

The Writing Experiences and Beliefs of Secondary Teacher Candidates

By Peggy Daisey

Writing affords students an opportunity to clarify their thinking. Through the process of writing, students recognize what they know and what they still need to learn. Graves has observed that “writing makes sense of things for oneself, and then for others” (cited in Bright, 1995, p. 36). Writing promotes intellectual growth as students connect their prior knowledge with new information and refine their concepts (Kresst & Carle, 1999). It enhances understanding and retention (Clark, 2007; Gere, 1985; Langer & Applebee, 1978). “Writing’s greatest gift is the ability to help us learn” (Moore, 1994, p. 290).

Moreover, writing offers empowerment. According to John Updike, “The humblest and quietest of weapons [is] a pencil” (cited in Rountree, 2002, p. 46). Writing affords dignity (Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002). Greenberg and Rath (1985) believe that writing “enables the writer, perhaps for the first time, to sense the power of...language to affect another” (p. 12). Teachers need to provide positive

writing experiences that promote student enjoyment, as well as help students to express themselves with clarity and power (Elbow, 2000).

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Despite the importance of writing in instruction to clarify thought (O’Conner, 1999) and to empower (Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002), writing instruction continues to be overlooked in this country’s 1300 schools of education. A course in writing instruction is not a specific requirement in most state teacher

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certification programs (National Writing Project and Nagin, 2003). A report from the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003) recommends enhancing the emphasis on writing instruction across the curriculum.

Teachers are the most important condition in the classroom environment and need to begin with their own literacy (Graves, 1990). This is because teachers pass on their attitudes about writing to their students. Teachers who do not like to write, ask their students to write less than teachers with positive attitudes toward writing (Claypool, 1980), tend to avoid conferencing with students about writing (Bizarro & Toler, 1986), and avoid conversations with students about their own writing experiences (Lane, 1993). "When we model our struggles along aside [students], we wipe out the disempowering notion of perfection that teachers often unwittingly model, and we expose our uniqueness, our vulnerability, and most important of all, our humanity" (Lane, 1993, p. 145). It is essential for teachers to be writers so that they can share their writing experiences and explain why writing is worth the anxiety and work it entails (Augsburger, 1998). Yet, Ada and Campoy (2004) found that too many teachers with whom they worked feared writing. Daly, Vangelisti, and Witte (1988) found that mathematics and science teachers had higher writing apprehension than teachers in other subject areas. In contrast, Rasberry (2001) observed that some of his secondary teacher candidates enjoyed writing, others were reticent and even fearful of it while others were ambivalent. He learned that he could not assume either before or after his course that teacher candidates' enthusiasm for writing could be predicted by their content area.

The ability of a teacher to include writing-to-learn activities in a classroom with efficacy and success depends on the teacher's beliefs and attitudes about writing and his or her capacity to develop instructional activities (Brinkley, 1993; Kamman, 1990; Pajares, 2002). Ultimately, writing will be viewed as unreasonable and time consuming if its purpose is not clear, the subject area content is not the focus, and the social support is perceived as inadequate (Chinn & Hilgers, 2000). This combination of factors prompts the belief among teacher candidates that education courses are impractical, and do not prepare them for the real classroom (Kagan, 1992).

From a sociocognitive stance (Vygotsky, 1978) learning is affected by values, attitudes, and experiences. Teacher candidates have been subject to a lifetime of writing experiences by the time they enter teacher education courses (Pajares, 1992). "Teachers don't just appear out of thin air. They are products-as well as active agents-of the worlds from which they came" (Greenleaf, Jimenez, & Roller, 2002, p. 487). Teacher educators have asked teacher candidates to write autobiographies about their past writing experiences so that they may confront their prior assumptions about writing, in order to accept new instructional writing ideas into their belief systems that they might have dismissed or not had the efficacy to try (Norman & Spencer, 2005; Roe & Vukelich, 1998). Through the use of literacy histories teacher candidates' past negative writing instruction may be questioned and criticized (Copeland & Grout, 2001). Lortie (1975) thinks that "unless teach-

ers-to-be are aware of their preconceptions and internalizations, the varieties of instructional methods they study may be wasted” (p. 231).

Researchers have considered elementary inservice and teacher candidates’ writing histories for insights to base their literacy course pedagogy (Coia & Taylor, 2002; Norman & Spencer, 2005). The promise of writing in secondary instruction will not be realized without teachers who enjoy writing and understand its potential. Given the large number of secondary teacher candidates, it is essential that teacher educators identify course pedagogy that will best lead to improved attitudes toward writing. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe secondary teacher candidates’ past writing experiences, present attitudes and beliefs about writing, changes in attitudes and beliefs about writing during a required content area literacy course, as well as their predicted use of writing in future instruction. The following research questions were examined: (1) What were the past writing experiences of secondary teacher candidates who reported enjoying writing throughout their lives versus those teacher candidates who reported not enjoying writing? (2) What were the current attitudes and beliefs about writing of these two groups of teacher candidates? (3) How did these two groups of teacher candidates change their attitudes and beliefs during a required secondary content area literacy course? (4) What predictions do secondary teacher candidates in both these groups make about integrating writing into future instruction after completing a required content area literacy course?

Method

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the design of this quasi-experimental study, which took place at a midwest university that educates many teacher candidates.

Participants

Secondary teacher candidates ($N=124$), who were enrolled in a secondary content area literacy course participated in this study. This is a required course for initial state certification for all secondary teacher candidates. It is one of the last courses taken before student teaching. Teacher candidates complete their major and minor course work in other colleges within the university. They apply to the college of education for certification courses in their junior year. Although this was an undergraduate course, about a third (33.9%) of the teacher candidates had a bachelor’s degree. All teacher candidate participants passed a basic skills test in reading, writing, and mathematics in order to gain acceptance into the college of education. There were 57 males and 67 females. There were eight African-American and 116 Caucasian teacher candidates. These teacher candidates had a wide variety of majors including: English (23), social studies (14), physical education (12), business (12), mathematics (10), history (7), biology (5), art (5), general science (5), psychology (3), instrumental music (3), earth science (3), marketing (3),

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communications (3), physics (3), political science (2), chemistry (2), technology (2), German (1), culinary arts (1), French (1), and vocal music (1). Four teacher candidates were preparing to be special education teachers of emotionally-impaired students.

During the course, teacher candidates were encouraged to expand, rethink, experience, value, and ultimately model writing in their subject area. During the semester, teacher candidates wrote journal entries, analogies (Daisey, 1993), biopoems (Daisey, 1996-1997; 1997; Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002), cinquains (Anders & Lloyd, 1989), found poems (Dunning & Stafford, 1992), concrete poems (Janeczko, 2001), and a “how-to” book that described how to do something in their subject (Daisey, 2000, 2003, 2008). Specifically, “how-to” books contained at least 500 words written over 20 pages including graphics, a back cover photograph of the teacher candidate author with autobiographical information. Prewriting activities included looking at lists of “how-to” book titles, examples from former teacher candidates, and “how-to” books at bookstores (Daisey, 1995), as well as practicing writing directions. They submitted a rough draft (with a content area benchmark), revisions, their cover, biography, and resource page early. The class peer reviewed. Teacher candidates were asked to talk to their classmates throughout the semester about their “how-to” book authoring progress. When the “how-to” books were due, teacher candidates chatted with their classmate authors while looking at their “how-to” books. Evidence from past studies suggested that writing “how-to” books reduced writing apprehension while promoting ownership of secondary teacher candidates (Daisey 2003, 2008).

Data Source and Analysis

I asked teacher candidates to complete pre, mid, post, and follow-up (open-ended and Likert-scale) surveys about their writing attitudes and beliefs. The follow-up survey probed answers from the post survey. In order to compare the responses of teacher candidates who enjoyed writing throughout their lives versus those that did not, I divided the teacher candidates into two groups. I asked teacher candidates on the first day survey to respond to the statement “throughout my life I have enjoyed writing” on a scale from 1-10 (1=strongly disagree; 10=strongly agree). I compared the 81 (65.32%) teacher candidates who rated their enjoyment of writing throughout their lives between 6-10 (“high writing enjoyment,” HWE) to the 43 (34.68%) teacher candidates who rated their enjoyment of writing throughout their lives between 1-5 (“low writing enjoyment,” LWE).

After typing the answers for each of the open-ended survey questions, I read and reread the open-ended survey questions. The first readings were an inductive analysis focusing on the content of the surveys. As I read through them, I looked for key words and similar ideas that were repeated in teacher candidates’ answers. I then rewrote the categories along with key words on a piece of paper and looked for themes using constant comparison analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I highlighted teacher candidate’s quotes that illustrated each category. Frequency counts were

made. I compared pre and post quantitative data by using Chi-square and ANOVA analysis.

Findings

The Past Writing Experiences of Teacher Candidates with HWE Differed Markedly from Those with LWE

Teacher candidates with HWE reported enjoying writing throughout their lives much more than those with LWE (See Table 1). They had positive writing experiences in middle school and high school including teachers who enjoyed writing and were a positive influence. They recalled teachers who encouraged them, promoted their writing ownership and provided good writing instruction. A teacher candidate with HWE wrote “I had more than one high school teacher that worked you but with enthusiasm and enough praise to propel you forward.” In contrast, more teacher candidates with LWE had no idea if their former teachers in their subject area enjoyed writing. Although both groups of teacher candidates cited professors as their most negative influence on them as a writer, their reasons differed. Teacher candidates with HWE complained that they were forced to write what the professor wanted to hear, while those with LWE thought they were too critical. Teacher candidates with HWE enjoyed all aspects of writing more than those with LWE.

Table 1

	Past Writing Experiences	
	HWE	LWE
Throughout my life I have enjoyed writing	8.01	3.85
High school and middle school teachers rated as most positive writing influences	22.22%	9.88%
College professors cited as most negative writing influences	23.46%	20.93%
“No one” cited as most negative writing influence	22.22%	11.63%
Former teachers who were perceived as enjoying writing themselves	29.63%	9.31%
“No idea” if former teachers in their subject area enjoyed writing themselves	23.46%	37.21%
Best writing experience was		
creative writing	43.21%	23.26%
relevant or personal writing	35.80%	20.93%
Unenjoyable aspects of past writing experiences		
lacking creativity of assignment	23.46%	4.65%
gathering information for writing and time writing required	11.11%	32.56%
analyzing and organizing writing	6.17%	16.28%
Suggested teachers and professors could reduce writing apprehension by		
providing positive feedback and instruction	35.80%	23.25%
offering choice of topic	8.64%	23.25%

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They enjoyed creative, relevant and personal writing. They suggested that teachers and professors could reduce students' writing apprehension by providing positive feedback and writing instruction. In contrast, teacher candidates with LWE reported disliking many aspects of writing including the time it took to gather, organize, and analyze information. They suggested that teachers and professors could reduce students' writing apprehension by offering topic choice.

Teacher Candidates with HWE Thought of Themselves as Writers More than Those with LWE

Teacher candidates with HWE thought of themselves as writers because of their frequency of writing, past comments from others, past grades on writing assignments, and reasons for writing (See Table 2). They thought they were "good at" writing and wrote a lot. Teacher candidates with HWE wished to be writers more than teacher candidates with LWE. They enjoyed creative writing. For example, a teacher candidate with HWE wrote, "I'm currently working on a science fiction novel about intergalactic warfare." They reported their wish to have more time to write.

Teacher candidates with HWE were surrounded by encouragement from their friends, family, and teachers. They believed in themselves as writers. For instance, a teacher candidate with HWE wrote, "I know that when I write, if it is coming from my heart and not just to finish something, it is evident in the product." They had learned to put their internal critic to work for them, rather than to be discouraged by it. A teacher candidate with HWE explained, "There is only one golden moment for writing, then it's gone. I write down everything I can, then analyze it later." Teacher candidates with HWE have found comfortable places and times of day to write. For example, one wrote, "If in the office, I straighten the keyboard area. At the pool, I set up my laptop, radio, and umbrella." Another teacher candidate with HWE wrote, "My favorite spot is perched on a stool looking out a high window in a downtown café, with a Mocha Cappuccino in front of me. With this combination my writing is pure genius." Teacher candidates with HWE have the television on or listen to music when they write. One wrote, "I listen to Bruce Springsteen music—one of my favorite lines is at the end of *Jungleland*, 'And man the poets down here don't write nothin' at all, they just stand back and let it all be.'" Teacher candidates with HWE wrote at night or when they had time. Almost all teacher candidates with HWE reported having shared their writing with friends and family members. They shared their personal writing with friends and relatives more often than teacher candidates with LWE. For instance, a teacher candidate with HWE wrote, "We recently threw a surprise party for my mother. I wrote a poem for her to celebrate the occasion and read it to her and 50 of our closest friends just because I love her!" Few teacher candidates ($N=124$) reported sharing their writing with a student (27.42%).

In contrast, teacher candidates with LWE were less likely to think of themselves as writers than those with HWE. Teacher candidates with LWE had less of a desire to be a writer than those with HWE. For example, a teacher candidate with LWE

Table 2

Current Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing

	HWE	LWE
Extent teacher candidates thought of themselves as writers		
pre semester	7.68	4.72
post semester	8.26	6.25
Reasons cited for rating the extent teacher candidates thought of themselves as writers (pre semester)		
frequency of writing	83.95%	58.14%
past comments from others about writing	69.13%	53.49%
past grades on writing assignments	66.67%	34.88%
reasons for writing	51.85%	37.21%
Reasons cited for rating the extent teacher candidates thought of themselves as writers (post semester)		
"I am good at writing"	28.39%	11.63%
"I write a lot"	22.22%	4.65%
What would it take for teacher candidates to feel more like a writer?		
more time	16.05%	6.98%
ownership, enjoyment, or interest	8.64%	20.93%
Encouragement for writing came from		
teacher candidates themselves	53.90%	34.88%
friends and family	25.92%	13.95%
teachers	20.99%	9.30%
grades and deadlines	2.47%	20.93%
no encouragement received	1.23%	9.30%
Extent teacher candidates wished to be a writer		
post semester	8.22	6.69
Methods teacher candidates used to deal with their internal writing critic		
"I write first, listen later"	25.92%	13.95%
"I listen and use it as instruction"	22.22%	6.97%
"I ignore it"	28.39%	37.21%
Writing habits of teacher candidates		
Listens to music or has TV on when writing	18.52%	9.39%
Writes at night	44.44%	27.91%
"I write when I have time"	14.81%	2.32%
Writes anywhere	16.05%	4.65%
Writes when they had to for school, usually at the last minute	38.27%	62.79%
Shared writing with friends and relatives (pre semester)	91.36%	81.39%
Shared personal writing	30.86%	18.60%
Shared writing with a middle or high school student	25.93%	30.23%

wrote, "Since the only time I write is for school, I just keep going by reminding myself that this is important to my future, so take care of it now." Teacher candidates with LWE thought that they would feel more like a writer if they had more ownership, enjoyment, and interest in their writing. They reported that their writing

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encouragement came from grades and deadlines. For example, one explained, "I write out of need. I don't write for fun. To call myself a 'runner' I would run because I want to, not because I'm being chased." Some of the teacher candidates with LWE said they received no encouragement for writing. One noted, "I have never had any encouragement from anyone. It is probably why I hate to write so much." Teacher candidates with LWE claimed to ignore their internal writing critic. Perhaps because of past negative school writing experiences, they put off writing until the last minute, when they had no time to listen to their internal critic. Yet, one teacher candidate with LWE rebelled against past critics and wrote, "I ignore the critic. I have missed too much in the past to let the critic steal anymore from me now."

Teacher Candidates Enhanced Their Writing Identity during a Content Area Literacy Course

All 124 teacher candidates rated the extent that they thought of themselves as writers at the beginning and end of the semester. The means were 6.56 and 7.48. This difference was statistically significant, $F=4.32$, $df=2$, $p<.05$. Teacher candidates increased their ownership of writing during the course. They were asked at the beginning and end of the semester to describe the type of writer or writing they envisioned when they rated themselves. The category of "school writer" decreased from 48.39% to 8.06%. This category decreased dramatically for teacher candidates with LWE (55.81% vs. 2.32%). When asked how writing a "how-to" book enhanced their identity as a writer, two teacher candidates with LWE noted, "This course has opened my eyes to different types of writing. I have gained a new way of looking at writing." "You showed me different way we can use writing in physical education." Teacher candidates with LWE, in comparison to those with HWE cited available resources and prewriting activities more often as helpful in writing their "how-to" book (See Table 3). Teacher candidates with HWE, in contrast to those with LWE

Table 3

Attitudes and Beliefs toward Writing in the Content Area Literacy Course

	HWE	LWE
Type of writer teacher candidates envisioned for themselves		
creative writer (pre semester)	32.10%	18.60%
creative writer (post semester)	34.57%	18.60%
school writer (pre semester)	44.44%	55.81%
school writer (post semester)	11.11%	2.32%
"I only write when I have to" (pre semester)	7.41%	27.91%
"I only write when I have to" (post semester)	17.38%	18.60%
Available resources cited as most helpful when writing the how-to" book	16.05%	30.23%
Pre-writing activity cited as helpful when writing the "how-to" book	5.87	7.02
Advised future teacher candidates to pick a familiar or interesting topic when writing a "how-to" book	29.63%	16.28%

realized the value of prior knowledge and topic interest to promote motivation to put time and energy into writing. One wrote, "It helped me to see that I could be a writer and it also gave me an idea for a book I may write someday."

Teacher Candidates Believed that Their Future Students Will Enjoy Writing Because They Will Offer Them Variety of Writing Forms, Ownership, and a Positive Writing Role Model

There was a statistically significant difference in the percent of all 124 teacher candidates who circled "strongly agree" or "agree" at the midpoint and end of the semester for the statement, "I think my future students will enjoy the writing in my class" ($F=6.92$, $df=2$, $p<.05$). Despite this increase, not every teacher candidate changed his or her mind about the value of writing. For example, one teacher candidate with LWE explained, "It's physical education, [students] don't want to write." More teacher candidates with LWE than those with HWE indicated that they would ask their future students to write in different forms than they were assigned (See Table 4). Perhaps this signals that teacher candidates with LWE believed that variety could promote positive writing experiences. When asked for their reasoning for considering a "how-to" book as a possible writing assignment for their future students, a teacher candidate with LWE explained that writing "how-to" books could promote learning, motivation and creativity, as well as break the pattern from when they were in school. A teacher candidate with LWE noted, "I learned something neat. Imagine, if I had a whole class do this, how much I would learn." Another teacher candidate with LWE wrote "I don't think I need to restrict student writing to just research and book reports." A teacher candidate with HWE explained, "I think students learn a lot by teaching others. This book is like the hard copy of that."

At the end of the course, teacher candidates predicted that they would include writing while attempting to decrease their future students' writing apprehension, by assigning short writings on relevant topics that were of interest, promote ownership and creativity, while focusing on standards. They also said they would provide feedback and a classroom library. A teacher candidate with HWE wrote, "Even though writing is not a normal part of my curriculum, I think my students will enjoy the value of learning something on their own and sharing it." Specifically, an art teacher candidate with LWE explained, "I have not seen writing done in the art classes I have visited, but I plan on incorporating writing into my curriculum."

At the end of the semester, almost all teacher candidates circled either "strongly agree" or "agree" in response to the statement, "it is my goal to be a positive writing role model for my future students." Teacher candidates were asked to rate how they thought other teachers in their subject area would rate writing role model as their goal. They then compared that rating to their own rating. More teacher candidates with LWE than those with HWE felt more strongly about being a positive writing role model than teachers in their subject area. When asked, why they rated other teachers in their subject area as they did, teacher candidates with LWE explained

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Table 4

	HWE	LWE
Will ask future students to write in different forms than they were assigned	59.26%	69.77%
"It is my goal to be a positive writing role model for my students": "strongly agree" or "agree" to the statement (post semester)	98.77%	98.77%
Agreed more strongly than they predicted for other teachers in their subject area that it is their goal to be a positive writing role model	54.32%	67.44%
Belief that school administrators expected teachers in their subject area to be writers	6.99	5.69
Advice to teacher candidates who do not like to write themselves: "practice writing," "do it for your students"	35.80%	44.19%

that other teachers did not think that being a writing role model was their job, or believed that writing was not applicable to their subject area. For example, a teacher candidate with LWE wrote, "Most P. E. teachers probably aren't too concerned with how their students view them as a writer." When asked to rate the expectations that school administrators have for teachers in their subject area to be writers, teacher candidates with HWE in contrast to those with LWE had a higher mean. Teacher candidates with HWE and LWE suggested that future teachers who did not like to write themselves, "practice writing" and "do it for your students."

Implications and Conclusions

It is important that teacher educators be aware of the wide difference of enjoyment levels for writing among teacher candidates. Constructivist theory posits that knowledge is constructed from experience through reflection (Merrill, 1992). Teacher candidates need to reflect upon their past writing experiences and compare the positive and negative aspects. In this way, they may consider why and how not to repeat negative writing experiences for their future students. Teacher candidates need to understand that high school teachers, just the people who they are preparing to be, play a crucial role as a positive or negative influence on students as writers.

Teacher candidates need an opportunity to think about how they would share their writing with students and have an opportunity to practice; so that their future students will have evidence that their teacher writes. It is valuable for teacher educators to measure teacher candidates' writing apprehension before and after a course (see Lenski & Pardieck, 1999) and to discuss the results (Daisey, 2008). Wachholz and Etheridge (1996) observed that persons with high writing apprehension relied on teachers for affirmation and thought that writing was an inborn aptitude instead of a practiced process. Reeves (1997) found that persons with high writing apprehension had common characteristics such as lower self-esteem. They

tended to choose courses and careers that they believed involved little writing, rarely wrote for themselves, and had few writing role models. Teacher candidates need to understand that if they are apprehensive about writing and have experienced negative writing experiences, that it is helpful to discuss these experiences with their students (Lane, 1993). This is because future students who are apprehensive may relate and be empowered to criticize similar past instructional practices.

The findings suggested that teacher candidates with LWE did not write for themselves. They were less likely to believe in or encourage themselves. Teacher candidates with LWE had little ownership in their writing. Perhaps they had no audience for their past writing other than a teacher and had little use or value for writing other than to please a teacher or pass a course. Teacher candidates with LWE reported that they had no encouragement to write. They avoided writing and usually wrote at the last minute to meet a deadline. Teacher candidates with LWE recommended teachers offer choice of topics to reduce writing apprehension, this suggested that they infrequently were offered choice themselves (see Calkins, 1994), or had concluded that what was important to them was not appropriate for school writing (Allen, 1995). Teacher candidates' comments suggest that it is vital to offer topic choice in order to promote ownership that will enhance motivation to put effort into writing (Atwell, 1987).

Teacher candidates need to encourage their students with negative past writing experiences to keep writing. Keyes (1995) encourages writers to continue to write despite their doubts. 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). Aspects of writing which are problematic such as how to gather, analyze and organize information, as well as manage writing time efficiently (Peterson, 2008) could be identified and discussed in teacher education courses. Teacher educators may intervene to make writing more meaningful, do-able and enjoyable. Goldberg (2002) suggests that one or two word daily intentions or goals for the next day, written at the top of rough drafts help to break down a writing task into manageable tasks. Davis (2004) recommends that when writers become discouraged that they consider dedicating their writing to someone or a cause. Clark (2006) recommends that writers surround themselves with support to keep them going, answer questions, edit, and help provide time to write. Reeves (2002) suggested that writers "hang out with other writers" (p. 4). Teacher educators may pair teacher candidates as writing buddies throughout a semester to provide encouragement and advice to each other. Teachers need to help their students examine their assumptions about writing and writers in order to help them imagine a new identity as a writer for themselves (Graham, 1999-2000). Teacher educators need to surround teacher candidates with LWE with nurturing writing environments. In this way, these teacher candidates may be walked through how to structure this sort of environment for their future students (Soven, 1996).

Teacher candidates with HWE noted more frequently that their encouragement

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for writing came from themselves. Murray (1982) points out that although students typically write for others, writers agree that they write for themselves. Atwell (1987) has observed that students are more likely to write well if they have ownership in their work. Ownership in writing promotes commitment and success (Koch, 1997). Student motivation is enhanced when they are allowed to write about what is important to them for an authentic audience (Calkins, 1994). Thus, teacher educators need to promote teacher candidate ownership and motivation to write by offering topic choice in writing assignments. Teacher candidates with HWE noted that they had a wide variety of pleasant writing places. Published writers recommend writing on porches or in backyards (Grant & Grant, 1999), by a window in a coffee shop (Fletcher, 2000), in laundromats and airports, or at bus stops (Goldberg, 1986). Teacher candidates with LWE might enhance their enjoyment for writing if they experimented with writing in places they enjoyed. Those with HWE also enjoyed creative forms of writing. Heard (1995) believes that, "some times writers need to break all the rules they were taught in school" (p. 126). Writing becomes accessible when respect, ownership, and relevancy, as well as rule-breaking are part of instruction (Romano, 2004). Nontraditional forms of writing promote less writing apprehension of females and minority students (Daisey, 2003, 2008; Hildebrand, 1998). According to Staw (2003), "hope often lies in taking a different route, or at least an unexpected turn...Interrupting our habitual series of behaviors and responses toward writing gives us a chance to open ourselves to new reactions and attitudes" (p. 30-31). Lunsford (1993) calls on educators to "create a new scene for writing, one that challenges divisions between disciplines, genres, and media" (p. 73). Teacher candidates need to be walked through nontraditional writing experiences that promote construction of knowledge and ownership; so that they in turn may walk their future students through them. Those with HWE wished that they had more time to write. Writing teachers suggest the use of small amounts of time during the day to write down notes, thoughts, or outlines (Peterson, 2008). This is an important topic that teacher educators could discuss with teacher candidates.

The findings suggested that the writing identity of teacher candidates with LWE could be enhanced through positive writing experiences in a content area literacy course. Prewriting activities and writing examples were important to demonstrate writing that was useful and to promote writing efficacy. Teacher candidates with LWE appreciated resources such as list of titles and examples of former teacher candidates' "how-to" books. Prewriting activities such as looking at published "how-to" books in bookstores (Daisey, 1995) and small group direction writing (see Daisey, 2003, 2008) were reported as helpful. Teacher educators need to affirm teacher candidates' choice of and expertise in a topic. This is because a student's prior knowledge enhances his or her confidence and identity as a writer (Williams, 2006).

The findings suggested that a positive writing experience could prompt teacher candidates with LWE to question whether the typical lack of writing in their subject area and lack of expectation by administrators that teachers in their subject area

be writers was helpful to students. Teacher educators need to discuss with teacher candidates what has been typical and expected in content area instruction in the past. Teacher candidates need to be encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and attitudes about writing, as they are walked through positive writing strategies. This process is likely to enhance the quality of their instructional practices. Teacher candidates also need to consider how to initiate change as new teachers and how to work with veteran teachers, who may not value writing as a teaching strategy. Despite the self-report limitations of writing histories, teacher educators may afford secondary teacher candidates valuable insights into their thinking and about writing and methods for its integration into their future instruction by reflecting upon (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993) their writing past and walking through a variety of forms of writing. This stance will influence their decisions about their future writing pedagogy and the conversations about writing that they have with their students.

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