

Using Professional Learning Communities to Advance Preservice Teachers' Understanding of Differentiation within Writing Instruction

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in preservice teacher education as a tool for learning about differentiation within writing instruction. Using online dialogue journals, preservice teachers communicated with elementary students about a shared text and met in ongoing PLC groups to examine students' work and discuss articles related to writing instruction. In end-of-course reflections, preservice teachers reported new understandings of how to guide individual students toward reasonable writing goals, as well as increased confidence in their ability to teach writing and to differentiate instruction as a result of participating in the PLCs. In particular, preservice teachers learned to build upon students' strengths in an effort to facilitate growth over time.

Elementary teacher education programs are unique in that they must train teachers to use instructional strategies and methods across all areas of the curriculum, in addition to teaching standard pedagogical skills, collaboration with parents and fellow teachers, and effective classroom management practices. Because the children they will teach are new to reading and writing, helping preservice teachers become strong in literacy methods is a priority for most elementary education programs (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2016). However, the teaching of composition tends to take a backseat to reading. Though reading and writing instruction work together in the elementary language arts curriculum, studies have shown that preservice teachers are not usually required to take courses focused solely on the teaching of writing (Troia & Graham, 2016). In the elementary classroom as well, attention to writing is often given only a very narrow space (Troia & Graham, 2016). But because learning to express

ideas in writing is so important for developing children's critical thinking (Quitadamo & Kurtz, 2007), it is necessary to find ways to devote more class time to writing and to better prepare future teachers to teach writing effectively.

Purpose

Preservice teachers need opportunities to examine differences in writing skills among elementary students and devise strategies to help individual children develop as writers (Stover, Yeara & Sease, 2014). The purpose of the present study was to explore the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in preservice teacher education as a tool for learning about differentiation within writing instruction. Using online dialogue journals, which allow students and teachers to correspond in writing about a topic of mutual interest in an authentic way (Stillman, Anderson & Struthers, 2014), preservice teachers communicated with elementary students about a shared text, then met with peers in ongoing PLC groups to examine students' work and to discuss articles related to writing instruction.

Literature Review

In recent years, PLCs have been used in schools to help teachers engage in pedagogical discourse and make collaborative decisions about how to best help students achieve learning goals (DuFour & Marzano, 2004). The key purposes of PLCs are to develop a guaranteed and viable curriculum, to monitor student learning on an ongoing basis, to ensure effective instruction, and to respond when students don't learn (DuFour & Marzano, 2004). Feger & Arruda (2008) conducted a vast literature review on the use of PLCs in education and found that "much of the literature on PLCs is grounded in theories that highlight the social nature of learning and detail practices through which teachers share and build their work (p. 5)." Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of development, which suggests that human learning is

largely a social process, is particularly applicable to PLCs in that they emphasize collaboration as a key way to increase teachers' knowledge and efficacy.

Several researchers have investigated the use of PLCs within teacher education programs. In one study, preservice teachers participated in an extra-curricular course on reading aloud to students which involved working in small groups on a continuing basis for twelve weeks (Auhl & Daniel, 2014). Participants reported that their experiences in the peer groups contributed to their understanding of teaching, learning, and children's development and the value of critical transformative dialogue in supporting professional reflection. They also credited the small groups for preparing them to engage in the professional context of schools and for increasing their confidence as beginning teachers (Auhl & Daniel, 2014).

In another study (Bond, 2013), preservice teachers met in PLC groups four times across the semester to discuss artifacts they were collecting for their professional portfolios. Data revealed that the PLC meetings helped preservice teachers think critically, approach pedagogical problems from multiple perspectives, and support one another emotionally (Bond, 2013). However, problems implementing the project showed the importance of explicitly teaching preservice teachers how to effectively navigate participation in PLCs. Bond (2013) suggested that teacher educators should model giving critical feedback and consider using a prescribed meeting protocol to keep the discussion focused on student learning.

A consultancy protocol was used successfully in a study by Kagle (2014), wherein preservice teachers presented problems of practice at each PLC meeting and then discussed how to best meet these challenges within schools. Kagle (2014) found that the PLCs helped preservice teachers build basic pedagogical skills, become reflective practitioners, transition from student to teacher, and confront educational challenges professionally. Similarly, Miller's

(2008) study used a consultancy protocol to engage preservice teachers in conversations about subject matter, pedagogy, and assessment during regular PLC meetings. Miller (2008) found that “problem-based conversations (among) teachers are integral to their learning and sense-making, particularly when these opportunities...are focused and structured to account for complexity, include all voices, and are grounded in experience” (p. 80).

Professor-led PLC groups which met regularly to discuss educational research and case studies were the subject of another study (Dillard, 2016). Group norms about participation, decision-making, expectations, confidentiality, and accountability were agreed upon at the outset and adhered to throughout the students’ coursework. The following year, four participants kept journals related to school-based PLC participation during their first year of teaching. Most reported feeling prepared to work with fellow teachers in PLC groups and appreciated the close relationships and support fostered within them (Dillard, 2016). Some felt, though, that the veteran teachers with whom they began working lacked knowledge and understanding of the purposes behind PLCs, which negated the benefits of the new teachers’ prior experience.

Preservice teachers showed improvement in their perceptions of several indicators in another study (Hoaglund, Birkenfeld, & Box, 2014), which placed a faculty mentor with each ongoing PLC. After participating in PLCs, preservice teachers were more willing to admit mistakes, share issues, support decisions, organize, volunteer, and lead: “Teachers benefit from interacting with colleagues to review assessment data, engage in professional learning, and share in planning curriculum. These activities can have a profound effect on teacher effectiveness as well as student achievement” (Hoaglund, et al., 2014, p. 524).

As teaching moves away from its history as an isolated profession toward one that centers around collegiality, collaboration skills are becoming more critical for educators (DuFour &

Marzano, 2004; Feger & Arruda, 2008), so it seems wise to foster them during teacher education programs: “A positive experience with a PLC as an undergraduate will lead these future teachers to be proactive in developing schools that provide ample opportunities for professional collaboration” (Kagle, 2014, p. 24).

Foundational theorists like Calkins (2003), Graves (1994), and Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) emphasize conferencing with young writers as a key component of elementary writing instruction. Through conferencing, teachers can tune into the individual needs of their students: “In a conference, there is a natural flow that begins with understanding and moves toward teaching a particular skill, technique or strategy” (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001, p. 52). In suggesting broad revisions to one student and addressing minor editing concerns with another, teachers can differentiate instruction and provide each child what he or she needs for growth in writing. Stillman, Anderson, and Struthers (2014) point out that dialogue journals can serve some of the same purposes as in-person conferencing because they “offer opportunities for teachers to forge relationships with students as communication partners and...to model and otherwise support their acquisition of traditional skills” (p. 148).

Tomlinson (2001) explains that a teacher who practices differentiation “proactively plans and carries out various approaches to content, process, and product in response to student differences in readiness, interest, and learning needs” (p. 7). As differentiation is essential for maximizing student learning (Tomlinson, 2001), teacher educators need to provide opportunities for preservice teachers to practically apply differentiation strategies throughout their coursework. In writing instruction, differentiation occurs most readily through individual conferencing. Using online dialogue journals, this study provided a means for preservice teachers to simulate the experience of one-on-one conferencing while receiving peer support.

Method

I used a qualitative research design to study the attitudes and perceptions of 22 preservice teachers who engaged in PLCs with the purpose of learning to differentiate writing instruction alongside a small group of peers. I aimed to explore the following research questions: (1) How does participating in PLCs influence preservice teachers' readiness to teach writing? (2) How does participating in PLCs influence preservice teachers' readiness to differentiate instruction?

Setting and Participants

The study took place in a southeastern state in the United States. The preservice teachers were enrolled as graduate students beginning a 12-month teacher education program at a large land-grant university. Twenty-one of the preservice teachers were white females and one of the preservice teachers was a black male. Pseudonyms were used for all participants to maintain confidentiality.

The preservice teachers were enrolled in a mandatory summer course which focused on writing instruction at the elementary level. As part of the coursework, the preservice teachers read the novel *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis. They used an Internet platform to engage in discussion about the text via a dialogue journal with rising fifth- and sixth-grade students who were reading the same book using the same prescribed reading schedule.

The rising fifth-grade students attended a summer enrichment program drawing from three public elementary schools within the same district located about 45 minutes from the university. The rising sixth-grade students attended a gifted program at a different school within the same district, but they were not participants in the summer enrichment program. Initially, the preservice teachers met both groups of students at the summer enrichment site and were assigned

partners. From there, the fifth- and sixth-grade students initiated weekly dialogue journal entries to which the preservice teachers responded. All parties were given discussion questions, though the fifth-grade students tended not to refer to them in their posts. Because the sixth-grade students used the discussion questions and the fifth-grade students did not, there was an even greater disparity between the quality of writing samples between the two different groups than could be explained by the difference in age or the fact that the sixth-grade students were identified as gifted. However, this was not problematic for this study because its goal was to elicit preservice teachers' discussion about student writing, no matter the quality.

I co-taught one of two sections of the summer writing course during which preservice teachers both studied and participated in the writing process, practiced analyzing student dialogue journal samples within PLCs, and learned how to use ongoing assessments to meet the needs of individual learners. As such, I was a participant observer with the advantage of being an insider within the university classroom.

In four PLC meetings, groups of three to four preservice teachers discussed student writing samples from the dialogue journal exchange using the following protocol questions as a guide:

- *What are the student's strengths?*
- *What things has the student not yet mastered?*
- *What suggestions might you make for this student to help improve his or her writing?*

On four alternate days, preservice teachers brought in self-selected academic articles centered on writing instruction and presented them to their PLCs for discussion, and on two occasions, preservice teachers centered their discussion on articles I had selected.

Data Collection

The preservice teachers wrote reflective papers immediately after participating in this project in response to the following questions. (Question 3, it should be noted, refers to the preservice teachers' interest in teaching in "urban" schools. The term *urban* was chosen because the school district the fifth- and sixth-grade students attended refers to itself as a "model for urban public education" in promotional literature. Question 3 was asked as part of a different study which aimed to study the influence of participating in online dialogue journals with urban students on preservice teachers' interest in teaching in urban schools.)

1. Describe your experience with the dialogue journal partnership. What was your relationship with your partner like? Did you enjoy discussing the novel with your partner? How did it feel to participate in an ongoing conversation with students via a dialogue journal?
2. Describe what you learned about teaching writing through this process. What strategies, if any, did you learn that you can take with you into your future classroom? In particular, please consider the conversations about students' writing you had during PLC sessions.
3. Have your feelings changed regarding the possibility of teaching in an urban school? Do you feel more or less inclined to teach in an urban setting after participating in the dialogue journal project? Please discuss any parts of the project that helped you feel more prepared to teach in an urban setting.
4. Please share any suggestions you have about improving this project in the future.

Data Analysis

Preservice teachers' reflections were analyzed using thematic analysis with open coding (Maxwell, 2005) in the following manner.

- First, I read through the reflections twice and identified four preliminary codes reflecting the general areas around which the preservice teachers' thoughts revolved:

differentiation, collaboration, writing instruction, and online peer discussion (see Table 1).

Table 1

Preliminary Codes

| Code | Criteria used to assign the code |
|------------------------|---|
| Differentiation | Comments related to the preservice teachers' recognition of the need to teach students differently according to demonstrated writing skills |
| Collaboration | Comments referencing PLC discussions |
| Writing Instruction | General statements regarding the teaching of writing |
| Online Peer Discussion | Preservice teachers whose elementary partners stopped attending the summer program conversed about the text in an online discussion group; comments related to these conversations were coded "Online Peer Discussion." |

- Then, I compiled all the reflections onto one document (Document 1). Because the focus of this study was PLC participation, I excised all the students' responses to Question 2 (which pertained specifically to PLC participation) and pasted them into a new document (Document 2).
- Next, I sifted Document 1 for any mentions of *differentiation, collaboration, writing instruction, and online peer discussion* in students' responses to Questions 1, 3, and 4. Sentences with these ideas mentioned were then cut and pasted into Document 2.
- I color-coded the comments on Document 2 according to the four preliminary codes and then separated the text so that the comments pertaining to each code were grouped together.
- Next, I printed and re-read Document 2 and wrote memos in the margins.
- Then, I typed these memos into a new document. Each time a new memo was added, I scanned the document to see whether it seemed to reflect an idea which was similar to

that of any previous memo. If the memo seemed similar to a previous memo, I typed it directly underneath. If the memo did not seem similar to any previous memo, I typed it at the bottom of the document.

- The situated memos helped me to identify three themes and 13 subcodes (see Table 2), which I then applied to the entire document.

Table 2

Themes and Subcodes

| Theme | Subcode | Description of Subcode |
|---|----------|--|
| Perceptions of PLCs | PD | Peer Discussions |
| | PST L-P | Preservice Teacher Learning: Preparedness |
| | PST L-SW | Preservice Teacher Learning: Opportunity to View Student Writing |
| Impressions of Student Writing | ISS | Impressions of Student Skills |
| | IST-I | Impressions of Student Tone: Informal |
| | IST-F | Impressions of Student Tone: Formal |
| | IST-R | Impressions of Student Tone: Lack of Respect |
| | IST-E | Impressions of Student Tone: Expectations Needed |
| Descriptions of Learning to Teach Writing | AWAT-F | Addressing Writing as Teachers: Areas of Focus |
| | AWAT-SW | Addressing Writing as Teachers: Strengths and Weaknesses |
| | AWAT-FB | Addressing Writing as Teachers: Feedback |
| | GI | General Ideas for Teaching Writing |
| | OPD | Online Peer Discussion |

I offer the following excerpt from Melissa’s composition below to demonstrate the way the codes were applied to the preservice teachers’ reflections:

“The PLC groups gave me greater confidence in setting goals for individual students, for many of them seemed far behind where they should be in terms of their writing skills.”

I assigned three codes to this excerpt. First, I assigned PST L-P (Preservice Teacher Learning: Preparedness) because Melissa’s description of having gained “greater confidence” after participating in the PLC shows that she feels more prepared to teach writing. Second, I assigned AWAT-F (Addressing Writing as Teachers: Areas of Focus) because Melissa discusses “setting goals for individual students.” In other words, she is helping determine areas of focus for writing instruction. Third, I assigned ISS (Impressions of Student Skills) to the second part of Melissa’s sentence because she mentions that many students’ writing skills “seemed far behind where they should be,” which indicates her impression of students’ skills as lacking.

Findings

In the following section, I describe how preservice teachers’ reflections about participating in PLCs illuminate their new understandings of collaboration among professionals, their increased ability to analyze students’ writing to determine instructional focal points, and their awareness of the critical importance of differentiating writing instruction for each individual student. First, I describe the preservice teachers’ perceptions of PLCs. Second, I examine the preservice teachers’ impressions of student writing. Third, I discuss the preservice teachers’ descriptions of learning to teach writing.

Preservice teachers’ perceptions of PLCs

In their reflections, preservice teachers wrote only about the benefits they experienced from working within PLCs; they did not express any drawbacks. For example, they described the opportunity to examine student writing beyond that of their own personal journaling partner

as interesting, enjoyable, and “a learning experience.” Tammy wrote, “It was fun and exciting to read the students’ responses because it demonstrated where they were developmentally in their writing, but it also showed their personality.” The PLCs provided time and space for the preservice teachers to interact with multiple students’ writing, and they expressed appreciation for the exposure to additional students’ work. Clearly, including the PLC component broadened the impact of the dialogue journaling project on preservice teachers’ learning. In fact, one preservice teacher, Molly, wrote that “the discussions in our PLC groups proved more beneficial than my interactions with my blogging partner,” showing that extending the examination of student writing to peers helped the preservice teachers understand students’ skills and abilities much better than if they were to have simply worked one-on-one with a student. Several preservice teachers also expressed that participating in PLCs helped assure them that their analyses of students’ writing were “correct,” and it gave them greater confidence in providing formative feedback to students, setting learning goals for students, and creating activities to support students’ growth as writers.

Preservice teachers’ impressions of student writing

The preservice teachers wrote quite a bit about their impressions of student writing, both in terms of skill and tone. Nearly all the preservice teachers commented on what they perceived as a vast difference in writing ability among the students whose samples they reviewed within the PLCs. For example, Ashlee wrote, “You could definitely see the differences in students’ writing abilities. I can really see how teachers can struggle with catering to different students’ learning levels.” On the whole, the preservice teachers noted that many students seemed far behind where they “should” be in terms of their writing skills, and some found this discouraging. Diana wrote that failing to address problems with writing mechanics like forming complete

sentences and using correct punctuation “only leaves room for the children to fall through the cracks more and more, year after year.” Many preservice teachers indicated that the parallel exposure to both the summer school students’ writing and the writing of students identified as gifted was very eye-opening to them as future teachers. Maria expressed a common sentiment in writing that “the summer school group had a tremendous amount of room to grow in comparison with the gifted group.”

In terms of tone, the preservice teachers expressed surprise and dismay at the informality used by some students in their posts, citing the use of slang and abbreviations in many of the writing samples. Several preservice teachers felt that students seemed to have written quickly, in the same manner in which they would talk, and guessed that the students likely did not go back and re-read their posts before submitting them online. Some preservice teachers thought that the format of the online exchange led to the informality of the students’ writing, and many concluded that expectations for the online writing needed to be established more clearly. Hayley wrote that when students do not meet expectations, “That is not necessarily their fault. They need clear and well-communicated guidelines about the quality and content of their writing and...an understanding of the formality that an educational setting requires.”

Preservice teachers’ descriptions of learning to teach writing

Throughout their written reflections, the preservice teachers described what they had learned about teaching writing through participating in the PLCs. Foremost, they explained that their discussions with peers helped them learn to determine areas of focus for each individual child’s writing instruction. Lauren wrote that initially, “It was hard to pinpoint where instruction should start because there was so much to work on.” Other preservice teachers reflected that their discussions within the PLC groups helped them realize which parts of writing they

considered most fundamental, and that it was essential to target one area at a time so as not to overwhelm the student. Lindsey noted, however, that teachers must “devote the time needed to improve (the skill), and not just assume that since you told them, it will change the next time.”

Also mentioned frequently was the preservice teachers’ growing comfort level with the idea of providing constructive feedback to students. Jennifer wrote that she “learned how to guide students to different ways of thinking through asking questions.” Some preservice teachers wrote about learning to identify common mistakes among students, then creating plans for addressing certain needs with the whole class.

In some reflections, the preservice teachers discussed general ideas they had learned about composition instruction through participating in the PLC groups. For instance, one preservice teacher mentioned wanting to try peer editing in her future classroom after learning about the idea during a PLC meeting. Another preservice teacher discussed expanding her idea of using mentor texts in writing instruction, and another mentioned creating a project where she would match classmates together to engage in continuous dialogue about a book. After some of the fifth-grade students stopped attending the summer program, several preservice teachers were placed in a separate dialogue journaling group where they conversed online about *Bud, Not Buddy* and how they might teach this novel in their future classrooms. In their reflections, these preservice teachers all expressed benefitting from these exchanges, which served as online PLC extensions. Stephanie described that “throughout our ongoing conversations, we were able to make predictions, brainstorm possible extension activities from each section of the book, and provide feedback to one another.” Time and again, the preservice teachers described ways in which communicating with their peers enhanced their understanding of writing instruction.

Discussion

With this project, the first question I aimed to explore was: *How does participating in Professional Learning Communities influence preservice teachers' readiness to teach writing?* The data showed that preservice teachers felt more prepared to teach writing after participating in PLCs during their summer course. Preservice teachers wrote about an increased sense of how to “tackle” students’ difficulties in writing, and they perceived benefits from discussions which centered on analyzing writing samples from their elementary partners. Like many of her peers, Kristina expressed a newfound awareness of the need to build upon students’ strengths and provide positive comments before working to improve skills which they have not yet mastered. She wrote, “One of the big takeaways I have from this project is how important it is to see growth over time in a student’s writing. Even just through the few exchanges I had with Jayden, I was able to see him improve and learn new writing techniques.” Kristina’s reflection demonstrates how she is learning to approach students’ writing from an affirming stance; her understanding of the need to build on students’ strengths will make her a much better writing teacher in the long run.

Throughout the project, I noticed that the journaling exchanges between Amelia and her sixth-grade partner Lilly were among the most interesting and engaging. Lilly used a lot of voice in her writing. She wrote passionately about events that took place in the novel, expressing dismay, suspense, relief, and jubilation in turns as she experienced the text. I found Lilly to be an extremely talented young writer, though her passion sometimes led her away from traditional writing conventions. I was surprised to read Amelia’s remarks about Lilly’s writing: “While her content was good, her actual writing was not.” She went on to describe the informal tone of Lilly’s writing and how it might be improved if she were given a more structured writing task in

which she understood that “her best writing is expected.” Amelia’s comments demonstrated a need to delve more deeply into what constitutes “good” elementary school writing with the preservice teachers. It seems that more discussion is needed to come to a common understanding of what good writing looks like and what our goals for writing instruction should be; perhaps PLCs could be a vehicle for those conversations.

By comparison, Rebekah revealed a great depth of understanding of the nuances involved in assessing students’ writing. She wrote:

“As my classmates looked over one of Ellie’s posts and offered potential teaching points, I found myself defending Ellie—I had seen more of her writing so I had a better idea of the things she could do. The best example was (when) Ellie was worried about Bud and Deza kissing, so she typed fervently in what became one long run-on sentence. Many of my classmates pointed out that Ellie might need instruction to not compose run-on sentences, while I knew from her other work that she had this skill already developed.”

Clearly, Rebekah’s realization that she disagreed with her classmates’ evaluation of Ellie’s writing helped crystallize her thoughts about the ways teachers can use and misuse assessment. This new understanding would likely not have come about if Rebekah had not been given the opportunity to discuss Ellie’s writing within the PLC. Perhaps in continued conversation among PLC members, Rebekah could help her peers come to some of the same conclusions about viewing students’ writing holistically.

The second research question was: *How does participating in Professional Learning Communities influence preservice teachers’ readiness to differentiate instruction?* In their reflections, the preservice teachers revealed an increased awareness of the great disparity in writing ability displayed by students within the same school district. Collectively reviewing

student samples in PLC groups helped bring about this realization and an understanding of the need to differentiate writing instruction. Elizabeth, who was paired with one of the students identified as gifted, noted that:

“While Hope was advanced and wrote like a professional, I saw excerpts from some of the other partners that I found very surprising. I was amazed to see just how much variation there was in skill levels across the project participants, and I think that the exposure to this project will help me remember to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.”

Further, the discussions within the PLCs supplied the preservice teachers with ideas for how to approach writing instruction for students of different skill levels. Preservice teachers referenced their intentions to hold individual writing conferences with students to provide feedback and help determine areas of focus, which is a key way in which elementary writing teachers differentiate instruction (Calkins, 2003; Graves, 1994; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). Samantha wrote, “After identifying struggling areas for the student, I now know that I can create writing activities solely for that student which target these challenges and aid in strengthening these areas.” Melissa, too, noted improvement in her ability to use differentiation strategies: “These conversations allowed me to step back and address the student work at a closer level, and I feel this gave me experience for my future career as a teacher in terms of practicing differentiated instruction for the students.” Though the preservice teachers did not necessarily discuss having learned practical differentiation strategies in their reflections, they did describe a growing awareness of the need to approach each child’s writing instruction differently as a result of collectively analyzing student writing samples within their PLCs.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Had this study been conducted during a full-length semester course rather than a summer condensed version, preservice teachers may have developed deeper relationships within their PLCs, resulting in more meaningful pedagogical discourse with an even greater effect on their ability to teach writing. One recommendation for future research is to replicate this study over a full semester during the school year. An additional recommendation is for the preservice teachers to actually provide feedback specific to writing skills to the students with whom they were partnered rather than only discussing their ideas for potential feedback with their peers. Preservice teachers could reflect on the influence of their teaching upon students' writing and collaborate with peers to plan ongoing instruction. In future research, additional data collection in the form of field notes taken at PLC meetings or preservice teacher interviews could help provide a more nuanced interpretation of the effects of the PLCs on preservice teachers' ability to differentiate writing instruction.

Conclusion

Engaging in pedagogical discourse with other future teachers within Professional Learning Communities has the potential to positively influence preservice teachers' sense of self-efficacy as composition instructors. Analyzing multiple student writing samples collaboratively with the use of a discussion protocol may help give preservice teachers confidence in their ability to recognize areas of focus for their students as writers. Discussing pedagogical practices and potential interventions with peers may help build and enhance the preservice teachers' beginning repertoires of writing instruction strategies. The support preservice teachers could receive within functional PLCs could prove valuable for them as they continue with their teacher education programs and prepare to enter classrooms as licensed teachers.

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