DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 429 297 CS 216 642

AUTHOR Witucki, Rose M.
TITLE Staff Development in Writing Instruction and the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools: A Review of the Literature.
PUB DATE 1999-04-05
NOTE 36p.; Research Paper, California State University at Long Beach.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Effectiveness; *Language Arts; Literature Reviews; *Public Schools; *Reading Instruction; Staff Development; Whole Language Approach; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *California

ABSTRACT

With the introduction of the "whole language" approach to literacy and an emphasis on "across the curriculum" learning, the effective instruction of writing has taken on an added importance during the past two decades in California. Recent public demands for a "back to basics" school curriculum where the mastering of individual skills is valued has prompted the issuance of rigorous statewide standards and the rewriting of the California Reading/Language Arts Framework. In response to these events, this paper answers the following questions: (1) What are the current practices to inservice teachers of upper elementary students in the instruction of writing?; and (2) Which staff development models for the instruction of writing are best in accord with the new Reading/Language Arts Framework? The paper presents sections on the following: relevant definitions; a history of the topic/major contributors and contributions; major issues and controversies; model practices and programs; synthesis and analysis; conclusions; and recommendations. Contains 21 references and a 9-item bibliography. (NKA)

Staff development in Writing Instruction and the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools: A Review of the Literature

Rose M. Witucki

April 5, 1999

Presented to Dr. Mary Jo Lass

In partial fulfillment for requirements of
EDEL 501: Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness
Through Instructional and Personal Strategies

California State University Long Beach

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

An elementary school teacher must make daily decisions not only about what to teach, but also about the best way to teach it. The teacher must keep in mind dozens of variables such as what does the state and district say I should teach? Do my students have the prerequisite knowledge and skills to handle the lesson? How can I make this lesson accessible to the slow learners and the English Language learners? Will my gifted learners already know this? If so, how can I adapt the lesson to make it a valuable learning experience for them? How will I assess the students to see if they learned what I want them to know? Is the state mandated standardized test going to assess students on this same item? How does that affect the way I will teach it now? And the list continues.

In dealing with a fairly straight forward piece of curricula, such as multiplying two single digits together to get a product, the answers to the above questions may not be quite as complex as dealing with other areas of the curriculum, such as the instruction of writing. Writing involves the manipulation of language, the transferring of the symbols of thought into the symbols of print, and then the arranging of those symbols according to a complex system of organization, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. Add to that the above teacher's list of concerns, and writing instruction becomes a veritable maze.

In an attempt to navigate this maze, researchers began to study how people compose written text. Writing began to be seen less as a finished product, and more as a process of creation involving a series of nonlinear steps. This translated into a new way to approach the instruction of writing: teachers were now able to focus on the creative

aspect of writing instead of merely the grammar and English language conventions. The listening, speaking, reading, and writing components of language arts were being considered as interwoven parts of a whole, inseparable even for instructional purposes thus enabling writing instruction to deal with the concerns of substance, as well as form. These developments lead to the enthusiastic creation of writing projects that were able to tap into the personal creativeness of teachers, and thus gave birth to a new type of collaborative staff development. However, the recent development of rigorous state-wide standards and language arts instructional guidelines that calls for the mandatory testing of sub-skills can be seen as a threat to the concept of the interdependence of the language arts components and as a return to a skills-based driven language arts curriculum. Such a return might also mean the demise of the exuberance experienced by teachers used to the freedom of relying on their own creativity to foster the writing of their students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the introduction of the "whole language" approach to literacy and an emphasis on "across the curriculum" learning, the effective instruction of writing has taken on an added importance during the past two decades. Recent public demands for a "back to basics" school curriculum where the mastering of individual skills is valued has prompted the issuance of rigorous statewide standards and the rewriting of the California Reading/Language Arts Framework. In response to these events, this paper will answer the following questions: (a) what are the current practices to inservice teachers of upper elementary students in the instruction of writing? and (b) which staff development

models for the instruction of writing are best in accord with the new Reading/Language Arts Framework?

DEFINITIONS

Across the curriculum: a term referring to the integration of skills practiced in one curricular discipline into other curricular areas. For example, writing is integrated with math by requiring students to keep a math journal. Other examples include asking students to role play historical figures in a history class, or write letters to Congress regarding the particular concerns of a social studies class.

English-Language Arts Content Standards: a document published by the California Department of Education in 1998 that designates what to teach at specific grade levels in the language arts.

Inservice education: the planned and organized effort to improve the knowledge, skill, and attitudes of instructional staff members to make them more effective on the job (Good, 1992, p. 294).

Literacy: competence in the language arts to ensure the ability to access information with ease, apply language skills at levels demanded by the twenty-first century and appreciate the literature and liberty that fluency and facility with language offers. The

mission of all public schools must be to ensure that students acquire this proficiency to enhance their civic participation, as well as their academic, social, personal, and economic success in today's society and tomorrow's world (California Department of Education, 1998).

Professional Development: D. Gilford cites Bellanca (1995) as defining professional development as a planned, comprehensive, and systemic program designed by the system to improve all school personnel's ability to design, implement, and assess productive change in each individual and in the school environment (Gilford, 1996, p.4).

Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools: a document issued by the California Department of Education which specifies the strategic and systematic reading/language skills and knowledge students should acquire and teachers should teach to achieve competence in the language arts. The document itself claims that it "is designed to provide a blueprint for curriculum and instruction to enhance all students' potential as producers and users of language" from kindergarten through grade twelve. Its purpose is to "guide the implementation of the English-Language Arts Content Standards through specification of the design of instructional materials, curriculum, instruction, and professional development". These guidelines also include "selected research-based approaches for implementing instruction to ensure optimal benefits for all students". The framework itemizes by grade-level what is to be taught in reading, writing, written and oral language conventions, as well as listening and speaking skills. It also

specifies how students are to be evaluated in these areas (California Department of Education, 1998).

Staff development: D. Gilford cites the Department of Education as defining staff development as including "the rigorous and relevant strategies and organizational supports that insure the career-long development of teachers and other educators" (Gilford, 1996, p.3).

Standards: particular skills and knowledge students are expected to master by designated points in time with the assumption that earlier skills are foundational and requisite for later, more complex higher-order skills and knowledge (California Department of Education, 1998).

Whole language: an approach to teaching based on the assumption that speaking, listening, reading and writing flow into one another as students work naturally with language. Students attain skills through meaningful interaction that involves them naturally in language. Under this teaching model, reading and writing skills are not taught as isolated fragments, but are instead taught as they are being used in meaningful contexts (Hennings, 1986, p. 9-10).

Writing: the process of selecting, combining, arranging and developing ideas in effective sentences, paragraphs, and... longer units of discourse (National Council of

Teachers of English Committee on Standards for Basic Skills Writing Programs, as cited in Kean, 1983).

Writing process: an approach to teaching writing that recognizes the many overlapping and nonlinear stages involved in transforming thought into written communication. The stages are (a) **prewriting:** activities designed to stimulate the flow of ideas before any structured writing begins. These activities include, but are not limited to: brainstorming, clustering, debating, fantasizing, and outlining, (b) **writing:** putting words to paper, (c) **sharing/responding:** getting feedback from others about the text in terms of reactions to content and style in order to help the author identify strengths, weaknesses and incongruities, (d) **revising:** the author scratches out, marks over, adds, rephrases and reorders words and ideas in the text, (e) **editing:** correction of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, grammar, and (f) **evaluating:** the final feedback usually from the teacher and usually in the form of a grade (D'Aoust, 1996, p.1).

Note: some descriptions of the writing process include an additional step called **publication:** how the final text is somehow presented to an audience, incorporated into a book, read a loud, etc.

Writers' workshop (also known as writing workshop): a way to organize and structure classroom instruction while incorporating the stages of the writing process. Typically students choose their own topics, and to some degree, work at their own pace, conferencing with teacher or peers as the need arises. The teacher acts as facilitator, and teaches necessary skills and strategies. The teacher, along with the students and even the

student writer himself, act as evaluators of the student's writing (Stretch, 1994, p.4). Writers' workshop usually contains the following components: a **mini-lesson** led by the teacher to explain various writing strategies and skills, **status of the class**, where students report the stage where they are currently working, **writing and conferencing time**, when students prepare their drafts, and confer with others for advice, and finally, a **group share**, where a few students discuss their work with the entire class or with small groups (Calkins, 1986, p.26).

HISTORY OF THE TOPIC/MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Starting in the mid 1960's, the teaching of composition began to take on added importance in elementary schools. Teachers were traditionally given little training in the area of writing and the main focus of the teaching of writing had been on the completed products, rather than on the act of composition itself. Teachers taught writing by emphasizing grammar and mechanics. However, it was as early as 1935, that professional leaders first began to discuss integrating the reading, writing, speaking, and listening components of language arts into meaningful classroom activities, thus sowing the seeds for the later "whole language" approach to teaching the English language arts. By 1963 the Conference on College Composition and Communication (the CCCC), a national center for educators interested in the teaching of writing from the kindergarten through college, published a research review called "The State of Knowledge about Composition." This review cited research rejecting grammar-based approaches for improving children's writing (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, & Schoe, 1963, as cited in Squire,

1991). The CCCC also lobbied for stronger preparation of teachers in writing (Committee on National Interest, 1961,1964, as cited in Squire, 1991).

Recommendations from the 1966 Dartmouth Seminar, a three week study of the teaching of the English language arts by a group of 60 international professors, teacher-educators, and teachers, called for the development of a "growth model" of learning for students which stresses creativity, expressive writing and responding to literature. From this recommendation, developed two major models for the teaching of English Language Arts: the Interactive Model and the Naturalistic Model.

The Interactive Model and was developed by James Moffett. Moffett's work is based largely on the psychological developmental theories of Jean Piaget. In his book, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (1968), Moffett recommends that the teaching of language arts should be sequential and correspond to the emotional and intellectual development of the individual student. In subsequent work, Moffett emphasizes a language arts curriculum that is student-centered, that is, it allows students to choose the their own activities. It fosters interaction by allowing students to teach one another, and it integrates the various curricular subjects the student needs to make meaning from his particular area of study (Squire, 1991, p.74). It should be noted that the current teaching method called Writing Workshop also emphasizes these practices.

The other model developed as a response to the Dartmouth Seminar is called the Naturalistic Teaching Model and is based largely on research by James Britton. He was influenced by psycholinguistic studies of researchers such as Vygotsky and others. Britton's model relies on the experiences of pupils as a means to learning. According to this model, a student's writing emerges from the experience of speech and begins as

"expressive", or relating to the writer himself. As the writer matures, his writing is able to shift toward the poetic or toward the transactional ranges which means that he writer's ideas and written language become more publicly geared, and move away from mere personal utterances. Britton's insistence on the importance of expressive language has affected the way writing fluency is encouraged in today's classroom. Some commonly used techniques proposed by Britton include free-writing, journal keeping, brainstorming for prewriting, peer editing, and writing for various audiences (Squire, 1991, p.78).

In 1971, J. Emig began to study twelfth graders in an effort to ascertain how writers write. Her studies showed that although students did not spend much time writing for school, they did use a well- learned, systematic and mechanical format. She also discovered that when students engaged in personal writing, they spent much time planning, writing, and revising their work. Other researchers, such as Flower and Hayes (1980-81), looked at adult writing procedures and learned that composing consisted of several sub-processes, namely planning, transcribing text, and revising. These sub-processes occur in random order and tend to overlap (As cited in Dyson & Freedman, 1991). These researchers, along with many others such as D. Murry (1986) and M. Shaughnessy (1977) have helped shaped the concept of the writing process, which is at the forefront of writing instruction today.

A very influential development in writing instruction has been the establishment of writing projects. The Bay Area Writing Project began in 1974 in response to the number of freshmen entering the University of California at Berkeley that lacked adequate writing skills. It brought together exemplary composition teachers for five weeks during a summer institute to share effective materials and techniques and to

explain the theoretical bases for their methods. Furthermore, participants are asked to write about subjects that interest them using different types of writing styles, ranging from personal points of view to the analytical. The papers are read to small groups and thoroughly discussed. In turn, participants in the summer institutes act as consultants for yearlong inservice programs for local school districts. Modeled after the BAWP, the California Writing Project came into after 1975. Sites were set up in conjunction with universities all over the state, including, but not limited to the UCLA/California Writing project, the South Basin Writing Project, which includes USC and several state universities, and the Inland Area Writing Project. (California State Department of Education, 1983). As of 1996, there were seventeen local writing projects statewide affiliated with the CWP. Each year over 30,000 teachers from all levels of instruction and regions of the state participate in a variety of summer and school-year programs sponsored by the CWP. Some of the key assumptions of the CWP are that universities and schools can work as cooperative partners to solve writing problems; effective writing teachers should be identified and trained to teach other teachers; teachers need to experience what they demand from their students, namely process writing; and what is known about writing comes not only from research, but also from those who teach writing (Olson, 1996, p. XI). There are other writing projects networked throughout the country, indeed throughout the world, including the Iowa Writing Project and the National Writing Project. Their methods of operation are similar to those of the California projects.

The instruction of writing continues to be strongly influenced by the research efforts of Donald Graves, Lucy Calkins, and Nancie Atwell during the 1980's. Graves

conducted research from the University of New Hampshire in nearby schools. He recorded his findings in a 1983 book titled Writing: Teachers and Children at Work. His emphasis on collaboration between researchers and teachers helped to promote the current trend of seeing teachers as researchers. The manner of reporting his findings as classroom narratives rather than lists of statistical information has blurred the distinction between practice and research, but has also made his reports more readable to the average teacher. Calkins conducted research from Teacher's College, Columbia, and likewise reported her work in a reader-friendly narrative styled book called The Art of Teaching Writing (1986). Atwell, a middle school teacher in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, not only reported the writing progress made by her own students, but also discussed her role in the teaching process as well. Her book, In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents, published in 1987, presents research in the form of classroom anecdotes, and offers the reader practical lesson guides to implement a teaching method named writing workshop. Graves, upon whose work Calkins and Atwell base their research, views student writing in terms of natural development and therefore believes the most conducive method for the teaching of writing is indirect and responsive, much like the naturalistic model of learning advocated by Britton (Squire, 1991, p.149).

MAJOR ISSUES AND CONTROVERSIES

...any teacher of writing must accept, as fact, the conclusion that school-age children possess an extraordinary wealth of linguistic knowledge. The question, then, is this: How do we get this knowledge "out" in the form of writing?

---Owen Thomas,
Former Codirector, UCI Writing Project
(Olsen, 1996, p. XV)

During the past two decades, in order to "get knowledge out of" students, teachers have been receiving various types of inservice training to teach children to use the writing process. In speaking of writing as a process, writers and researchers "are attempting to describe the incredibly complex system of transforming thought into written communication" (D'Aoust, 1996). For teachers of writing, the writing process is an instructional tool used to guide students in their writing. It is based on the stage-process model---prewriting, writing, sharing/responding, revising, editing, and evaluating (D'Aoust, 1996). Research has shown that the writing process method has merit as an effective teaching tool. For example, based on data obtained from a 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment in writing, it was found that the use of writing process techniques, such as planning and preparing more than one draft, is related to higher writing proficiency. It also shows that the average writing scores improved as

the number of writing process activities students reported being asked to do regularly by their teachers increased from one to three. The NAEP writing assessment report also claims that out of the 22,500 eighth and twelfth grade students tested, about one fourth indicated they were never asked by their teachers to plan or write more than one draft of their work. These students had the lowest average score (Goldstein & Carr, 1996). Why were these students not taught to use the writing process?

The new Reading and Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, which is about to be released next month, calls for specific benchmarks, or standards to be achieved by students by a certain grade. The writing portion is by and large heavily dependent on the writing process. Incorporated in the framework is the call for statewide assessment to ensure that teachers are teaching and that students are achieving these standards. It is imperative, not only that teachers are trained properly in current writing instruction techniques, but also that the training carry over successfully into the daily classroom practices of the teacher. By its nature, the writing process can be cumbersome, laborious, and time consuming; therefore teachers may feel some reticence in employing it regularly in their classrooms.

MODEL PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS

The manner in which elementary school teachers are trained to use the writing process seems to significantly affect whether or not teachers actually employ it in the classroom, as well as the degree of success that students experience when they use it. In

order to determine what sort of teacher inservice leads to the successful implementation a writing program that incorporates the writing process, this paper will examine different types of staff development programs that have produced various results. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine pre-service instruction of beginning teachers. It will also look closely at the writing portion of the Reading and Language Arts framework as a curriculum model, concentrating chiefly on the upper elementary grades 4 through 6.

One of the most successful inservice plans for teaching writing comes from the Bay Area Writing Project and its various offshoots, including the National Writing Project. The BAWP and other writing projects provide three modes of staff development. The first is an intense summer institute where a small number of chosen teacher participants demonstrate effective writing techniques, discuss the theory behind the techniques and engage in large amounts of personal writing which is shared in small groups. The second level of staff development is called the open program. It relies on former institute participants delivering a series of workshops to teachers over the course of several months. It often focuses on particular areas of interest. The last mode of staff development is the one-day orientation workshop. Like the open program, its area of emphasis is often determined by the principal or by the teachers themselves. In The Role of Staff Development in Implementing the Bay Area Writing Program, D. Marsh, D. Knudsen, and G. Knudsen describe a study which took place within the Department of Defense Dependents School system in Germany. Their purpose is to try and ascertain which of the BAWP inservice modes resulted in more teacher implementation of the skills taught at the workshop. To obtain quantitative data, researchers used an instrument called Level of Use (LoU) to help them identify the extent to which the teachers were

applying three of the writing strategies, namely, the writing process, peer response groups, and the teacher writing with students. To obtain qualitative data, researchers relied on open-ended interviews to determine the teacher's beliefs as to what helped or hindered implementation of these strategies. The findings showed that the extent of implementation varies directly with the intensity of the workshop mode and that institute graduates exhibited a longer lasting revitalization in their teaching. Data obtained from the DoDDS study is somewhat compatible with research studies of effective staff development by Joyce and Showers (1982) and Sparks (1983). The institute is seen as a structured experience where learners are also leaders who teach one another instead of only being lectured to by experts. The institute builds collegiality. It provides theory, modeling, practice, and feedback, although not necessarily in a linear manner as advocated by staff development models. The institute also encourages follow-up and peer coaching, but not as strongly as research indicates it should. The BAWP model does not incorporate strong administrative involvement or leadership, which staff development models list as a critical element for implementing a successful staff development program (Marsh, Knudsen, & Knudsen, 1987).

In Improving the Second "R": Writing Projects as Staff Development by C. Capper and N. Bagenstos, the authors generally agree with the studies by Marsh et al., that writing projects, the National Writing Project, in particular, "represent the single most significant effort to enable teachers to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure that students are able to write fluently and skillfully" (Capper & Bagenstos, (1987). They further note that because the NWP does not espouse any single all-encompassing or prepackaged method for teaching writing, it allows teachers the

autonomy to choose writing activities most suited for the particular knowledge, skill, or interest of the student. This certainly helps increase teachers' feelings of efficacy and professionalism. However, in comparing NWP training methods to models of staff development and adult development (Springhall 79), the authors find that the NWP needs to strengthen coaching and follow-up procedures, concentrate on team building, as well as encourage administrative participation and support (Capper & Bagenstos, 1987).

A more recent study by S. Hasseler, (1995) reports negative results in an attempt to use NWP techniques to improve the writing program in an overcrowded, low-income Chicago school despite having many qualities deemed appropriate for successful teacher learning opportunities. The writing program was associated with a national organization with a long time reputation for exacting changes in teacher practices of teaching writing (although the author fails to mention which organization). The workshop was well planned and allowed for teacher participation, immediate implementation, and opportunities for collaboration. The teachers at the site had requested the program, and it was to be led by teachers from the district that had successfully facilitated the program in the past The author gathered data through interviews, workshop evaluations, and observation of workshops and classrooms. Participation in the program was voluntary, and although the teachers started out enthusiastically, they became disillusioned and about half of them dropped out of the program before it ended. The author blames many factors for the failure of the program's innovations to carry over into the classroom. Some of these factors include teachers' perceptions, beliefs and knowledge, the structure and content of the workshop, as well as the low expectations of workshop leaders and their inability to break through the teachers' negative beliefs. The author claims that

missing from the workshop were important links of knowledge gained in workshops to classroom practice, and a weak school policy supporting change. (Hasseler, 1995).

Models other than those based on writing projects are also being successfully employed to implement changes in writing programs. S. Anderson and others (1992) studied the effectiveness of a staff development program in the Yale, Michigan public schools designed to provide inservice to teachers about the instruction of the writing process and the evaluation of student writing. In this case, the Yale Public Schools' Language Arts Committee assessed the needs of its schools and decided to hire a consultant from a private, non-profit consulting firm called the Network's Center for Effective Communication in Massachusetts. The consultant arranged two half-day workshops for teachers and a week long writing academy during the summer. During the academy, participants spent part of the day with the consultant and the rest of the day practicing new writing techniques with students under the supervision of the consultant. In addition, the teachers who needed word processing skills were given instruction before the academy began. The study gathered information regarding teachers' perceptions about the workshops, as well as the estimated numbers of student writing opportunities before and after the workshops. Finally, pre and post workshop samples of student writing were scored and compared to samples of a control group. The data seems to indicate the professional development model used had a positive effect on teacher and student behavior. Furthermore, direct instruction of the writing process resulted in an improvement in the quality of student writing and an increase in the number of opportunities for students to write (Anderson, et al., 1992).

In Orange County, Florida the Reading and Language Development team first created teacher inservices based on the Writing Project at Columbia University. When this model no longer served its needs, the team took a more innovative approach. Instead of attending lecture-type workshops, teachers formed study groups in which every member was responsible for teaching and learning, for choosing topics of interest, and for making curriculum decisions based on the results of their study. Each member of the Reading and Language Development team, which was primarily made up of resource teachers, was responsible for spending one day per week at two school sites: coaching teachers during the day and meeting with the study group after school. Participants in the study team were voluntary and agreed ahead of time to attend all study group meetings, read professional materials, attempt new practices in their classrooms and keep reflective journals. Additionally, principals were required to join the study teams as learners and collaborators in curriculum decisions. The principals also agreed to provide release time for teachers to observe their colleagues and to find room in their budgets for needed materials. At their meetings, the study groups would begin by talking about books for their classrooms, for professional teaching, and even for personal reading. Resource teachers and others would demonstrate practices teachers were using in their classrooms, such as writers' workshop or shared reading. The group would discuss the lessons and how to incorporate the practices into their teaching repertory. At the end of the semester, teachers conferred individually with resource teachers in order to evaluate the study team experience. Results indicate that teachers gained confidence as professionals, were not as hesitant about trying new practices and were more comfortable expressing how certain practices may not fit in with their philosophy of teaching. Additionally, teachers

suggested the continuation of the program for the year in order to further their investigations and to perfect new techniques. They were also interested in expanding the model to other areas of the curriculum (Johnston & Wilder, 1992).

The English Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools (1998) provides a comprehensive guideline for providing language arts instruction. It relies on curricular standards and aligns curriculum, assessment, instruction, and organization. It recognizes as one of its guiding principals, the importance of integrating and balancing the reading, listening, speaking, and writing components of language arts instruction. These components interweave and support one another and should not be taught in isolation. This paper will concentrate specifically on the writing strategies and applications for grades 4 through 6 as presented in the framework.

According to the framework, grade four students are expected to continue to use all stages of the writing process, and focus especially at the editing and revising stage. The framework stresses the need for students to practice adding, deleting, consolidating and rearranging text. In fact, the framework gives sample lessons for deleting, which includes having students delete irrelevant and redundant material from given texts. Furthermore, the framework assumes students are already proficient at creating multiple-paragraph compositions that call for structures such as chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference. It also assumes that students can select a focus, organizational structure, and point of view based on purpose, audience, and format. They should be able to write clear, coherent sentences and construct paragraphs that develop a central idea, focus on a particular audience, and reveal a clear purpose. Students are expected to write fictional and personal narratives, responses to literature, information

reports and summaries, They are to illustrate a range of skills such as using concrete sensory details, supporting judgments, draw from multiple sources of information, and framing a central question about an issue or a situation. Students are also expected to use both simple and compound sentence, identify parts of speech, and to use correct punctuation and capitalization, including quotation marks and apostrophes. They are expected to master the basic tenants of spelling (California Department of Education, 1998).

In fifth grade students are supposed to build on previously learned writing skills. They should write narrative texts with increasingly intricate plots, being sure to identify protagonists, antagonists and include conflict and satisfying resolutions. They are also expected to write expository, persuasive, and descriptive texts of 500 to 700 words.

For sixth grade, in addition to perfecting existing writing skills, students will be required to produce a research report that states a purpose, provides supporting evidence, and draws conclusions. Students will also be expected to have command of increasingly complex English language conventions (California Department of Education, 1998).

In addition to spelling out the specific skills to be taught and giving some methods for doing so, the framework also provides a guideline for assessing students' progress in achieving these goals. For grades four through eight, the framework calls for four types of tests: entry-level assessment, progress monitoring, summative evaluation and coordinated statewide assessment. Entry-level assessment determines if a student has the prerequisite skills necessary for a task, and the degree of skill or knowledge a student already possesses regarding that task. Process monitoring can be formal testing, observation, or evaluation of a partially completed task. Summative evaluation can be a

formal test or more genuine measures such as a completed project or an accumulation of projects in a portfolio. A suggested time frame for evaluation is also given, for example it is suggested that writing conventions be assessed every four to six weeks. It is recommended that writing applications, such as narratives, and expository writings, be evaluated at least twice a year. The framework also explains that the statewide assessment system requires standardized testing of students and reporting of test results. Tests are mandated in reading, spelling, written expression, and mathematics for grades two through eight (California Department of Education, 1998).

SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS

In examining the models for staff development for the instruction of writing, it is useful to compare them in terms of what research has found as elements of effective staff development. According to Joyce and Flowers (1982) effective elements include (a) presenting theory and information, (b) demonstrating/ modeling, (c) practicing, (d) obtaining feedback, (e) coaching for application. Sparks (1983) presents similar findings: (a) diagnosing and prescribing, (b) giving information and demonstrating, (c) discussing application, (d) practicing and giving feedback, (e) coaching (Marsh, et al., 1987). It is also useful to consider what research says about school change. Joyce and Showers claim the most influential element in school reform is increasing students' learning by effective teaching of the curriculum (Joyce and Showers, 1995). Crandel and Loucks (1982) as cited in Capper & Bagenstos (1987), claim that forceful leadership on all levels is key to school change. They also claim that provision of effective and sustained assistance; either from within or from outside sources is critical to school change. It is also suggested that "*user oriented adaptation* may be more necessary for complex, less clearly structured

innovations that demand a strong user commitment to inquiry, learning, and revision" (Huberman & Miles, 1984, as cited in Capper & Bagenstos, 1987).

The writing project models and the Orange County models of staff development contain elements consistent with the current research findings of effective inservice strategies, especially those of Joyce and Flowers, (1982) and those of Sparks (1983) and are particularly appealing to teachers. The writing projects, especially at the institute level and the Orange County model acknowledge teachers' ability to teach and learn from one another. Both models disseminate current theory and practice in writing instruction, especially the writing projects that often tend to be headed by scholars in the field. Both models offer opportunities for demonstration and feedback, as well as collegiality and coaching, although the writing project model is not particularly strong in this area after the teachers return to their own classrooms. The writing projects offer some evidence of student success as shown in the Department of Defense studies, while the Orange County model cites no such evidence. However, because the writing projects lack a single focus and incorporate a multitude of teaching strategies, it would be difficult to pinpoint its exact strengths and weaknesses in terms of student achievement on a large scale. The writing projects, by design, do not rely heavily on administrative support or involvement. The Orange County model requires it and therein lies one of its major strengths towards successful implementation.

The Yale model of staff development follows the effective inservice formula more consistently than does either the Orange County models or the writing project models. It possesses a strong organizational plan and singular focus unlike the other two models. The summer academy offers opportunities for modeling and learning theory

from an expert in the field as well as opportunities for practice, feedback and coaching under the supervision of the expert. Like Orange County, the program was initiated from curricular needs determined by a committee of teachers and other interested parties and was supported by the administration. Unlike the Orange County model, the Yale model did substantiate its claims of successful implementation by providing results of student assessment that seemed to show improved student achievement as a result of staff development efforts. According to the Yale study teachers were enthusiastic about the content of the staff development program as evidenced by their positive responses on the inservice evaluation form. All three models of staff development provided inservice and support over a period of time, except for the one-day orientation workshop mode of some of the writing projects.

The Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools concentrates heavily on teaching the writing process itself, which is consistent with all the models of staff development examined in this paper. However, the framework demands a proficiency in writing beyond merely knowing the steps of the writing process, such as applying it in narrative and expository writing in subjects across the curriculum. This indicates a need for a broad range of practices in a teacher's arsenal of methods and knowledge, which is what the writing projects and the Orange County models offer. The framework also demands that upper elementary students have a sophisticated understanding of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and spelling. While the writing process addresses these issues, it may not be the best vehicle for teaching them because paying too much attention to mechanics can interfere with the flow of thought needed for drafting text. Therefore approaches to writing that forbid

teaching mechanics outside the venue of students' writing may not support the framework's insistence on the mastering and assessment of particular skills. Another problem involving the writing process is that research has found that peer response, part of the responding stage of the writing process, may have little benefit, or worse yet, may have detrimental effects on the self-esteem and writing production of children writers if not carefully facilitated by the teacher (DiPardo & Freedman, 1987). There is also concern among researchers that writing process instruction relies too heavily on a formulaic recipe-approach to writing associated with the way adults write. Children seem to have a more idiosyncratic way of composing than do adults and so imposing on children an artificial way to organize their writing may frustrate their creativity (Schneider, 1997). Lacking in the framework's standards for grades four through sixth, is an emphasis on writing styles other than those easily adapted to process writing such as journal writing, poetry, or drama. These types of writing may also be among the diverse styles and practices espoused by writing projects and study team approaches to writing and may well be developmentally appropriate and enjoyed by fourth to sixth grade students. It should be noted that the California Education Department's approach to improving schools by imposing rigorous curricular standards and mandating statewide standardized testing is not a guarantee of educational improvement:

> Several common ways of putting pressure on schools, such as increasing the intensity of testing programs and changing standards for promotion and graduation, do not appear to stimulate change or to have an effect on student learning. Instead, some of these tactics to improve "quality" have

actually increased retention and dropouts (Gamoran & Berends, 1987, Potter & Wall, 1992, Slavin, 1987,1991). Changing standards is *distal* [pertaining to variables that are a distance from the environment of the student] and apparently does not affect the *proximal* [pertaining to areas that directly affect the students] (Joyce & Showers, 1995, p.65).

CONCLUSIONS

What are the current practices to inservice teachers in the teaching of writing to upper elementary students?

This paper examined three current practices to inservice teachers in the instruction of writing. The first is the participation of teachers in a statewide or national writing project on one of three levels: (a) a three to five week intensive institute where participants are learners and instructors, as well as writers, (b) an open program, which is often at a district-wide level, is presented by former institute participants, involves attending workshops over a period of time, and has some components of feedback, coaching, and follow-up, and (c) one day orientation workshops presented at the school site with no follow-up. The second model involves bringing in an outside consultant to the district to provide ongoing workshops and coaching. The third model involves setting up a school study team that agrees to read current literature, try new techniques in the classroom, and then form school curriculum policies.

Which staff development models for the instruction of writing are best in accord with the new Reading/Language Arts Framework?

All of the staff development modes examined in this paper incorporate the writing process as one of its chief methods for the teaching of writing. Writing itself is a complicated systematic process with recursive stages. On another level, it is also a developmental process that takes time to evolve and mature. The teacher's job is to facilitate that development and to teach and refine the systematic process in each individual student. Given the enormity of this task, teachers would want to know as many effective methods and techniques as possible. For this reason alone, it seems that participating in a writing project, either on an institute level or well-implemented open program level would be most advantageous. Writing projects have a larger network of experts and resources available to them than a school site based study team. Since a writing project's focus is so large, it offers teachers methods to accommodate the diverse needs of their students and the rigorous demands of the framework, which may not be the case for staff development that relies on one expert instructor and a single prescribed formula for teaching. Probably the most appealing solution would be to create a study team made up of teachers and administrators with strong leadership abilities and a genuine personal enthusiasm for writing, and to then involve them in a writing project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for teachers: Although staff development programs, teacher manuals, and curriculum guidelines all treat the writing process as veritable sacred doctrine, be aware of its limitations. It is merely one of several useful tools in the instruction of writing and should be applied judiciously for certain writing applications, rather than relied on as a universal formula whenever a student needs to apply ink to paper. Increase students' opportunities to write by incorporating writing anywhere and everywhere in the curriculum. Model your own writing to students. Write with students. Do more writing on your own by keeping professional reflective journals and anecdotal observations. Get involved on some level in a writing project. Do not allow preconceived perceptions of students' ability to learn to stand in the way of implementing new writing instruction techniques. Understand that although all students may not meet the recommended writing standards, they are capable of making progress. Be flexible in lesson plan designs and open to the joyful, creative aspect of writing. Instead of looking at writing in terms of a set of tasks to be completed, celebrate writing as an art form. Recognize and encourage students who seem to have a gift for writing in such a way as to inspire the rest of the students. Help students to see, via good literature and through the good writing of their peers, that writing adds a dimension of multi-layered richness to our language and to our lives.

Recommendations for parents: It is important for children to see the purpose of effective writing outside of the school setting. Children rarely see their parents engaged in writing. It would be beneficial for parents to show students their work-related writing,

such as reports, logs, minutes from meetings, memos, proposals, letters of recommendations etc. Children should observe and even participate in adult writing such as letters to an editor, letters of complaint or inquiry, resumes, recipes, family histories, poems, prayers, friendly letters, journals, diaries, and even e-mail messages. Additionally, parents should provide a print-rich household with plenty of books, magazines, newspapers, and offerings from family trips to the library and bookstores. Reading aloud to children fills their heads with the sounds of good writing. Finally, parents should celebrate the good writing of their children, by displaying it proudly and reading it to everyone that enters the household.

Recommendations for administrators and school districts: Acknowledge that individual schools may have different needs for planning and implementing writing instruction dependent upon the student population and the experience and leadership levels of the staff. Provide strong leadership and direction, but in the spirit of collaboration. Remember that teachers are trained professionals and are in a good position to know the needs of their students. Continue to provide high quality writing standards and staff development, but leave room in the curriculum for teachers to exercise their judgement about what is appropriate for their students.

Recommendations for the educators in state-level positions, the media, policymakers, and the community at large: Realize that schools are dedicated to student learning. In an attempt to improve student learning, schools implement change based on current recommendations of research. Strong-arm tactics, such as pressure to

implement strict standards and assessment procedures do little to enhance student learning. Neither does the indiscriminate reporting of scores of standardized achievement tests, which are meant to be diagnostic tools for educators, not reports of the adequacy (or inadequacy, as they are often interpreted) of our school system. Instead, work from within the school system by asking and responding to what the educational professionals deem necessary to help schools improve student achievement.

Recommendations to researchers: Continue to study the development process of children's writing to determine more fully how children learn to write and then design curricula to enhance and further their unique writing processes. Continue to study teacher's resistance to incorporating and implementing new knowledge and practices in their classrooms. Begin to study the strategies teachers use to cope with the more rigorous writing standards in the state of California. Report the reactions and changes, if any, to the state/national writing projects. Identify what kinds of staff development teachers receive in response to the new state framework and the effectiveness of that staff development on student achievement.

REFERENCES

Anderson, S. A., Collins, D., Collins, T., Dagg, T., Dams, K., Gilmore, D., LePla, N., Robinson, B. & Taylor, K. (1992). Implementation and evaluation of a writing process program. Yale, MI: Yale Public Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 349 555)

California Department of Education. (1998). Reading/language arts framework for California public schools, kindergarten through grade twelve (Draft approved by the California State Board of Education on December 10, 1998). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

California State Department of Education (1983). Improving writing in California schools, problems and solutions, Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

Calkins, L. M. (1986) The art of teaching writing. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Capper, C., & Bagenstos, N. T. (1987) Improving the second "R": Writing projects as staff development (rep. No. RR-07-004). Research Triangle Park, NC: Southeastern Educational Improvement Lab., (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 285 202)

D'Aoust, C. (1996), Teaching writing as a process. In C.Olson (Ed.), Practical Ideas for teaching writing as a process at the elementary and middle school levels (rev. ed., pp. 1-4). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

DiPardo, A., & Freedman, S. W. (1987) Historical groups in the writing classroom overview: (Technical Report No. 4). Berkeley, CA: University of CA, Center for the Study of Writing. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 282 229)

Dyson, A. H., & Freedman, S. W. (1991). Writing. In H. Flood, et al. (eds.) Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts (Chapter 35). New York: Macmillan.

Gilford, D. (1996). Measures of inservice professional development: Suggested items for the 1998-1999 schools and staffing survey, working paper series (Report No. NCES-WP-96-25). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 418-985)

Goldstein, A., & Carr, P. C. (1996) Can students benefit from process writing? (Report No. NCES-96-345). NAEPfacts, 1 (3). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 395-320)

Good, C. V. (Ed.) (1992). Dictionary of Education. (3rd ed., Vols. 1-4) New York: Macmillan.

Hasseler, S. S. (1995, April) Missing Links: The complexities of supporting teacher learning in school contexts. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 395 914)

Hennings, D.G. (1986). Communication in action: Teaching the Language Arts. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Johnston, J. S., Wilder, S. L. (1992). Changing reading and writing programs through staff development. Reading Teacher, 45 (2), 626-31.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1995) Student achievement through staff development: Fundamentals of school renewal (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Kean, J. M. (1983). The teaching of writing in our schools. (Fastback 193). Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 235 502)

Marsh, D. D., Knudsen, D. J., & Knudsen, G. A. (1987) The role of staff development in implementing the Bay Area Writing Program. Journal of Teacher Education, 38 (6), 34-39.

Olsen, C. B. (Ed.). (1996). Practical Ideas for teaching writing as a process at the elementary and middle school levels (rev. ed.). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

Schneider, J. J. (1997). Undoing "the" writing process: Supporting the Idiosyncratic strategies of children. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Reading Conference, Scottsdale, AZ. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 417 425)

Squire, J. R. (1991). The theoretical bases for English language arts teaching. In J. Flood, et al (Eds.), Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts. (Chapter 1) New York: Macmillan.

Strech, L. L. (1994). The implementation of writing workshop: A review of the literature. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 380-797)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atwell, N. (1987), In the middle: Writing, reading, and learning with adolescents. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Ellis, N. E. (1993). Collegiality from the teacher's perspective: Social contexts for professional development. Action in Teacher Education 15 (1), 42-48.

Graves, D., (1983). Writing: Teachers and children at work. Exeter, NH: Heinemann

Hoskisson, K., & Tompkins, G. E. (1987). Language arts: Content and teaching strategies. . Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Co.

Lensmire, T. J. (1994). Writing Workshop as carnival: Reflections on an alternative learning environment. Harvard Educational Review, 64 (4), 371-391

Mamchur, C. (1994). Don't you dare say "fart". Language Arts, 71 (2), 95-100.

Smith, T. R. (Ed.). (1986). Handbook for planning an effective writing program: Kindergarten through grade twelve. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

Strech, L. L. (1994). Action research: The implementation of writing workshop in the third grade. Exit project, California State University at Long Beach. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 380-797)

Valencia, S. W., & Killion, J. P. (1989). Implementing research -based reading and writing programs overcoming obstacles to teacher change: Three case studies (Tech. Rep. No. 462). Cambridge, MA: Bolt, Beranek and Newman, Inc., Illinois University, Urbana. Center for the Study of Reading. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 303 595)

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

CS216642

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title:
STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN WRITING INSTRUCTION AND THE READING/LANGUAGE ARTS FRAMEWORK FOR CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Author(s): ROSE M. WITUCKI

Corporate Source:
CA. STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH

Publication Date:

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☑

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Rose M Witucki	Printed Name/Position/Title: ROSE M. WITUCKI
Organization/Address: 12025 Pioneer Bl. #6 NORWALK, CA. 90650	Telephone: 562 864 5249 FAX:
	E-Mail Address: Date: 5-1-99

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1100 West Street, 2nd Floor
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-953-0263
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com