The Power of Teachers' Writing Stories: Exploring Multiple Layers of Reflective Inquiry in Writing Process Education

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The purpose of this theoretical mixed-method study is to examine teachers' self-assessments of their perceptions about writing development and instruction. One hundred and fifty teachers participated in a multiple-method data collection utilizing a Likert survey, extended narrative response, and sociometric networking of literacy identity (sociogram). Results indicated that there is a contradiction between the stated beliefs, self-perceptions and descriptions of practice. This article is an explication of why examining teachers' self-perceptions concerning themselves as writers and exploring the ways in which this self-perspective phenomenon influences the teaching of writing in their classrooms, through multiple methods, will lead to greater educational clarity of identity and practice.

The "teacher as writer" model of instruction is familiar to many readers of professional literature. Educators all over the country attend summer institutes, reunion days and become a part of writing workshop professional development circles in order to develop their understanding of literacy education. Early writing process researchers and practitioners have generally agreed that in order to be strong teacher of writing, writing teachers need to engage in the writing process themselves. This conclusion is based upon two reasons. First, as teachers of writing, they should practice what they teach, (e.g., the rhetorical, cognitive, and mechanical skills required in different writing situations). Second, if they seek opportunities for writing with their students, they will develop better insights into the "processes", including challenges and values, that student writers find within the context of a particular writing assignment in the writing workshop (Brindley, R., & Jasinski-Schneider, J., 2002). Though this appears to make sense, it is this identity, teacher as writer, which I have found to be the most difficult and humbling experience of most educators' lives.

I am a former classroom teacher, literacy specialist and now a professional development consultant and a college professor in the literacy education department of a small college located

on Long Island, New York. I have been the director of a writing project site funded through the National Writing Project and have participated in many summer institutes and reunion days held in New York and across the country. It is from this work at the writing project that I had begun to seriously consider the ways in which teachers' perceive themselves as writers in the service of teaching writing in their classrooms. This paper will discuss the journey my inquiry took as I explored this issue.

The Impetus for the Inquiry

When working with teachers on developing writing workshops in their classrooms, we reviewed relevant literature pertaining to this topic (Calkins, 1993; Graves, 1983, Wood-Ray, 2001, Fletcher, 1996, 2001; Fletcher, R. & Portalupi, J., 1998, 2001; et. al). We thought about and envisioned what a reading and writing workshop looked like; we read children's literature, first as readers then as writers. We studied mini-lessons, crafted our own, shared them, charted them, and talked about them. Then it happened; I asked the teachers to start keeping a writer's notebook. I asked them to write every day. I modeled for them what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like. They didn't like it. They didn't want to write, they wanted to teach writing. They didn't want to share, they wanted their students to share their writing. They wanted to examine it. They wanted to find the strengths amongst the obvious weaknesses they have been trained to correct. And, they definitely did not want to have a "publishing" day or a celebration. But why?

As a professional development consultant who has worked in schools in a number of states, I recognize that "deer in the headlights" look and know the soft grumblings of the participants nervous to share. As I considered these responses I wondered how can teachers be teachers of writing and not write? What is it about writing, the actual act of writing, that stops many teachers before they start? It is with this question in mind that I began exploring what was going on in the writing lives of the teachers I worked with. Specifically, I wanted to study and understand why there was often so much resistance from teachers when asked to write. Is it due to their feelings of incompetence with writing from past experiences, their perceptions of themselves as poor writers, or their uncertainty on how to teach and foster writing in their classrooms?

This piece chronicles the beginning of my two-year inquiry exploring East End Writing Project[1] participant perspectives about writing based upon past experiences in their own schooling, current experiences in their professional lives and education courses informs and influences their current instructional practices.

I begin by first discussing the nature of multiple ways of reflective knowing, where teachers re-examine and interrogate their own writing to discover how personal experience shapes their beliefs and assumptions about the teaching of writing and impacts their classroom practices. This discussion leads to why utilizing multiple layers of reflective inquiry, specifically in the teaching of writing, may be an effective pedagogical approach. I then discuss my development of multiple measures of assessment which can invite teachers to gain a greater sense of agency and clarity in their realities. Developing new insights into why teachers approach the teaching of writing in specific ways may have the potential to give themselves a greater sense of agency once they acknowledge and reflect upon their orientations to the teaching of writing.

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[1] Located on the east end of Long Island, NY, the East End Writing Project was an affiliate of the National Writing Project.

The Inquiry

It is my belief that any discussion of classroom practice should recognize the influence of teachers' beliefs on their teaching behaviors in classrooms (Author & Voorhees S., 2007; Pajares, 1992) Past research has shown that people typically hold complex belief systems built on memorable events in their lives, unquestioned presumptions, and personal truths (Nespor, 1987). Furthermore, beliefs often persist even when they are proven inaccurate. In fact, rather than reasonable representations of reality, these beliefs are often ideological conceptualizations that truly differ from reality to some extent (Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Rokeach, 1968). Therefore, attempting to explain a teacher's classroom behaviors in terms of individual theories and knowledge of teaching is complex. Teachers' professional behaviors in particular situations are affected by their beliefs and understandings about previous experiences. These experiences tend to create perspectives about and influence the personal knowledge of appropriate classroom practice (Calderhead, 1988; Carter, 1990; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984). Cazden's (1976) earlier work recognized this disconnect between teachers' knowledge and how they deliver the curriculum to children. In this way teachers use their intuitive screensn(Goodman, 1988) as they develop personal practical knowledge that is ultimately combined as lay theories about teaching (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Holt-Reynolds, 1992). In plain terms, teachers tend to teach what they "know." But what they know oftentimes is based upon past experiences and interpretations rather than academic or intellectual knowledge.

The purpose of this work is to gain insights that may help teacher educators recognize the tensions between teachers' beliefs and practices and help educators at all levels to develop a better understanding of the complexities surrounding the teaching of writing in schools today. As a result, my goal is for teacher educators to further develop the manner and sensitivity with which pedagogical literacy issues, specifically the teaching of writing, are addressed in pre-service and in-service course work and the role teacher education has to play in the transformative process of teacher-as-writer and writer-as-teacher. Specifically, I explored three lines of questioning:

1. What are the self-perceptions of teachers as writers and as writing instructors?
2. In what ways do teachers envision their past writing experiences?
3. How do teachers teach writing based on their self-perceptions?

Conceptual Knowledge: Ways of Knowing

Learning to teach reading and writing is a challenging endeavor. Research shows that teachers are confronted with practical issues related to classroom management, developing and understanding literacy curriculum, learning how to teach diverse learners, and assessment practices (Bullough, 1989; Fullan, Galluzzo, Morris, & Watson, 1998; Hill, 2000; Mueller & Skamp, 2003; Richardson & Placier, 2001). In the 1980s, most research on teaching literacy centered on these issues as well as important teachers' observable behaviors and their effects on students (Barr, 1984; Otto, Wolf, & Eldrige, 1984; Tierney & Cunningham, 1984). Reading teacher education emphasized the translation of theory into practice (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000); that is, education professors believed teacher candidates should acquire subject matter knowledge and models of curriculum and then practice using them in order to be effective teachers (Shulman, 1986). However, new questions about teachers' decision making and beliefs were also being raised at that time (Anders et al. 2000). Several investigations were conducted

that emphasized the study of teachers' belief systems (DeFord, 1985; Duffy, 1981; Harste, 1977; Hoffman & Kugle, 1982; Shavelson, 1983) and the impact these practices had on instructional decision making; a new direction of teacher education inquiry had begun.

In the past few decades, substantial research interest has given prominence to the complex interplay of teachers' thought processes, content and pedagogical knowledge, and the ways they are constructed, represented, and practiced in classroom contexts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990); in other words, the research focused on teachers' ways of knowing (Carter, 1990). In a research review on teachers' thought processes, Clark and Peterson (1986) compared various research on teachers' thinking as well as a much larger body of research on teachers' behaviors and the effects on students and student learning; teachers' thought processes, pedagogical knowledge, and beliefs were found to substantially affect their classroom behavior. Elbaz (1983) termed this as teacher's practical knowledge, referring to the ''kinds of knowledge, as integrated by the individual teacher in terms of personal values and beliefs and as oriented to the practical situation'' (Elbaz, 1983, p. 5). Beijaard and Verloop (1996) defined it as the ''core of teaching quality'' and placed it at ''the heart of teacher assessment'' (p. 275).

I propose a teacher's practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983) is not just an expression of his or her own professional knowledge that is informed by his or her professional background, experience, and perceptions, but it is also one shaped by personal attitude, motivation, and sociocultural values; this, in turn, is constructed as a belief system (Bausch, Voorhees, & Inserra, 2006). Although knowledge may be the most influential conception-driving classroom practice (Meyer, Tabachnick, Hewson, Lemberger, & Park, 1999), personal views of knowledge are central to these notions (Hewson, Tabachnick, Zeichner, & Lemberger, 1999). My thinking is concomitant with Harvey's (1986) definition of a belief system: "A set of conceptual representations which signify to its holder a reality or given state of affairs of sufficient validity, truth and/or trustworthiness to warrant reliance upon it as a guide to personal thought and action'' (p. 660). Therefore, I maintain what teachers believe about literacy and literacy instruction (i.e., teachers' implicit theories) is likely to have a strong impact on how they construct literacy in practice. However, focusing on beliefs or behaviors may not automatically lead to change (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991); as Richardson, et al. (1991) suggested in their research, change will only happen when ''teachers think differently about what is going on in their classrooms, and are provided with practices to match the different ways of thinking'' (p. 579). For change to take place, teachers need an open, risk-free environment to critically think about and discuss their assumptions and practices with others (Hinchey, 1998; Wink, 2000).

Teacher-as-Writer Perspectives

Writing experts agree that to teach writing effectively, teachers must first be writers (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Faery, 1993; Hollingsworth, 1988; Atwell, 1991; Calkins, 1994; Emig, 1977; Fulwiler, 1986; Graves, 1983; Murray, 1990; Wood Ray, 2001). This assumption has become one of the adages of the current paradigm of writing pedagogy. Teachers must be able to discover and understand the process of writing themselves to be able to effectively teach this process to students. Teachers must participate in the process to see why and how writers write and to know how to create the kind of conditions that facilitate skillful student writing in their classrooms (Atwell, 1991). In order for teachers to help students incorporate writing into their lives, teachers must first incorporate it into their own.

The literature speaks to the development of a writing community, where all members of the class are writing, including the teachers (Atwell, 1991; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Graves & Kittle, 2006). Moreover, it is the teacher's writing that oftentimes serves as a writing model, the piece that is publicly and explicitly composed, deconstructed, analyzed, drafted, and revised at the word, sentence and whole text level. This modeling invites students into the writing process and allows them to see and hear the process of writing as the teacher thinks and talks through it. In other words, teachers who act as models help students see the process from the inside out. Johnson (1992) agrees that through modeling and sharing writing, or becoming a member of the class as a participating writer, student metacognition and success in writing increase. Students can see and hear that even good writers struggle (Robbins, 1992). They especially grow as writers in an environment they perceive as empathetic (Hollingsworth, 1988). Conversely, teachers also learn to write better by writing with their students (Graves, 1983; Graves & Kittle, 2006; Calkins, 1994); they, too experience the process as it unfolds in front of them and their students, and a collaborative spirit that infuses the writing work is born.

Narrative Inquiry Defined

Narrative inquiry is defined as one method toward examining experiences as lived and told stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Within a narrative and visual inquiry I would assert that narrative "is the best way of representing and understanding experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 18). Moreover, because a narrative is "the representation of an event or a series of events" (Abbott, 2002, p. 12) that are "connected by subject matter and related by time" (Scholes, 1981, p. 205) utilizing a visual representation (as I did by incorporating a sociogram as part of the reflective process) creates a powerful pedagogical tool where teachers are making sense of their experiences visually as well as through the written narrative medium.

Significantly, both visual and written narratives include characters who are a part of and in some way influential in the event, as well as the narrator who is constructing the story. As a part of a narrative inquiry within the qualitative strand of this study, the teachers are then able to utilize both written and visual data as narrative tools for constructing knowledge.

Therefore, I contend that reflecting upon the power the stories of their educational lives have on their instructional decision-making and practices, as they evaluate, compose and illustrate these narratives, holds great promise for teachers to create spaces to "become freed to glimpse what might be" (Greene, 2000, p. 19).

Method

In order to investigate writing instruction and teacher-as-writer perceptions teachers were bringing to the teaching of writing, I developed a Teacher-as-Writer Survey based upon current research on the teaching of writing and belief systems (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994; Matthewson, 1994). It consisted of a ten item, 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *always (5)* to *never (1)* to quantify perspectives about writing and instruction (See Table 1). Six open-ended survey questions provided an opportunity for narrative explanations that I utilized to determine emerging themes (See Table 2). Finally, I incorporated an artistic response in the form of a sociogram, (See Photo 1 & 2) a graphic representation of internal perceptual links that a person has (in this case their relationship and understanding about themselves as teachers of writing and

writers) to encourage them to explore through various illustrative mediums how they embodied the role of teacher as writer.[2]

Figure 1: Writing project fellows beginning their sociograms.

The Participants

One hundred and fifty teachers spanning experience levels including pre-service teachers, non-tenured teachers, graduate students studying literacy for state certification, teachers with ten or more years of experience, and teachers participating in a six-week writing project all living and working in various school districts and grade levels ranging from kindergarten to twelfth grade in the Northeastern United States, were surveyed. Of the one hundred and fifty teachers, 134 were female and 16 respondents were male.

I invited these teachers to voluntarily participate in this survey based upon my work with them through my position as a college professor, staff developer, and writing project director. The surveys were completed and submitted in a marked envelope left in a designated office. The sociogram work occurred during the summer institutes. Though the surveys were anonymous. The sociogram designs occurred in classrooms throughout the college and were viewed by the institute participants. The project members were informed why this work was being accomplished and the ways in which it connected to what we were studying together. The opportunity to withdraw or not participate in the work was always available throughout this study. All participants completed the survey and sociograms.

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[2] Other than grade levels and years teaching the respondents remained anonymous.

Data Analysis

The survey implemented included ten questions with Likert-type rating scales for teachers to quantify their perspectives about writing and instruction. The questionnaire also provided an opportunity for narrative explanations and included six survey questions, which the teachers could answer in prose.

Table 1: Likert Survey of Writing Instruction

Questions	5	4	3	2	1
1. Do you often feel confident about your ability to teaching writing workshop?					
2. Do you often share your knowledge about students writing lives with your colleagues? Parents? Administrators?					
3. Do you use specific, individual measures of student performance to plan writing instruction?					
4. Do you often speak to your students about their writing lives and how they are doing as writers in your classroom?					
5. Do you often feel confident about your knowledge as to how well your students are doing in regards to writing acquisition?					
6. Do you enjoy writing with your students?					
7. Do you consider yourself to be a strong writer?					
8. Do you conduct writing workshop at least 3x's per week in your classroom throughout the year?					
9. Do you engage in writing activities (writing group, publication, diary/journal writing) outside of your teaching duties?					
10. Do you believe teachers need to be writers in order to teach writing workshop?					
11. Visualize the highly successful writing class. What does the classroom look like?					
12. What can you say about the types of writing and reading activities that are evident?					
13. What kinds of writing do you do in your writing life?					
14. What kinds of writing do you feel you need to do more of?					
15. What kinds of writing do your students do in your classroom?					
16. In your classroom how much time do children spend actually writing?					
17. What type(s) of writing instruction do you provide your students?					
18. What should your next steps be, as a writer and teacher of writing, in the teaching of writing?					

NOTE: For Questions 1-10, *5=significantly, 4=to a large degree, 3=somewhat, 2=minimal, and 1=not at all.*

In order to collect further representations of teachers' self-perceptions as writers they were asked to each sketch a sociogram. A sociogram is a charting of the inter-relationships within a group, a concept, or a perspective *(*Hartup, W. W., & Robin, Z., 1982). Its purpose is to discover the structure or the basic "network" of relational patterns and sub-group organizations[3].

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[3] Teachers can make use of pictures, symbols, shapes, colors, and line styles to illustrate the writing relationships and self-perceptions.

Though an unusual research medium to incorporate within an inquiry, I believe the self-perception of a teacher-as-writer and as a teacher of writing can be derived, in part, from a

Table 2: Narrative Survey

Visualize the highly successful writing class. What does the classroom look like?		
What can you say about the types of writing and reading activities that are evident?		
What kinds of writing do you do in *your* writing life?		
What kinds of writing do you feel you need to do more of?		
In your classroom, how much time do children spend *actually* writing?		
What should your next steps be, as a writer and teaching of writing, in the teaching of writing?		

sociogram. A sociogram's value as a research and self-evaluative tool, as used in this inquiry, is in the potential for developing greater understanding of self perception so that the teacher may operate more wisely in writing process instructional practices and curriculum development (Weinstein, 1969). When drawing is a part of literacy, it helps the writer to know their subjects and their thinking and encourages them to dig in (Ernst-daSilva, 2001). Drawing slows the writer down and helps them to notice important skills for writers. For the purpose of this study, teachers were asked to visually represent themselves as teachers of literacy and as active literacy users.

The basic material from which these sociograms were constructed were collected from the following questions:

1. How do you see yourself as a writer?
2. How do you fair as a writer?
3. How do you see yourself as a reader?
4. How do you fair as a reader?[4]

Following the traditional directions of crafting a sociogram the teachers were asked to sketch a self-evaluative illustration using symbols as representations of their perceptions of self-as-reader and writer and their opinions about their abilities within these literacies. The mixed-method design of this study permitted me to compare responses and identify emerging themes and then strategically explore the "thick descriptive" responses that reflected the themes. I selected a multi-method approach for analysis of the Likert survey results. The Likert-type rating were recorded and an overall mean score was computed to extract general trends (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1990). I studied the narrative responses and looked for emerging themes by separating the questions into three major ideas based upon my beliefs about writing: writing instruction, teacher's self perception about being a writer, and belief about the importance of teaching writing.

Figure 2: A teacher's completed sociogram

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[4] These questions are examples of a fixed neutral nomination technique, neutral in that there is no fixed weight given to a positive or negative response and fixed because only fair questions were asked. Some researchers recommend the use of positive or negative questions in order to discover interpersonal alignment or resistance. For the purpose of this inquiry a neutral stance was desired for the teachers to have more control over their responses.
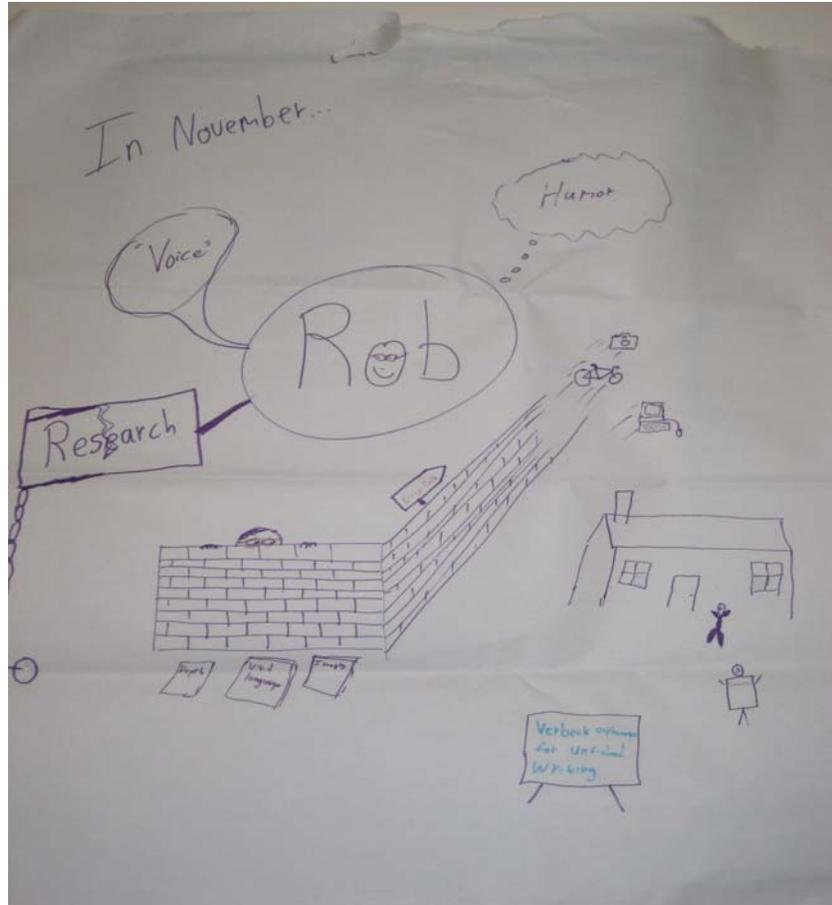
Figure 3: A metaphoric depiction of one teacher's writing identity

Next, I examined the sociogram illustrative component, again looking for emerging themes and the revelation of different illustrated thoughts, comments, and ideas related to the different questions (Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993). First, an "etic" level was created as a general accounting scheme for codes. Then a more "emic" level was developed inductively (Miles & Huberman, 1994) through careful and repeated readings of the transcripts and studying of the artifacts. As each artifact was analyzed, the coding scheme was revised and new, more specific categories to summarize the essential content (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) were created.

Results

The surveys indicated a wide range of perspectives among these teachers about writing instruction and how they see their writing lives influencing their teaching practices. The scope of explanations, including the distinctions between instructional practices and actual classroom practice, varied greatly. The Likert self-perception survey revealed similar statistical results that corroborated the anonymous extended written responses. The self-perception survey did not indicate a significant sense of teaching self-confidence. The majority of responses indicate either a "somewhat" to a "minimal" degree of confidence in the teacher's writing workshop literacy practices.

The three questions which received the largest (5=significantly) confidence response, asked about the sharing of student information with colleagues, parents, and administrators

Questions	5	4	3	2	1
1. Do you often feel confident about your ability to teaching writing workshop?	19	15	20	29	17
2. Do you often share your knowledge about students writing lives with your colleagues? Parents? Administrators?	51	17	19	13	0
3. Do you use specific, individual measures of student performance to plan writing instruction?	21	26	8	41	4
4. Do you often speak to your students about their writing lives and how they are doing as writers in your classroom?	33	55	10	2	0
5. Do you often feel confident about your knowledge as to how well your students are doing in regards to writing acquisition?	27	22	36	13	2
6. Do you enjoy writing with your students?	26	21	41	8	4
7. Do you consider yourself to be a strong writer?	14	16	38	25	7
8. Do you conduct writing workshop at least 3x's per week in your classroom throughout the year?	54	39	4	1	2
9. Do you engage in writing activities (writing group, publication, diary/journal writing) outside of your teaching duties?	6	3	12	26	53
10. Do you believe teachers need to be writers in order to teach writing workshop?	72	22	2	3	1
11. Visualize the highly successful writing class. What does the classroom look like?					
12. What can you say about the types of writing and reading activities that are evident?					
13. What kinds of writing do you do in your writing life?					
14. What kinds of writing do you feel you need to do more of?					
15. What kinds of writing do your students do in your classroom?					
16. In your classroom how much time do children spend actually writing?					
17. What type(s) of writing instruction do you provide your students?					
18. What should your next steps be, as a writer and teacher of writing, in the teaching of writing?					

Table 3: Survey of Writing Instruction (Resultant percentages)

NOTE: For Questions 1-10, *5=significantly, 4=to a large degree, 3=somewhat, 2=minimal, and 1=not at all.*

(no.2); the amount of time writing workshop is held throughout the year per week (no. 8); and the conceptual belief that teachers need to be writers in order to teach writing workshop (no. 10). The question which received a significant number of negative response, (no. 9) asked if the teacher participated in writing activities, specifically writing group, publication, and diary/journal writing outside of the classroom teaching duties. Fifty-three respondents indicated that they do not participate in these kinds of writing activities outside of their classrooms.

In the extended response section of the survey (questions 11-16), when asked to envision the writing workshop classroom (no. 11) the descriptions included significant blocks of time (2-2.5 hours at least), where everyone was writing and working with a quiet, conversational "buzz" of talk being heard. The term "touchstone texts" was listed as important, as were a *"print rich*

environment, posters, exemplars of writing, graphic organizers, writing materials and comfortable spaces provided for individual, peer, and small group writing opportunities."

Comments about not having enough physical space to hold the materials, or having to be creative about where these materials were stored, were added on to the survey. One teacher noted that she had shelves added to a closet door so when it swung open the students could easily access the writing workshop materials. Another teacher had her desk removed and now uses a table as her meeting space. She was able to add in more bookshelves and portable storage carriers on wheels to help her use her space efficiently. Most of the other responders said they needed to become more *"organized about their writing workshop materials."*

Though writing workshop was held a minimum of three times per week, the depth and breadth of the workshop was interpreted differently by the responders. There were caveats added to many of the answers. For example, participant #45 noted *"I list ww [sic] in my plan book but if I have to cover a content area I'll skip it."* A "smiley face" was added at the end of this statement. Responder #74 wrote, *"I do it 3x's per week, but I don't think I'm doing it right. It makes me nervous."* Finally, participant #12 wrote, *"I do it when I can fit it in."* Conversely, there were teachers who did hold writing workshop three to five times per week and stated that they enjoyed it immensely. A few added comments stressed how important it was to them to share the writing life with their students and how much they themselves enjoyed writing in their own lives. One participant (#101) wrote, *"I believe it's important to go through every step I'm teaching with my students, otherwise I'm just telling them what to do."* Another participant (#109) wrote, *"I love poetry. I am a published poet. I want my students to love poetry as much as I do. I'm constantly sharing my finished work and my drafts. I want them to see it's messy for everyone."* The majority of participants did note that they enjoyed writing with their students as part of their instruction, but very few considered themselves to be strong writers.

Although the participants acknowledged the importance of the process of writing as integral to living a "writerly" life, meaning that time, choice, response and sharing were important components, most of the teachers did not clearly acknowledge those parts as being a apparent part of their literacy block instruction (no. 12). Skill work, such as writing paragraphs, writing in complete sentences, test prep and prompt writing were listed as evidence of writing workshop activities. Writing in response to reading, reading into the circle, talking, journaling, graphic organizers, prompt writing and test preparation writing were also noted as the kinds of writing students engaged in within the writing workshop.

The majority of teachers noted in their own writing lives, they engage in writing lesson plans, lists, letters, greeting cards, emails, research papers, and notes. Very few acknowledged keeping a writer's notebook or using one as part of their instructional practice within the classroom.

The question that appeared to be interpreted the most widely[5] was the one where teachers were asked what kinds of writing they needed to engage in more (no.14). Interestingly, many teachers (n=96), left that question blank, crossed it out, placed question marks as an answer, or wrote "N/A" in the space provided. Other respondents appeared to understand the question as asking, "What kinds of writing do you feel you need to do more of" *in the classroom?*"[6] Some of the responses were as follows: *"In all subject areas",* also, *"Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading responses, creative writing, and journal writing"* were listed as areas that needed to be

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[5] The multiple interpretations speaks to the need to perhaps rephrase this question for more clarity.

[6] I am taking the liberty of drawing this conclusion because the answers the teachers listed indicated content areas as priority writing topics.

Table 4: Narrative responses: Emerging Themes

Question	Theme	Count
Visualize the highly successful writing class. What does the classroom look like?	2.5 hours/literacy block	65
	Children are engaged	15
	Everyone is working	10
	Works are displayed	22
	Touchstone texts	17
	Graphic Organizers	5
	Writing Materials	10
	Writing across the curriculum	6
What can you say about the types of writing and reading activities that are evident?	Writer's notebooks	33
	Reading into the circle	3
	Writing paragraphs	11
	Writing in complete sentences	12
	Reading journals	26
	Talking	4
	Test prep	42
	Prompt writing	19
What kinds of writing do you do in *your* writing life?	Lists	66
	E-mails	14
	Journaling	13
	Letters	4
	Thank you notes	6
	Research papers	2
	Greeting cards	3
	Lesson plans	42
What kinds of writing do you feel you need to do more of?	Crafting	7
	Independent writing	11
	Editing	6
	Writing traits	9
	Writer's notebook writing [sic]	21
	N/A/????	61
	No written response or crossed out	35
In your classroom, how much time do children spend *actually* writing?	45 minutes	12
	30 minutes	26
	20 minutes	53
	10 minutes	45
	"Throughout the day"	14
What should your next steps be, as a writer and teaching of writing, in the teaching of writing?	Combining state standards with the curriculum	17
	Training to be "lovers" of writing	5
	Develop writing instruction uniformity	2
	More professional development	10
	Learn how to introduce new concepts	16
	Connecting testing to writing workshop	43

addressed and supported. Finally, other respondents listed crafting, independent writing, editing, writing traits, and writer's notebook writing [sic] as the kinds of writing they feel they needed to be doing more of in their teaching life.

The amount of time dedicated to the students actually writing varied greatly (no. 15). The average amount noted was between 10-20 minutes per day. Thirty minutes was also listed as a common amount of time for student writing. A few respondents wrote "throughout the day" and listed one hour or less as the amount of time students are engaged in writing.

When asked, *"What should your next steps be, as a writer and teacher of writing?"* (no.16), responses included attending workshops, learning how to align the state standards with a workshop process approach, being *"trained to be lovers of writing"*, and finding the *"right"* way to teach writing were listed as the next steps to be taken as a writer and teacher of writing.

Sociogram Analysis

Historically, sociometric studies measure the social interactions between individuals and within groups. One of the models used in sociometric studies conducive to the intended exploratory work in this inquiry is network analysis. Network analysis involves a "mapping" of the connections among a set of people, organizations, events or places. Researchers often represent these networks by drawing a sociogram. The intended use through an illustrative sociogram network approach for this study is two-fold. The first intention was to document the participating teacher's past school-based writing experiences and examine the events that have informed and influenced their current practices. The second goal was to explore the internal relationship each teacher possessed in relation to self-as-writer and self-as-writing teacher. The key feature of this exploratory application is that each person is informed and influenced from their past educational writing process experiences through direct or indirect linkages.

The sociogram analysis revealed the complicated relationships teachers have with their identities as readers and writers and their accompanying instructional abilities. Brick walls or other forms of blocks representing writing were clearly evident. Small faces with only the eyes looking over the wall were artfully rendered on the chart paper. Relationships with reading were illustrated as being close to their teacher identity and central to their character, and writing was often shown as being far away with broken or twisted connections. Graded papers with red marks and "F's" emblazed on top were shown as evidence of past histories. Some participants placed their writer's notebooks in heart symbols; others had the notebooks behind fences, appearing to be out of reach. One educator had the character's hands reaching toward writing materials, but unable to grasp them. The illustrative findings indicate that the teacher's past experiences as student writers may be an influential factor of their current perceptions of themselves as writers and writing teachers.

Discussion

This inquiry identified contradictions between stated beliefs and classroom practice for some teachers. A review of data gathered indicates a broad range of perceptions of teachers as readers, as writers, and as teachers of writing. The majority of participants viewed themselves either through writing or illustrations as strong readers and as ones who enjoyed reading significantly. Yet, when responding to questions about writing, their writing lives, and the

teaching of writing, most results fell within the middle to lower indices of confidence and understanding.

The Likert survey revealed that a basic understanding of the teaching of writing appeared to be internalized as an instructional practice. Teachers noted the expected environmental and instructional materials and purposes that usually accompany a process-oriented philosophy in the teaching of writing. They responded that they share knowledge and discuss with colleagues, parents, and administrators the students' writing lives. They also noted that they use individual measures to plan writing instruction and to discuss with their students their writing performances. The state mandated tests were listed as a type of writing instruction and was also mentioned as a topic that needs to be addressed in professional development forums and within the process-oriented methods of a writing workshop. Other more traditional writing skills, such as writing paragraphs, complete sentences and understanding correct grammar usage were also highlighted in many responses as an important part of writing workshop.

It was within the implementation of writing workshop that disconnect most often appeared. Many of the educators considered themselves to be either significantly strong writers or strong writers to a large degree. Yet these perceptions, when explored further through narrative responses and illustrative opportunities, failed to support these initial results. The results indicated that viewing themselves as writers and sharing their writing lives with their students was the biggest challenge for teachers. The majority of respondents indicated that they did not lead writer lives outside of the classroom. Self-generated writing was listed in the form of lists, lesson plans, cards, emails, journaling, etc. Yet philosophically, once again, the majority (n=104) noted on the Likert survey that they *do* believe teachers need to be writers in order to teach writing workshop. It appears these teacher participants either do not see the contradiction or have not dwelt on the inconsistency until they illustrated their personal relationship with the concept of self-as-writer and writing teacher. Many of the informal discussions after the sociogram activity focused on the surprise the teacher felt when viewing their artistic representations.

Although the knowledge of writing instruction and development has grown substantially during recent decades, my findings suggest teacher educators and professional developers should encourage their students to explore how actual implementation and knowledge is reflected in the classroom. As teachers, we know that when we make our own insights about ourselves as writers and readers explicit, we often help students understand themselves better as writers and readers as well. By exploring the dispositional aspect of belief systems through the Likert survey, extended narrative response and an illustrative construction teachers can help generate hypotheses about why and how, as writers, they construct different internal identity experiences. Sharing these hypotheses with students and encouraging students to make hypotheses of their own can lead also to discussions comparing teacher- and student-writer points of view.

Limitations

The results of this inquiry are limited in several ways. There were only 150 surveys and they all originated from districts and teachers within a 70 mile radius and within the same state. Because educators from many different districts, with different amounts of teaching experience, and different professional development opportunities completed the surveys, it is not possible to draw robust conclusions. The nature of survey research can be questioned due to the accuracy of self-reporting (Hook & Rosenshine, 1979). Though the surveys were anonymous, it is possible

that teachers hesitated to answer questions or felt a need to extrapolate beyond the questions, as was seen with the added notations made with survey question 15 (*How much time do children spend actually writing?).*

Finally, the subjectivity of my interpretations of the teachers responses could be considered biased since I am very aware of the pressures teachers face, the way state testing is often at the forefront of much of teacher decision making and instructional practices, and because I, as a former director of a writing project and a writing teacher, possess definite views and opinions about the teaching of writing.

Conclusion

This inquiry indicates that for many teachers there is a contradiction between their stated beliefs, their self-perceptions, and their descriptions of practice (Pajares, 1992).
What I believe is fascinating from this inquiry is the ways in which using multiple resources to represent one's theoretical and personal orientations, such as a reading and writing, allows for deeper reflection. It appears that using an instrument like the Likert survey is but one way to elicit teachers' self-perceptions. By taking the time to expand upon self-reflective thinking through extended narrative responses and an artistic representation, there is more opportunity for teachers to tease out multiple belief systems and dispositional frameworks that inform and influence their teaching practices.

Future research directed toward teachers' analyzing their results, making more robust connections between self-as-teacher and self-as-writer, would lead to greater educational clarity of identity. This suggests that within graduate and undergraduate education classrooms, professional development opportunities, and in districts that advocate a literacy process orientation and instructional practice, there should be rich discussions about the relationship of subject matter, pedagogical content knowledge, and the ways in which teachers can hone their instructional practices and theoretical orientations. Colleges and districts should continue to encourage and support teachers in collaboratively planning professional development, study groups, and courses that include opportunities to reflect on practical knowledge in light of contemporary literacy in teacher education and the notion of self-efficacy and the ways in which this impacts and influences instruction.

As teachers, we know that when we make insights about ourselves as writers and readers explicit we often help students see themselves as readers and writers as well (Sperling, 1995). Therefore, it is imperative that we scaffold teacher wisdom, *not* teacher compliance, and encourage teachers to examine the role of self-as-writer utilizing multiple methods. They should also reflect upon the ways in which this identity maintains, sustains, and at times constrains their instruction, thereby beginning to reach a deeper understanding of writing in the context of their lives and in the schools.

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