

**Secondary Preservice Teachers Share Their Writing with Individual
Students in School: A Survey of Their Experiences**

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The need to write clearly has never been more essential than in today's intensely competitive and global economy. According to the National Commission on Writing (2004), companies with the greatest growth potential, test applicants' writing ability. Writing is important because through this process thinking is clarified and communicated (Moore, 1994). Moreover, writing may provide an avenue to heal (Frank, 2014), gain self-respect and sense dignity (Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002; Worlsey, 1989).

Because of the importance of writing as a 21st century skill (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015), it has become an essential part of instruction and learning in various subject areas. Recommended writing instruction across the disciplines includes teaching students skills and processes including planning, revising, editing, and publishing (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Writing in the Disciplines (WID) is a component of academic writing that builds students' knowledge of various genres and helps them to become proficient academic writers. For example, the importance of being able to understand and explain concepts is central to scientific literacy (Next Generation Science Standards [NGSS], 2013). Thus, the writing process serves as a meaningful avenue for promoting interest and achievement in science. Although feminist educators (Hildebrand, 1998) wish to disrupt the hegemony of writing practices in school writing to empower a broader range of students, writing in science instruction typically includes writing up replicable experiments, sequencing steps in lab reports, clearly delineating observations, and follows a problem-hypothesis-solution and publication pathway. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the NGSS call for students to develop increased language

abilities to enhance their content comprehension. This requires a high level of discourse in classrooms across all subject areas. One essential practice of scientific inquiry is to attain, evaluate and communicate information (Quinn, Lee, & Valdes, 2012).

Similarly, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 2000) believes that writing increases understanding of mathematics as students organize, strengthen, clarify, and extend their mathematical thinking while explaining concepts to others. In mathematics instruction, students need to write explanations of their thought process and its sequence (Zygouris-Coe, 2015). The CCSS require students to create and solve problems, understand concepts clearly and make connections, as well as realize multiple representations of mathematical concepts and models, communicate sequentially their thinking, justify their thinking, and pose arguments. This new approach necessitates students to develop new language abilities that allows them to think like a mathematician (Moschkovich, 2012).

The CCSS expects language arts students to use textual evidence to inform, debate, and interpret for varied audiences their insights acquired through research (Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel, 2012). Students in English-language arts classes are asked to analyze literature. They must read widely and critically, as well as use language in a picturesque and exact manner (NCTE, 2013; Zygouris-Coe, 2015).

The goal of social studies is the advancement of civic competence-the knowledge, thought processes, and democratic inclinations required of students to be active and engaged members in public life. Civic competence puts into practice inquiry processes, and requires skills of data collection and analysis, collaboration, decision-making as well as problem-solving (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS]), 2011). Learning

expectations of the NCSS entails the investigation of essential questions and themes. Students enhance their knowledge as they incorporate new information into their prior knowledge, and participate in instruction that develops their abilities to think, reason, pursue research and increase their understanding as they meet new concepts, principles, and issues. Students present what they learn in products that demonstrate their competency to use information correctly. They must demonstrate their comprehension and research skills acquired in the process of learning. Student writing skill development is important to create products. In history, students need to write historical essays that synthesize information from diverse and even conflicting viewpoints. Students collect evidence and analyze ideas in primary and secondary documents by offering alternative perspectives and uncovering bias (Zygouris-Coe, 2015).

Students in all disciplines need to write well (Hudson & Noonan-Morrissey, 2014). Artists represent their ideas visually; they explore, create, experiment with new techniques and technologies. They critique and analyze their own work as well as the art of others. The National Art Standards (2014) require critical and creative thinking. For example, students need to be able to develop collaboratively a proposal for an installation, artwork, or space design that transforms the perception and experience of a particular place. They need to analyze their response to art based on their knowledge of and experience with art and life. Students are asked to construct an evaluation of art based on differing criteria, as well as synthesize their knowledge and appraise the impact of a piece of art.

Despite the value of writing, in 2012, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published the dismal results of the 2011 National Assessment of Educational

Progress (NAEP) for writing in grades 8 and 12. Only 27% of eighth graders performed at or above the proficient level. Of that group, only 3% were advanced. The results for grade 12 were worse because the numbers were the same, 27% proficient and 3% advanced. Thus, in four years there was no improvement (Culham, 2014).

Despite the need for students to improve their writing ability, a course in writing instruction is not a specific requirement in most state teacher certification programs (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003). Consequently, few secondary content area teachers have been prepared to include writing in their teaching (National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, 2004). For example, 60% of science teachers reported that they did not feel prepared to teach writing (Kiuahara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009). Thus, writing instruction does not take place consistently in content area classes, including English and language arts (Applebee & Langer, 2006). This deficit needs to be remedied, since educational accountability reform in general, and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in particular, have placed individual schools and teachers in the spotlight by requiring evidence of their ability to produce student achievement (Pianta, 1999).

Evidence of this lack of emphasis and training in writing instruction, is found in Daisey's (2009) study. More than a third (39.5%) of the 124 secondary preservice teachers of diverse subject areas either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that most teachers in their subject area believed it was their job to be a positive writing role model. They also did not believe that school administrators expected teachers in their subject areas to be writers. In addition, more preservice teachers who reported enjoying writing

as compared to those who did not enjoy writing, could recall former teachers in their subject areas who enjoyed writing: 29.6% versus 9.3%.

Graham and Perin (2007) identified 11 instructional strategies that had a significant impact of student writing performance. One of these strategies was offering models of writing to students to read, analyze, and emulate good writing (effect size = .25). Teachers' own writing may serve as a model of the writing process. Writers surround themselves with people that give them support. (Keyes, 2003). Reeves has observed that "writers hang out with other writers" (2002, p. 4). Secondary content area literacy course teacher, Gary Rasberry (2001) notes that as a writer, he wishes to "engage with others whose lives also include...writing" (p. xvi). "As teachers, we find ourselves in a unique position to be mentors for these emerging writers" (Fletcher, 2013, p. 10).

Middle and high school classroom teachers need to "display positive reading and writing behaviors and serve as models for students" (International Reading Association [IRA], 2010, p. 44). Role models are motivators whose real-world guidance and advice inspire others to achieve. Teachers are the most important sources for creating conditions in the classroom environment to promote student motivation to write (Graves, 2001). This is because, teachers pass on their attitudes toward writing to their students (Graves, & Kittle, 2005). Yet, despite this effective strategy to teach students to write, Gallagher (2011) reports that "extremely few" (p. 16) secondary teachers tell him that they are writing role models.

As a secondary content area literacy and practicum instructor, as well as a writer, I believe that secondary teachers need to share their writing with students. In this way, they may provide disciplinary writing guidance and motivation to write. However, I have

found that preservice teachers need an explanation as to why it is important to share their writing with students and to have an opportunity to experience its benefits. There is a large number of middle and high school teachers who have been charged to be enthusiastic writing role models. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe the method and significance when secondary preservice teachers of diverse subject areas shared their writing with individual middle and high school students in school. The research questions were as follows:

1. How did preservice teachers go about sharing their writing?
2. What barriers (if any) did preservice teachers have about sharing their writing with a teenage student?
3. What positive effects did preservice teachers think sharing their writing had on their student?

Theoretical Framework

As schools place increasing attention on accountability and standardized testing, student-teacher relationships provide a unique entry point for educators to improve both student academic development (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004, Hamre & Pianta, 2006). There is strong evidence that student relationships with high school teachers was a factor most closely associated with growth in achievement from eighth to twelfth grade (Resnick et al, 1997). Positive student-teacher relationships have important, positive and long-lasting implications for students' academic and social development (Rimm-Kaufman, 2014). Students need a personal connection to a teacher, frequent communication with a teacher, as well as guidance and praise from a teacher. As a result, such a student will likely become more trustful, show more engagement in the academic content presented,

display better classroom behavior, and achieve at higher levels academically. Positive teacher-student relationships draw students into the process of learning and promote their desire to learn (Rimm-Kaufman, 2014). One core belief about teaching is that “teachers [may] form trusting relationships with students that build a community of learners when they know their students’ strengths, interests, and needs and when they model and demonstrate their own writing and reading” (Rief, 2014, p. 4).

Teachers who experience close relationships with students reported that their students were more engaged in learning (Klem & Connell, 2004). Thompson (1998, cited in Boyton & Boyton, 2005) believes that a positive relationship with students is essential for a favorable learning environment. Canter and Canter (1997, cited in Boyton & Boyton, 2005) believe that we all can recall classes in which we did not try very hard. Students who feel valued and respected are more likely to be “cooperative and motivated” (Sprick, 2006). Moreover, relationships are “critical” to engage students at the highest level of Bloom’s taxonomy and the most challenging levels of application (Daggett, 2005). This should remind us how important it is to have positive relationships with our students. However, teachers’ efficacy beliefs may also affect the nature of the relationship they develop with students. This is to say, teachers who believed that they have an influence on students tended to interact in ways that enhanced student investment and achievement (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989).

Method

Participants

Secondary preservice teachers ($N = 77$) participated in this study. There were 45 females and 32 males; 67 were Caucasians, six were African-American, three were

Asian, and one Latina. These preservice teachers were undergraduates enrolled in a course that typically came right before their student teaching. Preservice teachers represented 14 content areas: 28 English, 25 social studies, eight mathematics, three art, two special education-cognitively-impaired (CI), two music, two special education-emotionally-impaired (EI), one biology, one physics, one chemistry, one integrated science, one communication arts, one French, and one Spanish.

Procedure

During the semester, preservice teachers were asked to share their writing individually with students in their 30-hour practicum placements in their subject area in a middle or high school. I explained that they could share either writing that related to the topic the students were studying or school-appropriate recreational writing that they thought might be of interest to the teenager. I advised them to share their writing for two minutes before class began with a student who came into class early (even if the sharing occurred in the hallway), so that class time was not needed. I asked preservice teachers to take to their practicum class hard copies or digital forms of a variety of their writing and informally talk about it (and/or ask students to read it) every time they went to the classroom during the semester. I suggested that they start small by writing a five-line cinquain or 5w-poem relating to the topic that students were studying (see Clark, 2014, *How to Write Short*). I asked cooperating teachers to suggest a student to his/her preservice teacher. I immersed preservice teachers in writing during the semester in the connected content area literacy course. I shared examples of my writing including journal articles, how-to books, and cinquains. Preservice teachers wrote journals, analogies (Daisey, 1993), as well as a “how-to” book in their subject areas that described how to do

something (Daisey, 2003). They also wrote different poetry forms (e.g, a concrete poem that takes the shape of the poem's topic),

Middle and High School Settings

Preservice teachers were placed in one of five high schools or six middle schools where the population of students varied greatly. High schools 1 and 2 and middle schools 1-4 were in the same public school district. Middle school 2 had a population of students where 28 languages were spoken. High school 3 was an expensive Catholic high school and middle school 5 was a charter school all in the same suburban town. High school 4 and 5 and middle school 6 were in different towns. Middle school 6 had a large Arabic student population.

Data Collection

Toward the end of the semester, (i.e. after about 75% of the course was completed), preservice teachers completed an anonymous survey (see Appendix I) containing open-ended questions regarding their experience sharing their writing. The purpose of the survey was to gather responses from secondary preservice teachers about how they shared their writing with individual middle or high school students. A second purpose was to discern what perceived barriers or reservations (if any) they faced (for example, did they feel their beliefs about their content area conflicted with the concept of sharing writing?). A third purpose of the survey was to gather preservice teachers' thoughts about the positive effects of their sharing including relationship building, promotion of student motivation to write, and increase in achievement of writing in the disciplines.

The survey was written to try to maximize the relationship between the responses collected and what was being measured. In order to enhance the validity of the survey, I considered past experiences with secondary preservice teachers in practicum experiences (Daisey, 2012) and attempted to infer from patterns of association as Fowler (1988) recommends. Through the years of teaching secondary preservice teachers, I have encouraged them to write with and share their writing with students. This experience guided me to formulate survey questions about how students went about sharing their writing with an individual student and the extent they thought sharing their writing built a relationship with students as well as afforded other positive outcomes. According to Fowler (1988), there are several advantages to the use of open-ended questions. They afford researchers unanticipated responses. They also may allow a more accurate view of respondents' thoughts. When designing the survey, I attempted to increase the reliability by asking the same questions over three semesters to 77 different preservice teachers. The responses were similar each of the three semesters. Moreover, the questions were related closely to what I was attempting to measure: the writing sharing experience, barriers, and positive significance such as improved writing within the disciplines.

Data Analysis

Survey questions were analyzed by typing responses, then reading and rereading them to look for categories. Although the author was the sole researcher to categorize, when categorizing the responses in the second and third semesters, I reconsidered the categories from the previous semester(s). For example, for the question about what preservice teachers said first in their sharing, I decided to split the "asking question" category into two categories: "asking questions" and "asking permission," since asking a

question did not necessarily include asking permission. Themes and patterns were studied using constant comparison method (Corbin & Strauss, 2007).

Results

The results of this study will be described by research question and matched with related questions on the survey. Survey question 1 asked the content area major of the preservice teacher. Responses and percent of preservice teachers who offered a response in that category will be provided. Examples of quotes will allow the voice of the preservice teachers to be heard.

Research question 1: How did preservice teachers go about sharing their writing?

How did you go about sharing your writing with the student? (Survey Question 1)

Preservice teachers shared their writing in a variety of ways. In some cases, preservice teachers simply showed their writing to the student to read (33.8%). For example, a social studies preservice teacher wrote, “I took the student aside for our weekly talk and just showed it to him.” Others had a conversation with the student that lead into the sharing of the writing (20.8%). A social studies preservice teacher noted, “after I established a comfortable social relationship, I simply added sharing writing to our talks.” Preservice teachers described their writing as relevant or of interest to the student (20.8%). A special education preservice teacher of the cognitively-impaired asked, “if they wanted to see a book I wrote about my dog.” Some preservice teachers asked the student’s permission to share with them (14.3%). An integrated science preservice teacher recalled, “I walked up to her and asked if she’d be willing to read my how-to book rough draft.” Other preservice teachers asked for the student’s opinion or to

proof-read their writing (13.0%). A mathematics preservice teacher noted, “I asked the student for suggestions for my book draft.” A few preservice teachers explained the practicum assignment to the student (10.4%). A social studies preservice teacher wrote, “I explained to the student that one of my assignments was to share with them pieces of my own writing.” A few preservice teachers asked their student to read their writing (10.4%). An instrumental music preservice teacher explained, “It was posted on line; we played though it for several hours.” A few other preservice teachers asked their student a question (3.9%). A social studies preservice teacher asked, “Do you enjoy writing?”

What opportunities/occasions did you have in practicum that you used to share your writing with a student? (Survey Question 3)

In an open-ended question, preservice teachers explained the opportunity that presented itself to shared something they had written. Preservice teachers noted that they shared what they wrote in college or published (37.6%). An instrumental music student noted, “I shared an arrangement of a movie score that I did for trombone quartet.” An English preservice teacher described, “I shared some poetry that I wrote and a children’s book I had made for another class.” A mathematics preservice teacher reported, “He was reading a sci-fi book so I said, ‘I wrote a story, would you like to read it?’ He said, ‘Sure.’ I then gave him a book my story was published in.” Other preservice teachers’ comments were about general sharing with a practicum student (26.0%). A biology preservice teacher explained, “Someone asked if I liked writing, and I answered ‘yes,’ especially poetry. One student perked up and told me she did too. Afterwards we agreed to exchange poetry.” Some preservice teachers noted their sharing was to help or to be useful to a student (18.2%). A special education preservice teacher for the cognitively-

impaired said the writing was “a transition plan for the student.” An English preservice teacher described, “I shared my *Fahrenheit 451* poem in 10th grade English class with a girl struggling to understand the book.” Some preservice teachers showed drafts of their how-to book to a student (18.2%). A social studies preservice teacher explained, “I shared my how-to book, *How to Think Like a Historian*. It applied to what the students were doing that day.”

How did you choose a student? (Survey Question 4)

In an open-ended question, preservice teachers cited six methods how they chose a student. About a quarter of preservice teachers chose a student who appeared interested (24.7%). For instance, an English preservice teacher wrote, “I chose a student who I knew had interest in hip hop and writing lyrics.” An art preservice teacher explained, “I chose this student because she is the most creative, seems to love art, and is easy to talk to.” A social studies preservice teacher wrote, “I chose a student who I observed to enjoy reading for pleasure when work was completed. I thought it would be easier to converse or find interest between the two of us.” Some preservice teachers chose a student randomly or who arrived early (22.1%). An integrated science preservice teacher described, “a female student was sitting outside [the chemistry classroom] during lunch period before 4th period started and I just asked her if she would read what I had written.” Some preservice teachers shared their writing with a student they already knew (20.8%). An English preservice teacher noted, “This student and I had begun to build a relationship just by talking briefly week by week.” Other preservice teachers chose a student who approached them (14.3%). A social studies preservice teacher explained, “I chose the student based off of the fact that she talked to me every day about school and

other things.” A few preservice teachers chose a student who needed help (10.4%) or to a teacher recommended student (6.5%). A social studies preservice teacher recalled the student, “asked me how to write a paper for their government class;” while another social studies preservice teacher recalled, asking “the teacher for a ‘good’ student.”

What did you say first to begin your sharing? (Survey Question 5)

Preservice teachers noted that they began their sharing in seven ways.

About a quarter of preservice teachers began by explaining the practicum assignment (26.0%). An English preservice teacher said, “I’m taking a course...and I’m required to share some writing with a student. I believe you will enjoy this piece.” A quarter of preservice teachers began their sharing by asking their student a question (24.7%). For instance, an art preservice teacher asked, “Do you know what a concrete poem is?” Two mathematics preservice teachers queried, “Have you ever written a math paper?” and “Is there anything you’ve always wanted to know about being a mathematician that I should be sure to include in my *How to Be a Mathematician* how-to book?” Some preservice teachers started their sharing by asking the student’s permission or extending an invitation (19.5%). A Spanish preservice teacher wrote, “I was wondering if I could share my writing with you.” An art preservice teacher said, “Hey..., want to see my website and check out some of my artwork?” Other preservice teachers began with a greeting (13.0%) or had a conversation with the student (10.4%). A social studies preservice teacher explained, “We were already having a conversation so I worked it into that.” A few preservice teachers sought to help the student (9.1%), or asked the student to read the writing aloud (1.3%).

Describe the characteristics of your student. (Survey Question 6)

Preservice teachers described a wide range of characteristics including “struggling,” “outgoing,” “shy,” “engaged,” and “intelligent.” For example, a social studies preservice teacher wrote, “I noticed the student tended to struggle in class and the teacher told me he was homeless.” An art preservice teacher described the student as “bright, ADHD, attention-seeking, disruptive, enthusiastic, funny, sarcastic.” A special education student noted, “He was usually fidgety during class. Needed to be given explicit directions. Needed a push to do his work.” A mathematics preservice teacher explained that the student was “in the math support class for students who were behind.” An English preservice teacher wrote that the student was “shy with classmates, but comfortable talking to me.”

What types or forms of writing did you share? (Survey Question 7)

Preservice teachers reported sharing a variety of genres of writing. About half of preservice teachers shared something they had written in college (46.1%). For instance, a social studies preservice teacher wrote, “I shared a brief writing assignment from one of my geography classes asking about what I thought home was.” A Spanish preservice teacher shared a paragraph about Day of the Dead. A mathematics preservice teacher explained, “it was a statistical report on runners in their time in high school.” An English preservice teacher shared “a paper I wrote in college about an enjoyable writing experience I had.” Preservice teachers shared poems (26.0%). An art preservice teacher reported sharing “three different concrete poems.” Preservice teachers shared their how-to book drafts (19.5%). They also shared their recreational writing (10.4%) such as a personal narrative shared by an English preservice teacher or a blog shared by another

English preservice teacher. Writing specifically for a student was shared by a few preservice teachers (5.2%) such as a transitional plan written by a special education of the cognitively-impaired preservice teacher. Two music preservice teachers shared a musical score (2.6%).

Research Question 2: What barriers (if any) did preservice teachers have about sharing their writing with a teenage students?

What reservations did you have about sharing your writing with your student? (Survey Question 8)

Preservice teachers noted five reservations for sharing their writing with a student. They feared that the student would not be interested in their writing (41.6%). For example, a social studies preservice teacher said, “I was a little nervous the student would just not like it, but discovered we have things in common.” Two mathematics preservice teachers worried, “they will be uninterested and could care less about it,” and “It wasn’t necessarily the most exciting thing a student would want to read.” Preservice teachers worried their writing would be too difficult or personal (20.8%). A social studies preservice teacher explained, “The only reservation I had was that it was a college-level paper so it might have been intimidating.” An instrumental music student explained, “Sometimes they don’t seem ready for techniques that I’d like to teach them.” An art preservice teacher worried, “I hesitated sharing personal information in writing.” Preservice teachers were uncomfortable sharing their writing or concerned that the student would be critical of it (19.5%). A social studies preservice teacher wrote, “I hesitated because I had never done something like this before and did not know the reaction I was going to receive.” An integrated science preservice teacher wrote, “It can

be intimidating to have someone read something you wrote.” An English preservice teacher thought, “Putting my own writing out there makes me a tad nervous.” An instrumental music preservice teacher revealed, “I am very critical of my own writing so I wasn’t sure if it was quality work yet.” Several preservice teachers (15.6%) said they had no reservations; while two (2.6%) complained about being forced to share their writing.

Do you think your major played a role in sharing with a student? Please explain. (Survey Question 9)

Many preservice teachers (66.2%) thought that their major played a role in their sharing. English preservice teachers who thought their major made a difference, explained that writing was “expected” and a “core component” of the subject area; thus they had lots of practice writing, had more to share, enjoyed it, and were enthusiastic about writing. In addition, an English preservice teacher noted, “We learn about our students from their writing.” In contrast, English preservice teachers who did not think that their major played a role, felt that many English majors were uncomfortable sharing their writing. Some believed their personal narrative would have been interesting in any subject area, did not think students were interested in reading their writing, or felt that the sharing was a requirement for the content area literacy course.

Social studies preservice teachers who thought their major made a difference explained that social studies required a lot of writing; thus there was a “wider pool” of writing examples to share. Two social studies preservice teachers noted they did not write for fun only for school, and one preservice teacher thought that his/her best writing was in history. They felt confident in their subject area, and believed that students needed to

“read, interpret, and do something creative” with what they learned. In contrast, social studies preservice teachers who did not believe that their subject area made a difference thought that there was writing to share in every subject area.

Mathematics preservice teachers, who thought their subject area played a role, feared students’ general disliked for mathematics or research papers. They had difficulty thinking of writing to share. For example, one wrote, “This how-to book was ‘user-friendly.’ However, I struggle to think of other writing that I’m likely to do that will be both content relevant and an appropriate difficulty level for a high school math class.” In contrast, mathematics preservice teachers who thought that their major did not play a role reported that the writing they shared was not related to mathematics, thought writing was valuable in mathematics, or were simply following the practicum directions. A mathematics preservice teacher wrote, “I followed the directions for our practicum. Since it was a learning experience any conversation or shared writing experience helped establish a sense of trust with students.”

An integrated science preservice teacher who thought that his/her major played a role felt that the topic about lab safety was immediately relevant and the how-to book writing on the topic was user-friendly. In contrast, the integrated science and biology preservice teachers who thought that their major did not make a difference felt that writing could be shared in any subject. One wrote, “In this instance, I would have shared this assignment with any student I was trying to build a relationship.”

Special education preservice teachers generally thought that sharing writing could help build trust with a student or that it was useful to the student. The art preservice teacher who thought that his/her major played a role, explained that “Most of the writing

I do for art is really technical and academic like art history papers. I didn't want to put students off to writing." In contrast, the two other art preservice teachers who did not think that their subject area played a role said that art teachers frequently shared their work with students and "I was happy to share my poem with this student." Both instrumental music preservice teachers thought that their subject area played a role, since what they wrote was specific to students' needs in the music class. In contrast, both the French and Spanish preservice teachers did not think their majors played a role since they had experience sharing their writing.

Research question 3: What positive effects did preservice teachers think sharing their writing had on their student?

Do you think sharing your writing with a student helped to build a relationship with him/her? (Survey Question 10)

Many preservice teachers (74.0%) thought that sharing their writing helped to build a relationship with their student ("strongly agree" = 25.0%; "agree" = 48.0%). One preservice teacher (1.3%) who admitted having yet to share writing was undecided, while 23.4% "disagreed" and 1.3% "strongly disagreed." The following reasons were cited by the 57 preservice teachers who "strongly agreed" or "agreed." First, the students' comfort level to share their own writing and to trust the preservice teacher increased (28.1%, 16/57). A biology preservice teacher noted,

[My student] is a very poor speller and struggles with writing. I found an old paper of mine from high school with a bunch of corrections on it. I wanted to show her that it is

okay to make mistakes and learn from them and that even people who go to college struggle with these things.

Preservice teachers thought that the students' motivation to write increased (24.6%, 14/57). For instance, a biology preservice teacher noted, "The cinquain poem I shared with him was well-received, and he was motivated to try one of his own."

Preservice teachers felt that students were interested in college writing (17.5%, 10/57). For instance, a chemistry preservice teacher wrote, "I have shared poems and lab reports with the student. I think he has appreciated seeing my work and learning a little about the writing expectations in college as well as the possibility of writing 'for fun'." Five preservice teachers (5/57, 9.8%) thought that sharing drafts of their how-to book helped build their relationship. For example, an integrated science preservice teacher explained, "I know that he was very excited to see my final how-to book and was happy that he was apart of it by reviewing my opening paragraph." Preservice teachers also thought that their writing was useful as a guide to improve students' writing (9.8%, 5/57). For instance, an English preservice teacher thought, "a student doesn't want to sit and hear how they can do better. But by including her in my writing process, she felt like we were equals and that I struggle with writing often times as well." They felt that students appreciated their willingness to be vulnerable and show them their writing (7.9%, 4/57). An art preservice teacher thought that sharing writing helped to build a relationship "because showing someone your writing is a form of vulnerability, which in turn helps build trust."

Out of the total of 77 preservice teachers, 57 "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that sharing their writing helped to build a relationship with a student. One preservice teacher,

a mathematics major, who was “undecided” noted that the first writing shared was too difficult. The 19 preservice teachers who did not think that sharing their writing helped to build their relationship felt that the student was not interested in their writing. (Cited by all who “strongly disagreed” or “disagreed.”) Of this group of 19, one English preservice teacher admitted to have not share writing yet.

What positive effects (if any) do you think sharing your writing had on your student? (Survey Question 11)

Of the 57 preservice teachers who felt that sharing their writing helped to build their relationship with their student cited the following positive effects of sharing their writing. They believed that it motivated students to write (24.6%, 14/57). For example, two English preservice teachers observed, “I have noticed in a few students that they are taking their writing more seriously. [A student] specifically has shown great improvement in his writing and takes more time on it instead of goofing around. Maybe my influence made him see writing isn’t lame. (On my first day he told me writing was lame.)” “My student recognized my writing as a cinquain and wrote a funny one about himself. He willingly wrote a poem!!”

Preservice teachers believed sharing reduced their students’ writing apprehension and increased students’ comfort level to share their writing (21.1%, 12/57). For instance, two English preservice teachers noted, “My student actually asked me for help last week while writing her compare/contrast essay. She usually avoids letting her teacher or me help because she’s embarrassed. It was a big deal that she can talk about her writing.”

I have noticed in the essays of the students I mentor, that
they use their own voice to make points. I know that I have

said it is a lot easier to write when they put their own spin on it. The students did better grade wise and were not nervous to show me.

Preservice teachers found that students were interested to learn about college writing expectations (14.0%, 8/57). They thought that sharing their writing humanized them (12.3%, 7/57). For instance, a physics preservice teacher wrote, “Sharing my writing with her has (I believe) helped her see me more of a human figure than just a distant authority figure with whom she cannot relate.” Preservice teachers thought that students found their writing helpful as a guide to improve their own writing (10.5%, 6/57). For instance, an English preservice teacher wrote, “I think my writing worked because I participated in the writing assignment they were doing right then. It helped her understand the format of the assignment.” Other reasons cited included sharing writing served to encourage students to pursue their interest (5.3%, 3/57), was an “ice breaker” (1.8%, 1/57),” and increased students’ pride in their writing (1.8%, 1/57).

Although, 19 preservice teachers did not think that sharing their writing helped to build a relationship with their student, the following positive effects of sharing their writing were cited (once each). The writing related to mathematics. It served to reduce the student’s writing apprehension. It motivated students to write, and showed that writing could be useful in the future. Two preservice teachers who did not think that sharing their writing helped to build a relationship described their difficulty matching their writing to their student’s level.

Discussion

Although there is a growing need for middle school and high school students to write well in order to succeed in their disciplinary studies and later in a global economy, too many students perform poorly on national tests of writing (National Commission on Writing, 2004; NCES, 2012). Previous research has shown that providing students with models of writing plays an essential role in the development of writing proficiency (Graham & Perin, 2007). Teachers have been identified as important role models of writing for their students (IRA, 2010). Despite the need for writing instruction and writing role models, few states require a course in writing for certification (National Writing Project and Nagin, 2003). As a result, old attitudes and beliefs about whose job it is to teach writing persist (Daisey, 2009; Gallagher, 2011). The purpose of this study was three-fold: first, to offer teacher educators of secondary preservice teachers specifics of how preservice teachers shared their writing with a teenager in school. A second purpose was to determine barriers to sharing writing, and the third purpose was to describe the benefits of sharing writing.

In regards to the first purpose (or research question one), this study provides practical advice about how preservice teachers took their initial steps toward becoming a writing role model. This is helpful, because if future preservice teachers have an idea of what other preservice teachers have said, what they shared, what opportunities opened, and what to expect as responses from students, they may have less reservations about sharing their writing.

The results of this study also revealed that it was helpful to immerse preservice teachers in this study in content area writing, such as poems and “how-to” books, in a

content area literacy course; so that they might have a writing selection readily at hand to share with a student. Although only 15% of preservice teachers reported sharing their how-to books, it was an example of the writing process so its drafts were useful for sharing with teenagers. A mathematics preservice teacher struggled to think of mathematics writing to share, yet felt the how-to book as user-friendly. Two other mathematics preservice teachers reported that they shared writing that was unrelated to mathematics. Even though they were encouraged to share their how-to book drafts, perhaps it did not occur to them that this writing counted as mathematical writing. Applebee & Langer (2013) found that only 1% of their sample of secondary mathematics students' writing in mathematics consisted of assignments asking students to write a paragraph or more. This may be why one mathematics preservice teacher's questions to a student, "Have you ever written a math paper?" seemed an odd question. Yet, writing in mathematics has been long been valued and encouraged (Connolly & Vilardi, 1989). Thus, teacher educators need to continue to encourage preservice teachers to expand their idea of the forms that writing may take in their subject area (Hildebrand, 1998).

The second purpose of the study (or research question two), related to barriers experienced. The results of this study suggested that secondary preservice teachers were aware of what is expected and what is the norm for instruction in their subject area. Yet, some noted that they wished to move beyond what is expected for a teacher in their subject area, and serve as a writing role model. This was because they have experienced positive affects on students' motivation and interest. The results of this study also indicated the need for some preservice teachers to overcome their discomfort to share their writing. About a fifth (19.5%) of preservice teachers reported hesitating sharing

their writing with a student because they lacked confidence in their writing. Keyes (2003) believes that “the hardest part of being a writer is not getting your commas in the right place but getting your head in the right place” (p. 5). Lane (1993) reassures teachers,

Recently, a high school teacher told me he felt very insecure about his own writing and didn't feel right about sharing that with his class. He thought it would be bad modeling. I told him I felt just the opposite. When we model our struggles we give our students permission to struggle along side us. We wipe out the disempowering notion of perfection that teachers often unwittingly model, and we expose our uniqueness, our vulnerability, and most of all, our humanity (p. 144-145).

Another barrier that this study revealed was that relatively few preservice teachers reported choosing to share their writing with a student who seemed unmotivated. Pianta (1999) urges teachers to make an effort to spend time individually with each student, especially those who are difficult or shy. This will help to create a more positive relationship. He encourages teachers not to give up too quickly on their efforts to develop positive relationships with difficult or unlikely students. Other researchers have found that these middle and high school students will benefit from a good teacher-student relationship as much as or more than their motivated classmates (Croninger & Lee, 2001; Meece, Herman, & McCombs, 2003; Wentzel, 2002). Many preservice teachers worried that students would not be interested in what they had to share. For example, a social studies preservice teacher noted that s/he had not “done this before” and was worried how

the student might react. However, Linda Rief (2014) encourages teachers that “growth happens by trying things we haven’t tried before” (p. 6). Kindig (2012) believes that “teachers are some of the bravest people I know. We go into the classrooms everyday to face kids, some who are eager...some who tolerate school but can be motivated” (p. xiii). McGuey and Moore (2007), in their book, *The Inspirational Teacher*, reassure teachers that their efforts may not always receive the immediate positive outcome they desire from students. However, they rally teachers to think of their efforts as daily deposits in a 401(K) fund, and not to give up.

The third purpose of this study (research question three) was to describe the benefits of sharing writing with individual students in school. The results of this study suggested that even with two minutes of sharing writing before class, each time a preservice teacher visited their cooperating teacher’s classroom, progress could be achieved in the development of a students’ writing skills in the disciplines. For example, in mathematics, students need to make sense of problems and communicate their thoughts on paper (NCTM, 2000). One mathematics preservice teacher encouraged a student to consider what s/he knew and s/he would like to know about the work of a mathematician. This preservice teacher started a conversation by asking, “Is there anything you’ve always wanted to know about being a mathematician that I should be sure to include (in my *How to Be a Mathematician*) how-to book?” Such a conversation suggested that mathematics do not just come from textbooks, but is the life’s work and passion of diverse people in the past and present. This sharing also implied that one’s writing is helped when it is a collaborative process. Moreover, the preservice teacher provided evidence that the student’s (an audience for the writing) input was valuable. A

mathematics preservice teacher who shared a paper about a high school runner's time and its relationship to statistics, revealed to a mathematics student the need to understand statistics clearly and the importance of statistics to describe a real world event. Another episode of sharing writing by a mathematics preservice teacher, who shared a science fiction story that s/he published, suggested pride in writing, variety of writing that included problem-solving, as well as communication of one's thoughts through writing.

Writing in science requires understanding and explaining concepts clearly. Experiments are written as reports in the following pattern: problems, hypothesis, and results (NGSS, 2013). An integrated science preservice teacher thought that the lab safety how-to book s/he had written was "immediately relevant" to the students as well as "user-friendly." Another integrated science preservice teacher thought that sharing writing gave the student "a glimpse" into college writing.

Writing in social studies necessitates the exploration and analysis of themes that students represent in products such as writing (NCSS, 2011). One social studies preservice teacher synthesized the steps of *How to Think Like a Historian*, and shared this writing with a student. This how-to book walked a reader through examples of the exploration, analysis, and writing practiced by historians. A social studies preservice teacher believed that in social studies, a student had to "read, interpret, and do something creative." To this end, another social studies preservice teacher considered the theme of "home" in a paper shared with a student. In so doing, this preservice teacher shared a model of disciplinary writing and talked through its formation as recommended by the National Council of Social Studies (2011).

Writing in English class requires critical and creative analysis, as well as imaginative use of language in a variety of genres (NCTE, 2013). Diverse genre writing was shared by English preservice teachers who shared poems, a children's book, and a blog. One preservice teacher chose a student who was interested in hip-hop and lyrics. Sharing writing with students in English class also afforded preservice teachers an opportunity to help students succeed. For instance, one preservice teacher, who wrote along with a student in class, thought that the collaborative process helped the student to "understand the format of the assignment." Another English preservice teacher described sharing a *Fahrenheit 451* poem with a 10th grade student who was having difficulty understanding the book. Students benefit from watching and listening to teachers model their thinking process as they strive for clarity. Moreover, this experience suggested the potential of writing to be a rewarding experience (Kittle, 2008). An English preservice teacher shared a paper s/he wrote in college about an enjoyable writing experience. It is valuable for students to see teachers write and enjoy writing. It is helpful for secondary preservice teachers to remember their favorite writing experience and consider what aspects of the experience they could include in their future instruction to promote student motivation to write and become more proficient writers (Daisey, 2010).

Writing is also valuable in the arts (National Art Education Association, 2014). Visual artists and musicians analyze and evaluate their art and music as well as others' work in writing. One art preservice teachers shared a concrete poem to juxtapose it next to art, in order to challenge a viewer's response to the combination art and poetry, and to suggest the artistry in the writing. Pride in accomplishment was evident when an art

preservice teacher showed a student a website of his/her art work, and a music preservice teacher shared a movie score s/he had written for a trombone quartet.

The results of this study suggested that sharing writing for many preservice teachers served to help build a relationship with a student. Building a relationship with a student is one avenue to enhance academic success (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; Hamre & Pianta, 2006). Positive teacher-student relationships encourage student engagement to learn (Rimm-Kaufman, 2014). Yet, teachers must believe that they can have a positive influence on students in order to take the initiative to interact with students in a way that improves their motivation and achievement (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989).

Relationship building occurred in a number of ways in this study. First, preservice teachers were able to provide students evidence that they shared common struggles with the preservice teachers when they wrote. This approach is as recommended by Zygoris-Coe (2015). For example, a biology preservice teacher who shared her/his high school paper with misspellings to reveal that college students faced writing challenges too. Similarly, an English preservice teacher was able to build a bridge by demonstrating that the student's advice was useful to the preservice teacher in his or her own writing struggles, and that they were equals in that regard. A physics preservice teacher thought that by sharing writing, a teacher could appear more human rather than a "distant authority figure." In this way, the preservice teacher offered his/her writing as an avenue to gain self-respect, a sense of dignity, and perhaps a chance to heal (Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002; Frank, 2014; Worsley, 1989).

A second way that preservice teachers were able to build a relationship with students was by showing the student an opportunity to succeed in writing. For instance,

an English preservice teacher whose student thought writing papers could be “daunting,” but felt confident to write a 5-w poem. Likewise, a biology preservice teacher’s student was motivated to write a cinquain. Preservice teachers believed that their relationship with their student resulted in more effort to write. For example, an English preservice teacher, was thrilled that Malcolm “willingly wrote a poem!!”

A third way that preservice teachers were able to build a relationship with a student was by reducing the writing apprehension of students. For instance, an English preservice teacher described a student who used to be too embarrassed to ask for help and now could talk about her writing and what a “big deal” that was. Although 19 preservice teachers did not agree that sharing their writing helped them to build a relationship with a student, it is encouraging to note that they all cited positive outcomes for the sharing. Perhaps, they built more of a relationship than they realized.

Conclusion

Because preservice teachers self-reported their experiences sharing their writing, as a secondary content area literacy instructor, I am left with many questions. I wish that I could have been a “fly on the wall” during the sharing by preservice teachers. I wonder if preservice teachers’ reservations about sharing their writing could be reduced if they had a collection of two-minute videotapes to watch of preservice teachers in their subject area sharing their writing. The videotapes could be accompanied by short interviews of the preservice teachers describing what went well and what they would have done differently next time. I would like to know more about their method for selecting writing to share. It would be helpful to know what the students and cooperating teachers thought about the practice of sharing writing. These questions I leave for future researchers to answer.

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Appendix 1

Please complete the following survey based on your experiences sharing your writing with your student in practicum this semester.

1. Please tell me your major: _____
2. How did you go about sharing your writing with the student?
3. What opportunities/occasions did you have in practicum that you used to share your writing with a student?
4. How did you choose a student?
5. What did you say first to begin your sharing?
6. Describe the characteristics of your student.
7. What types or forms of writing did you share?
8. What reservations did you have about sharing your writing with your student?
9. Do you think your major played a role in sharing with a student? Please explain.
10. Do you think sharing your writing with a student helped to build your relationship with him/her? Strong Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree Please explain.
11. What positive effects (if any) do you think sharing your writing had on your student?

Thank you for your responses.