Meeting 3: November 1: BC
Meeting 4: November 29: CS
Meeting 5: December 6: PE & Robert
Ruth Culham: 6+1 Traits of Writing: The complete guide for the primary grades OR 6+1 Traits of Writing: The complete guide, grades 3 and up
Intended Audience: All teachers, principals, and other administrators
Canon Digital Camera for perfect attendance

ZZ County: Spring
PE with BC
Meeting 1: January 31: PE & BC
Meeting 2: February 14: CS
Meeting 3: February 28: SB
Meeting 4: March 6: LC
Meeting 5: March 20: PE & BC
Ruth Culham: 6+1 Traits of Writing: The complete guide for the primary grades OR 6+1 Traits of Writing: The complete guide, grades 3 and up
Intended Audience: All teachers, principals, and other administrators
Digital Camcorder for perfect attendance
APPENDIX C: CODING SPREADSHEET FOR FIVE QUESTIONS AND THREE EMERGING THEMES
### Appendix C: Coding Spreadsheet for Five Questions and Three Emerging Themes Showing Triangulation

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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 CO COLLABORATIVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ONG ONGOING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 TF TIME-FRIENDLY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 REF REFLECTIVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 EVA EVALUATED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 WO WORTHWHILE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2. ICP INFLUENCE CLASSROOM PRACTICE
1. IW Increased amt of classroom writing
2. WP Evidence of using the writing process
3. M Modeling
4. W/S Combining writing & speaking
5. RES Using personal research
6. DET Emphasizing detail
7. PED Pairing pedagogy/ approach to teaching writing
8. SH Sharing among students
9. AC Authors Chair
10. ID Taking specific ideas from 2007 SI demos
11. YW Young Writers
12. EX Experiential/Engaging

#### 3. UOPD FACTORS USEFUL FOR OTHER PD
1. PO Having a focus or theme that repeats
2. HP Helping teachers see the purpose of the PD
3. ENGA Engaging
4. LE A lived experience related to real life living
5. FRAC Opportunity for extensive practice of skills
6. APRO Feeling that the PD is apropos/that it fits
7. SH Sharing writing
8. SS Student Samples
9. SM Small number of participants
### 4. WPPD CWVWP PD—TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SI App</th>
<th>F. G. 1</th>
<th>F. G. 2</th>
<th>Visit 1</th>
<th>Visit 2</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Demo</th>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>E-Antho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>A good experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>WL</td>
<td>A whole language experience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>EN</td>
<td>Engaging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Living the PD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>FRAC</td>
<td>Extensive practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>APRO</td>
<td>Feeling that the PD is apropos/that it fits</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CONT</td>
<td>Continuity of focus/theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Using personal research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>LPP</td>
<td>Learning from professional presenters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>LSS</td>
<td>Learning specific skills/ways to teach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Helping other teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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### 5. EMWP EXPERIENTIAL MEANINGS OF CWVWP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>REL</th>
<th>Forming relationships and friendships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LCE</td>
<td>Life-changing event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Sharing writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Learned a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Helping other teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>Making a difference</td>
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</table>

### 6. TE TECHNOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DC</th>
<th>Using digital camera</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DCC</td>
<td>Using digital camcorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TGL</td>
<td>Needs up-to-date technology in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Needs convenient access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>HIC</td>
<td>Children lack computers at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>TUN</td>
<td>Technology that cannot be used in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Teacher is practicing tech use with students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7. TL TEACHERS AS LEADERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SI App</th>
<th>F. G. 1</th>
<th>F. G. 2</th>
<th>Visit 1</th>
<th>Visit 2</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Demo</th>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>E-Antho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>VALENCE AS A TEACHER/LEADER</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SE-L</td>
<td>SELF-EFFICACY AS A TEACHER/LEADER</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>HELP</td>
<td>Helping other teachers increase writing</td>
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### 8. IA INFLUENCE OF ADMINISTRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ENC</th>
<th>ENCOURAGEMENT OF ADMINISTRATORS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>DISCOURAGEMENT BY ADMINISTRATORS</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX D: RESEARCH FINDINGS BY PARTICIPANTS’ TOTALS
### Appendix D: Research Findings by Participants’ Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>PPD</th>
<th>ICP</th>
<th>UOPD</th>
<th>WPPD</th>
<th>EMWP</th>
<th>TE</th>
<th>TL</th>
<th>IA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANNE</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>DAISY</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>GEORGE</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JANE</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JANNA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOANNA</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROBERT</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACHEL</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARA</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SISSEY</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTION #1:** PPD: PARAMETERS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**QUESTION #2:** ICP: INFLUENCES ON CLASSROOM PRACTICE

**QUESTION #3:** UOPD: FACTORS USEFUL FOR OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**QUESTION #4:** WPPD: TEACHER PERCEPTION OF WRITING PROJECT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**QUESTION #5:** EMWP EXPERIENTIAL MEANINGS OF CWWWP

**THEME #6:** TE: TECHNOLOGY

**THEME #7:** TL: TEACHERS AS LEADERS

**THEME #8:** IA: INFLUENCES OF ADMINISTRATION
APPENDIX E: FINAL STATEMENTS ABOUT WRITING PROJECT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Appendix E: Final Statements about Writing Project Professional Development

**Directions:** Please write your opinion of each statement. I would love to hear specific examples if you think of them. Include your experiences with 2007 Summer Institute, Workshop on Workshops, Peer-Teaching, Follow-up requirements, opportunities to participate in other Writing Project activities, and participation in this research study.

1. This professional development related to my teaching and learning needs.

2. This professional development related to my students' needs.

3. This professional development was an opportunity to collaboratively develop professional growth activities with peers.

4. It provided opportunities to share my own professional needs and improvements with colleagues.

5. It was designed to link me to a larger learning community.

6. It is part of a long-term plan that allowed for ongoing participation in growth activities throughout the school year.

7. It provided follow-up beyond the initial professional development experience.

8. This professional development was time-friendly in terms of my teaching work schedule.

9. It required me to think about and reflect on the knowledge and skills learned during the experience.

10. It required reflection on how the content and goals of the experience were met in my classroom.

11. This professional development encouraged me to access and analyze research data as a way to improve student learning.

12. My professional development experience was evaluated to determine its impact on my teaching and learning.

13. My professional development experience was evaluated based on how changes in my teaching practices made improvements in my students' learning.

14. The time spent on this professional development experience was worthwhile to me.

APPENDIX F: SCHEDULE FOR CWVWP 2007 INVITATIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday July 16</th>
<th>Tuesday July 17</th>
<th>Wednesday July 18</th>
<th>Thursday July 19</th>
<th>Friday July 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 Coffee, snacks, name cards introduction to the Institute</td>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing? (and sharing)</td>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing?</td>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing?</td>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing? And sharing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 Write and share your Summer Institute research question.</td>
<td>9:00 Scribe Report</td>
<td>9:00 Scribe Report</td>
<td>8:50 Scribe Report</td>
<td>9:00 Scribe Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 [W] Writing prompt (9): &quot;My Very Worst Teaching Experience&quot;</td>
<td>Choose a genre and begin writing Suite 1. Rough draft is due tomorrow.</td>
<td>9:00 Discussion of Kelly Gallagher on writing prompts, conferencing, &amp; peer reviewing</td>
<td>9:00-11:00 [O] Guest RS: Blogging</td>
<td>9:30 [D] Jane Write a letter to yourself...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather with your response group to share and discuss &quot;Lieberman, p. 100&quot;</td>
<td>10:30 [O] Presentation by CM: Using Movie Maker to Encourage Writing Write a letter to yourself, explaining how you might expand, change, and use this information in your own classroom. Hand in.</td>
<td>10:00 [D] Daisy Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>10:30 [D] Sissy Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>10:30 [D] Sissy Write a letter to yourself...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 Computer Lab for NWPi, e-anthology</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:00 [D] Janna Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch: 11:30</td>
<td>Lunch: 11:30</td>
<td>Lunch: 12:00</td>
<td>Lunch: 11:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 [R] Research Groups: Overview of Kelly Gallagher: Take notes to share with whole group.</td>
<td>12:30 (B) Instructions for using your digital camera plus camera practice!</td>
<td>1:00 [W] Share Suite 1 draft with your response group. Revision due tomorrow.</td>
<td>12:30 (W) Response groups for Revision of Suite 1. Final copy due tomorrow.</td>
<td>12:30 Hand in final copy of Suite 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 [R] Introduction to NESC Library + Tour</td>
<td>1:30 [R] Spend time with research in the library. Meet with your group to share your findings.</td>
<td>2:00 [R] Spend time with research in the library. Meet with your group to share your findings.</td>
<td>2:00 [D] George Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>1:00 [O] JS presents 8+1 Writing Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time with your research group in the library.</td>
<td>3:00 [R] End of day sharing of research work</td>
<td>3:00 End of day sharing of research work</td>
<td>3:00 End of day</td>
<td>First draft of Suite 2 is due on Monday. Choose a different genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 Whole group meets to share research work</td>
<td>3:30 End of day</td>
<td>3:30 End of day</td>
<td>3:30 End of day</td>
<td>3:30 End of day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 End of day</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key:
- [B] = participant demonstration
- [O] = other presentations by directors, teacher-consultants, or guests
- [W] = writing response groups
- [R] = discussion of recent research
## Appendix F: Schedule for Central West Virginia Writing Project's 2007 Invitational Summer Institute  Week 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>July 25</td>
<td>July 26</td>
<td>July 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>8:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouldn't We Writing?</td>
<td>Meet at MUGC to begin Writing Marathon</td>
<td>Shouldn't We Writing?</td>
<td>Meet at MUGC to begin Writing Marathon</td>
<td>Meet at MUGC to begin Writing Marathon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>9:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>10:30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Work on research, philosophy of teaching to present next week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45</td>
<td>1:45</td>
<td>1:45</td>
<td>1:45</td>
<td>1:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[O] Presentation by BH: Using a Documentary to Encourage Writing</td>
<td>[O] Time for research &amp; writing</td>
<td>[O] End of day sharing of research work</td>
<td>[O] End of day sharing of research work</td>
<td>Individual conferencing with co-directors as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Write a letter to yourself...</td>
<td>Revision of Suite 2 due tomorrow</td>
<td>Revision of Suite 2 due tomorrow</td>
<td>Revision of Suite 2 due tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>3:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] End of day sharing of research work</td>
<td>End of day</td>
<td>End of day</td>
<td>End of day</td>
<td>End of day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30</td>
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<tr>
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<td>End of day</td>
<td>End of day</td>
<td>End of day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**

[D] = participant demonstration  
[O] = other presentations by directors, teacher-consultants, or guests  
[W] = writing response groups  
[R] = discussion of recent research  
(B) BH  
(C) CM  
(S) SN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 30</td>
<td>July 31</td>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>August 2</td>
<td>August 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing?</td>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing?</td>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing?</td>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing?</td>
<td>8:30 Shouldn't We Be Writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 Scribe Report</td>
<td>9:00 Scribe Report</td>
<td>9:00 Scribe Report</td>
<td>9:00 Scribe Report</td>
<td>9:00 Scribe Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 [O] Demonstration by SH: &quot;Where I'm From&quot;</td>
<td>10:15 [R] Author's Chair 5: Sharing our philosophy of teaching writing: Jannie</td>
<td>10:15 [O] (C) Read, Write, Think</td>
<td>9:15 Revision, editing, conferencing, response groups as needed for anthology choices</td>
<td>10:00 Anthology Read Around &amp; choose anthology title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch 11:30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ramada Lunch 11:30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lunch 11:30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lunch 11:30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Celebration Lunch 12:00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 3:30</td>
<td><em>Lunch with an Author at the Ramada Inn: Author Colleen Anderson</em></td>
<td>12:30 [R] Sharing our philosophy of teaching writing [bibliography is due in 3 days before]</td>
<td>12:30 [R] Time for Author's Chair if needed</td>
<td>Potluck Celebration Lunch at B's house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 End of day</td>
<td>Take writing materials.</td>
<td>Author's Chair 6: Joanna</td>
<td>Continuity &amp; Inservice plans for fall and spring</td>
<td>Receive certificate of completion for ISI 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 End of day</td>
<td>Revision of Suite 3 due tomorrow</td>
<td>Author's Chair 7: Daisy</td>
<td>2:00 Revision, editing, conferencing as needed for anthology</td>
<td>Fill out form to receive first stipend of $600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 End of day</td>
<td></td>
<td>Author's Chair 8: Sara</td>
<td>Final Blogs and E-Anthology</td>
<td>Workshop on Workshops in September</td>
</tr>
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<td>3:30 End of day</td>
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<td>Author's Chair 9: Rachel</td>
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<td>Follow-up in November</td>
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<td>Author's Chair 10: DD</td>
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<td>Author's Chair 11: Robert</td>
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**Key:**
- [W] = writing response groups
- [R] = response presentations by directors, teacher-consultants, or guests
- [O] = other presentations by directors, teacher-consultants, or guests
- [CM] = discussion of recent research
- [SH] = discussion of recent research
Appendix G: Syllabus for Central West Virginia Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute
6 Credit Hours (optional credit)
2007

General Information

Graduate Credit Hours: 6 (optional)

Barbara Holmes
Director, Central WV Writing Project
holmes26@marshall.edu

Office: MUGC GC 241
Office Hours: 12:00 - 5:00 M-F
746-1947

ISI Co-Director: Carol Mathis
ISI Assistant Co-Director: Sharon Huffman

Meeting Times and Places: The Invitational Summer Institute (ISI) begins with the Kickoff Campout at Cedar Lakes Conference Center in Ripley, May 18-19.

The Institute reconvenes July 16-August 3, MUGC, Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM-3:30 PM in AC 204, on the second floor of the Byrd Building.

Materials:
Fellows are provided with the following materials:

- Kodak EasyShare digital camera
- Leather Writer’s Binder
- Jump-Drive

Course Prerequisites:
Institute participants (Fellows) are certified teachers in public and private schools K-12 within the service area of CWVWP. Currently, this area includes the following county school systems that have formed a partnership agreement with CWVWP: Kanawha, Putnam, and Nicholas. Eligible teachers are encouraged to apply through the following link:
http://www.marshall.edu/muge/cwwp/CorePrograms/Application.pdf

A maximum of twenty Fellows are chosen as a result of application and personal interview.

Rationale:
Successful teachers of writing study current theory and research, they write, and they demonstrate Best Practice in the teaching of writing across the curriculum. The National Writing Project believes that the best teacher for teachers is another teacher. Thus the expectations for Fellows of the Invitational Summer Institute are:
1. Fellows will engage in personal writing,
2. Fellows will use literature review to research proven methods of teaching writing to students.
3. Fellows will share their writing expertise with other teachers, whether within their professional communities or in the field with CWVWP support upon completion of the Institute.

**Course Objectives:** The primary objectives of this course are to provide experiences in which Fellows can:

1. Demonstrate understanding of writing as a multilayered process: planning, drafting, revising, rewriting, and publishing.
2. Demonstrate a broad knowledge base of writing for various purposes (such as persuasive writing), in various genres (such as nonfiction and poetry), and writing to learn in various content areas (such as science, math, social studies, and health).
3. Demonstrate an understanding of best instructional practice for teaching writing across the curriculum.
4. Demonstrate mastery of technology appropriate to a writing program.

**To Receive Course Credit:** Participants who wish to receive six (6) hours of graduate credit from MUGC, must complete a Non-Degree Graduate application form (unless they are already admitted to MUGC in a degree program). They must send this to: Graduate Admissions, Marshall University Graduate College, 100 Angus E. Peyton Drive, South Charleston, WV 25303 with a check for $40. They must request that a transcript be sent from their alma mater to Graduate Admissions (address above). The online Non-Degree Graduate application form is available online at [http://www.marshall.edu/mugc](http://www.marshall.edu/mugc).

Participants may fill out the appropriate form online or copy the file to a hard drive or other storage medium and fill it out offline. Then they will print it, sign, and mail with appropriate application fee. (You may want to save a copy of the filled-out file to your hard drive or other storage medium.) They may wish to print it out, complete by hand, sign, and mail with the application fee. Six graduate credit hours are available at reduced tuition through third-part contracts to each participant’s home county.

Please call Mary Wolfe, Director of Graduate Admissions, with additional questions, 746-1910, Office: GC 101-E.

**Stipends:** Upon satisfactory completion of the 17-day Institute, which includes participation in required writing assignments and demonstrations, each Fellow will receive a stipend of $600 as a result of PART A: Summer Activities, as well as six (6) graduate credit hours, if applicable (optional). At the end of the following Fall Semester (December), each Fellow will receive an additional stipend of $400 upon completion of PART B: Culminating Activities.
PART A: Summer Activities:

- Fellows will reflect on and analyze their own writing processes as they prepare written selections for anthology publication.
- Fellows will complete several pieces of original writing for sharing in audience response groups and that may be used for publication in course anthology.
- Fellows will develop an interactive presentation on teaching writing across the curriculum by employing Best Practice and Twenty-First Century Skills.
- Fellows will employ technology, including word processing, using a digital camera and jump drive, digital imaging and publication, PowerPoint presentation and other technology-enhanced teaching demonstrations, accessing information on the Internet, and blogging.

PART B: Culminating Activities:

*Summer Fellows will attend and write about*
- Two Teacher-Consultant bi-monthly meetings, in September and December
- The October West Virginia Book Festival activities:
  - Work in the booth with other TCs
- One session (three hours) of professional development training in a partnering county, to be arranged by Barbara Holmes

*Senior Fellows:* Teachers who have attended Summer Institute and are invited to return as mentors and coaches. Senior Fellows may be asked to work with Fellows as needed. They will also engage in all ISI activities of the Summer Institute.

Additional Requirements of the Institute:

*Attendance:* Fellows are required to attend all class meetings.
A follow-up supper meeting will be held on **Friday, November ___** for everyone to share follow-up activities and classroom writing activities. Fellows will complete a form to receive the final $400 portion of the seminar stipend.

*Participation:* Fellows will engage in reading, writing, and other class activities as directed by Institute leaders.

*Personal Notebook:* Each Fellow will assemble a notebook of writings, reflections, demonstrations, ideas for Best Practice, and ideas for teaching writing using Twenty-First Century skills. It is our hope that this notebook will be useful to you as a classroom teacher and as a teacher-consultant of the Central West Virginia Writing Project.
Grades: Students who enroll to receive graduate credit and who complete all requirements in a satisfactory manner will be positively evaluated by letter grade.

Additional Resources:


We encourage you to add resources that are meaningful to your summer investigations. As a Fellow with the Central West Virginia Writing Project ISI, you have access to all resources of Marshall University’s library as well as the library of the Central West Virginia Writing Project.
Appendix H: Kickoff Campout Agenda

Cedar Lakes Conference Center in May

Summer Institute Co-Directors: CM and Barbara Holmes

Summer Institute Assistant Co-Director: SH

Friday Evening

Meet at 4:00 or so to get settled in Cedars Lodge
5:00-6:00 Supper in Dining Hall
7:00 Discussion Time: The Writing Project: What, where, when, why, how???
    Summer Institute Focus: Personal writing, demonstrations of
    successful teaching of writing, and individual research.
8:00 Meet CWVWP Co-Director, Paul Epstein
9:00 Bonfire, S’Mores, and Ghostly Stories

Saturday Morning

7:00 Breakfast in Dining Hall
9:30 Demonstration by Paul
10:30 Discussion of characteristics of good teaching: Twenty-First Century
    Skills and Best Practice;
    Breakout Groups: Share experiences of teaching writing.
12:00 Lunch in Dining Hall
1:00-3:00 Receive and discuss Syllabus and Book
    Breakout Groups: Create and share ideas for research
    Group Facilitator: BH
    Group Facilitator: SH
    Group Facilitator: CM

*****************************************************************************************************************************************

Breakout Groups: Discuss ideas for personal research and for demonstrations

Facilitator: SH:
Rachel
Anne
Daisy
Facilitator: BH:
Rachel
Anne
Daisy

Facilitator: CM:
George
Entity
Sara

Facilitator: Sissy
Robert
Janna
Joanna
APPENDIX I: 2007 SUMMER INSTITUTE WRITING REQUIREMENTS
Appendix I: 2007 Summer Institute Writing Requirements

1. *Shouldn’t We Be Writing?* Each morning half an hour will be reserved for writing. You are expected to use the half hour exclusively for writing, but you may write whatever you wish—journals, letters, revisions, poetry, etc. You will be invited to share your writings.

2. **Daily Writing:** Each day will require some writing as part of and in response to demonstrations and the e-anthology.

3. **Scribe Notes:** Each day someone will keep a complete log of the day’s happenings. The Scribe Notes will be kept by each participant in turn and read aloud the following morning. The scribe will post *Scribe Notes* on the NWP E-anthology.
   - A clean copy will be given to the director, and this record of each day’s events will be copied and distributed to participants. Creativity is encouraged!

4. **E-Anthology:** You will be required to post at least one text, any of the above or something else generated during the summer, and at least one comment on someone else’s writing, to the National Writing Project’s E-Anthology, an online forum for teachers participating in Summer Institutes nationwide. You will also post the daily scribe report when you are the scribe.

5. **Demonstration Lesson Plan:** Please provide a copy of your demonstration lesson plans, as well as sample assignments or other relevant materials, at least two days in advance of your demonstration (except for demonstrations #1 and #2) so they can be duplicated and distributed on the day of your demonstration.

6. **Précis:** A short summary of your demonstration is due to the director on the day after your demonstration.

7. **Three Pieces:** A finished piece of writing, word processed, and three to five pages double-spaced if prose, will be collected on July 20, 27, and August 2. Please bring three copies of a complete rough draft to share with your Writing Research/Response group each day that a draft is due. The three piece suite is described below.

8. **The Fourth Piece:** Your research will lead to your philosophy of teaching writing: You will have time on most afternoons to research the answer to your personal question about how to teach writing to your students. You will confer on this topic with your research teammates, as well. You will write your final philosophy of teaching writing based on your research as documented by your annotated bibliography. This should be a finished piece of writing, word processed, and four to five pages double-spaced. It will be collected after you present it from the Author’s Chair.
It is not necessary to worry. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to connect your classroom practice to current scholarship, to provide some additional sources for teachers interested in your research, and to provide a starting place for discussion of current theory about writing and the teaching of writing. This confers additional credibility on your work.

9. **Annotated Bibliography:** An annotated bibliography of a minimum of three recent scholarly texts consulted in relation to your research question is due three days before your reading from the author’s chair. Title your bibliography with your name and your research question. After each text listed, include a brief précis of the source, indicating its argument (e.g. Jane Smith, in “Article X,” argues that...), the issues covered, and how it relates to your research. Use APA formatting throughout.
   Resource: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01)

10. **Your Turn in the Author’s Chair:** On the day that you will share your research and philosophy from the Author’s Chair, copies of your annotated bibliography will be provided for everyone.

**Writing Assignment: The Three Piece Suit(e)**

“*Suite*: a group of things forming a unit or constituting a collection” *(Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary).*

You will compose three extended pieces of writing, each a different genre. They can revolve around an event or subject of your choosing. You may choose any of your writings to include in the 2007 Anthology.

You might wish to begin with an essay about an autobiographical incident or phase in your life that you have been interested in treating for some time. Then you might follow up with a descriptive portrait of an important person or place in your life such as a teacher or grandparent. Or you might write a persuasive essay for a newspaper or a short story.

Some of you will be more comfortable with starting in less personal ways. You may want to start with a curriculum guide for teaching writing or using writing to learn in a content area. Then you could move into more personal or creative modes in the next pieces.

The intention of these three assignments is to make you stretch, so while it is all right to do again what you can already do well, it is equally important to try what you have not tried before.

While you may have thought about or worked with the ideas for these writing assignments before, these texts should be fresh in the sense that you are actively working on generating and revising them during the summer.
Steps in the Writing Process:
1. Organize your thoughts: Teach your students to use graphic organizers.
2. Write a rough draft. Confer with your response group.
4. Write a final copy.
4. Publish and publicize your students’ work in some way.
   - Introduce the Author’s Chair in your classroom.
   - Submit your favorite pieces for the 2007 Anthology, the E-anthology, and your blog.

Genre Writing: Resources:
The Writing Site: [http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/genre/default.asp](http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/genre/default.asp)

Digital Storytelling in Education: [http://www.coe.uh.edu/digital-storytelling](http://www.coe.uh.edu/digital-storytelling)

Microsoft Photo Story 3 (free download)

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<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Technical</td>
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Response/Research Groups

**GROUP 1**
1. Daisy  ENG HS
2. Entity FOREIGN LANG
3. Jane  ENG HS

**GROUP 2**
1. Sissy  SPED HS
2. George  SS HS

**GROUP 3**
1. Janna  6 MS
2. Justin  8 MS
3. Anne  K/E

**GROUP 4**
1. Sara FOREIGN LANG
2. Rachel  5/E
3. Joanna  6 MS
Appendix J: Workshop on Workshops Agenda
September 21-22, 2007

Friday, September 21
5:00 Supper in the Dining Hall
6:30 Rafting across the Curriculum by SH
Bring your favorite game + Campfire if weather permits

Saturday, September 22
Early Morning: Breakfast and lots of coffee
8:30 What did we get ourselves into?? Overview of professional
development booklet
Writing to Learn by Kathleen Manzo: Read,
Pair, Share, and Discuss
10:00 Divide into Planning Teams
   1. Divide your book into five sessions
   2. Write plans for each session
   3. Include a demonstration by each presenter
   4. Each meeting needs activity and lots of ideas
12:00-1:00 Lunch
1:15-2:00 Activity: Writing with Borrowed Words: Paul
   Epstein
2:00-2:30 Get a fresh perspective: Combine the planning
groups for sharing
2:30-3:30 Rework your plan
3:30-4:00 Sharing via a group spokesman

Reflection by Paul Epstein, Co-Director, CWVWP, September 21, 2008
Barbara,
Just wanted to share some thoughts about the WOW.

This short weekend event is the epitome of successful Continuity as conceived
and perfected by NWP. It contains the most important elements:

- Meaningful work on a core program: Inservice
- Professional development for participants in the form of teachers-
  teaching-teachers
- Responsibility of all participants for aspects of the work
- Built-in time for social interactions, sharing of food, and writing

It also contains some extras: the beautiful setting, the sleepover, the camcorder as
a reward. Congratulations on creating a successful model for the work of creating
teamwork and group responsibility among the coordinators and the presenters of a
workshop series and for the year's inservice, as well as creating a phenomenal
learning/growing opportunity for the newest cohort of TC's.
CURRICULUM VITA
BARBARA DONDIEGO HOLMES CANDIDATE

EDUCATION

Graduate College, Marshall University
Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, 2009
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia
Master of Education, 1971
Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon
Bachelor of Science in Foods and Nutrition, 1966

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1996-2001 Executive Director of Early Childhood Development and Programming, Primrose School Franchising Company, Cartersville, Georgia
2002-2005 Teacher, University of Charleston, Charleston, West Virginia
2005-Present Graduate Assistant, Marshall University, South Charleston, West Virginia
2006-Present Director, Central West Virginia Writing Project, South Charleston, West Virginia
         Director, West Virginia Young Writers Contest

AUTHOR

1992 Craft-Training in the Preschool Curriculum, ERIC, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
1998 Start with Science, Totline, Frank Schaffer Publications, Torrance, California
1998 Start with Art, Totline, Frank Schaffer Publications, Torrance, California
2006 Increasing Teacher Awareness of Assistive Technology through Integration into Special Education Preparation Programs, with Nancy Burton and Dr. Lisa Heaton, Education & Information Technology Library, Volume 2006, Issue 1, page 1855

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

1996 Presenter, National Science Teachers’ Association National Convention, St. Louis, Missouri
1996 Presenter, Early Childhood Institute, Savannah Technical Institute, Savannah, Georgia
2005 Presenter, National Science Teachers’ Association National Convention, Dallas, Texas
2008 Presenter, National Writing Project Rural Sites Network Conference, Kalamazoo, Michigan