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K-12 Writing Teachers' Careerspan Development: Participatory Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Writing

Writing teachers need opportunities to support their development of pedagogical content knowledge of writing (PCKW), positive self-efficacy, and practice as writers, all of which impact their students' writing development (Bazerman, 2019; Graham, 2019). PCKW includes a writing teachers' understanding of what discipline-specific content to teach (e.g., reciprocal writing process components, writer's craft, writing strategies, assessment options, literary devices) and how to teach writing (pedagogy) to support students' writing development (Higgs-Coulthard & DeFauw, 2022). Studies in PCKW show writing teachers need opportunities to bolster their understanding and application of content knowledge of writing coupled with PCKW within their teaching contexts (DeFauw, 2020; Graves, 1983; Houghton et al., 2006; Limbrick et al., 2010; Parr et al., 2007). Writing teachers develop PCKW within myriad learning communities to develop their self-efficacy and to understand writing as writers and as teachers, beginning with initial teacher preparation and extending throughout their careers.

Some preservice writing teachers complete a writing methods course and develop their teacher-writer identity through authentic teaching and writing opportunities, all of which support PCKW development (e.g., Jensen & Dean, 2022). However, only about one-fourth of U.S. preservice teachers have a required writing methods course (Myers et al., 2016), or they may lack opportunities to apply PCKW in authentic field experiences (DeFauw & Higgs-Coulthard, 2022; Myers et al., 2019). Internationally, writing teachers often feel underprepared as well (Assaf et al., 2016). Because of this widespread lack of preservice writing teacher education, teachers are often left to their own volition to obtain the necessary knowledge for effective teaching, but many teachers *do* figure out how to teach writing well, and we wondered what experiences they felt were instrumental in developing their self-efficacy as writing teachers.

Nationally and globally, existing scholarship indicates that inservice teachers often participate in summer writing communities to develop PCKW (e.g., Whitney, 2009), such as the one-week Summer Writing Institute for Teachers in Ireland (Farrell & MUA SWIFT, 2019), the New Zealand adaptation of the National Writing Project (NWP) Summer Institute (Locke et al., 2011), or the NWP's intensive Summer Institute (NWP, 2023); however, access to such writing communities may be limited (Baisden, 2003). Overall, global PKCW research tends to examine classroom instruction rather than teachers' PCKW development (Assaf et al., 2016; Finlayson & McCrudden, 2022; Gadd & Parr, 2017). Focusing on the whole person and their experiences are paramount to understanding an individual's development as writer and teacher of writing.

Using narrative inquiry creates space for teachers' cultural norms and values to be incorporated within their stories. This study addresses a gap in the literature regarding teachers' PCKW development by contributing insights from writing teachers' stories, within and beyond the classroom, across their careers, which describe how teachers and teacher educators might create similar paths of learning. Specifically, we answer critiques of artificial separation between PCK and a teacher's cultural norms and values (Deng 2018; Gudmundsdottir, 1990) by surfacing ways, beyond institutional practices, that a writing teacher becomes competent and confident in content and practice. To do so, we attend to teachers' stories, not stages, of critical experiences that propel new thinking about writing and writers.

The purpose of this study is to explore how 19 U.S., K–12, inservice writing teachers engaged with professional and personal experiences to develop their PCKW. We, four teacher educators (see Table 1), elicited narratives of teachers' experiences to understand how they learn(ed) to teach writing, what their early-career instruction included, and what additional experiences contributed to their PCKW development. Specifically, we investigated the following research question to understand how writing teacher educators may support writing teachers across their careers: What are the professional development (PD) experiences that foster inservice K–12 teachers' developmental trajectories of PCKW?

Table 1
Researchers' teaching background.

Researcher	Current Professional Position(s)	K–12 Educator Roles (# years)	Current Context (# years)
Sarah	Assistant Professor of Secondary English Education	MS (17)	University (3)
Jenn	Professor of Literacy, Former Chair	Elem (5)	University (17)
Danielle	Professor of Reading and Language Arts, Former Field Placement Director	Elem (8), Lit Coach (3)	University (11)
Joy	Associate Professor of Teacher Education, Former Dept. Head	Elem (7), MS (1), Assistant Principal (1)	University (11)

Note: For more on the authors' pedagogical writing identities, see Myers et al., 2023.

First, we provide an overview of two conceptual frameworks that informed our study: pedagogical content knowledge of writing (PCKW) and teacher career cycles and PD. Next, we share the methodology used to explore how PCKW is embodied in writing teachers' lives across their careerspans. Findings are discussed in relation to problems of practice that propelled writing teachers to iteratively develop PCKW, and implications are provided for future research on ways teacher educators can strategically support writing teachers' PCKW development across their careerspans.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Writing (PCKW)

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is a multifaceted set of understandings at the intersection of content and pedagogy that a teacher implements to adeptly and flexibly meet the needs of particular learners, in particular contexts, within a particular discipline (Shulman, 1987). Cochran et al. (1993) extended the concept of PCK to pedagogical content knowing (PCKg), as teachers construct PCK through experience, across contexts with myriad students. The use of the gerund verb *knowing*, instead of the *known*, aligns with our view of PCKW as ongoing and evolving across contexts and over time. The International Literacy Association (2018) defines PCK as follows:

The interaction of subject matter and effective teaching strategies to help students learn the subject matter. It requires a thorough understanding of the content to teach it in multiple ways, drawing on the cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge and experiences of the students. (p. 143)

Providing a detailed review of PCK, Deng (2018) emphasized teachers implement PCK through interpreting the content needed to teach the curriculum and support students' learning, capabilities, and dispositions.

In this study, we use the term *pedagogical content knowledge of writing* (PCKW) as a concept that combines each PCK component in a disciplinary-specific application that includes the specialized content knowledge of writing necessary for instructional design (e.g., genre knowledge, literary elements and devices, composition processes and strategies) and knowledge of effective writing pedagogies that are responsive to both individual students and writing development. Alluding to PCKW, but not naming it specifically, Graves (1983) described writing instruction "as the control of two crafts, teaching and writing" in which teachers understand writing through the lens of writer and educator (p. 5). Houghton et al. (2006) explicitly defined PCKW as "the special language of writing, the deep and layered meanings of that language, and, most importantly, how to enact that language in practice" (p. 12). Teachers' PCKW may be developed through flipped writing methods courses (DeFauw, 2020) and writing assessment

opportunities in which inservice teachers learn PCKW as they formatively evaluate student writing using rubrics (Limbrick et al., 2010; Parr et al., 2007).

Writing methods courses are one place that teachers may develop PCKW, as these courses often include writing experiences and teaching writing content (e.g., Jensen & Dean, 2022; Sieben, 2022) along with opportunities to transfer learning from preservice education to classroom contexts (DeFauw, 2020; Street & Stang, 2017). Sanders et al. (2020) recommended that writing teacher educators develop teachers' PCKW through curricular components such as critical literacy, formative feedback, genre study, modeling, mentor texts, and writing workshop. Writing instruction can include a wide range of approaches, but many global literacy leaders prefer process approaches accompanied by explicit strategy and skill instruction (Lacina, 2018). Because teacher preparation is linked to successful student performance (Darling-Hammond, 1999), it is ideal for preservice teachers to have opportunities to build PCKW; however, many teachers have to develop their PCKW while inservice.

Research indicates that inservice writing teachers develop PCKW as they grow their writer-teacher and/or teacher-writer identities within writing communities (Cremin & Baker, 2010; Cremin & Oliver, 2017). This identity development is fostered when teachers develop their abilities to teach writing and grow as writers, all of which transfer to their teaching contexts (Whitney, 2009). We wondered what other experiences are catalysts for developing teachers' PCKW across their careerspans.

Teacher Career Cycles and Professional Development

Because our focus is teachers' PCKW development across the career, it is important to understand the nature of teacher career cycles. Early models depicting teachers' careers show progress through several sequential or linear stages from beginner to expert (Katz, 1972). However, Huberman (1993) asserted that teachers' "professional career journeys are not adequately linear, predictable, or identical," indicating a more qualitative and nuanced representation is necessary (p. 195). Fessler and Christensen (1992) contended that teachers can experience stages of development multiple times, and Steffy et al.'s (2000) model of career cycles specifies that teachers can grow in a positive direction while remaining in the same stage. For example, according to Steffy et al. (2000), in the apprentice phase, teachers are often planning and delivering instruction on their own until they can synthesize PCK. Those who remain in apprenticeship might seek out mentor teachers to shadow or invite into their class to teach demonstration lessons, relying on apprenticeship scaffolding to foster growth.

In studying teachers' PD, their professional biography or story can illuminate critical career moments (Kelchtermans, 1993; Sikes et al., 1985). Kelchtermans (1993) stated, "The specific content of the critical incident, phase, or

person therefore can strongly differ among teachers and has to be understood from the entire career story” (p. 447). In addition, story has the power to reveal people’s “possible selves” and the in-transition conceptions of those identities as one’s goals are manifested (Markus & Wurf, 1987, p. 158). Narrativity can also aid in the process of understanding life experiences as Polkinghorne (1988) stated:

We are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how they will end; we are constantly having to revise the plot as new events are added to our lives. Self, then, is not a static thing nor a substance, but a configuring of personal events into a historical unity, which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be. (p. 150)

Inservice teachers constantly encounter events and people who influence their practice, and understanding these influences is critical to teacher education.

Two goals of tracing teachers’ career trajectories are to consider what events and experiences impact their professional lives and to determine the training and support needed within a certain phase (Katz, 1972). Sammons et al. (2007) considered teachers’ contextual, professional, and personal factors, finding job commitment was influenced by professional phases and teachers’ identities were mediated by work- and home-life contexts. Not all teachers enter the teaching profession as their first career, so personalizing the induction experience is crucial to support career changers’ competencies (Brantlinger, 2021; Wilkins, 2017). For comprehensive university-prepared and non-traditional path teachers, research suggests PD across a career occurs through reflection on classroom practices, which includes the critical incidents and people across time (Pratte & Rury, 1991). Studying contemporary teachers’ self-understanding in different career stages, Yağan et al. (2022) noted an increase in self-PD with teachers seeking support through social media to learn from experienced colleagues.

Professional development designed to support teacher growth and impact student learning requires embedded, ongoing, relevant, and teacher-driven training (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; 2017). Teachers’ attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions of what they are teaching is paramount to successful PD (Ball & Forzani, 2009). According to Dunst et al.’s (2015) metasynthesis of 15 research reviews encompassing 550 studies of more than 50,000 PD opportunities, effective inservice PD includes the following: trainers modeling and explaining content knowledge or practice, authentic learning opportunities, teacher reflection, feedback from coaches or mentors during training, and adequate post-PD support and training to impact student learning. For writing teachers, PD acquired through various trainings needs to align to context to support transfer of learning to impact writing instruction (Lillge, 2019). Additionally, PD provided through the National Writing Project has supported teachers’ PCKW development in understanding how

to implement the writing process approach (NWP, 2023), which is evidence-based (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Although previous studies indicate teachers' learning trajectories and cycles are often nonlinear (Huberman, 1993; Steffy et al., 2000), our study raises up teachers' own storied voices--from teachers who perceive themselves as strong writing pedagogues. These stories convey what supported, hindered, propelled, or shifted their PCKW development and their ongoing professional needs.

Method

We employed a “combined methodological approach” with grounded theory and narrative inquiry methods to understand writing teachers' PCKW development across their careerspan (Ruppel & Mey, 2015, p. 184). A narrative grounded theory methodology enabled us to use the strengths of each approach and mitigate their weaknesses (Lal et al., 2012). Both methodologies rely heavily on language data (e.g., interviews and writing) (Lal et al., 2012), and both move toward theorizing. Narrative inquiry provides a way to study experience that emphasizes the social dimensions of inquiry and involves examining concepts of continuity that consider how “experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 16). At any point on a learning or experiential continuum--past, present, or future--an individual has a base of past experiences that leads to an “experiential future” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 16). Similarly, constructivist grounded theory emphasizes the contextual nature of data while also aiming to develop a theory that can be tested for resonance and applicability in new contexts (Charmaz, 2006).

Participants

After obtaining research permission from our institutional review boards, we circulated a flier seeking nominations (including self-nominations) of “exemplary” (which we intentionally left undefined) K-12 writing teachers for our study. We shared the flier on listservs (i.e., English Language Arts Teacher Educators, Literacy Research Association, National Writing Project) and social media sites (i.e., Ethical ELA, Facebook, TeachWrite, Twitter). Nominators completed an online survey with details about nominees, including a rationale. Next, we invited the 41 teachers to participate in an individual interview. Nineteen consented to participate and met our criteria of currently teaching writing in a U.S. K-12 classroom; all agreed to allow us to use their names.

Table 2
Participant demographic data and critical experiences.

Name	Years taught	State	Grades taught	Pre-service writing methods course?	Critical Experiences	
					Inservice professional writing engagements	Personal-familial events
Andrea	15	CA	PreK-8	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in Teaching, Learning, & Leadership 	Moved states
Andy	17	MI	9	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in Educational Impairments & Learning Disorders • Michigan Writing Project • TeachWrite • Ethical ELA • education book publication • leadership, state organization 	Moved states
Ashley	4	OK	10	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in Teaching, Learning, & Educational Leadership • OK State Writing Project • AP Summer Institute (APSI) 	
Carol	33	PA	7-8	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in English • audited a teaching of writing course • Western Pennsylvania Writing Project • Principal mentor • student teachers • authors as mentors • teacher of the year 	Family death, personal illness, moving schools
Christy	8	OH	11	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in Curriculum & Instruction • Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts presenter 	Newsletter for family farm
Cynthia	8	VA	9, 10, 12	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post-graduate prof. license • Summer training • Poetry Through America through Harvard • Kittle & Gallagher PD • NCTE affiliate • authors as mentors 	Career change
David	29	FL	6-10,	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NBCT * 	Family

			11-12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NWP ** ● education book publication ● authors & colleagues as mentors 	disease, moved states
Donnetta	12	TX	1-3	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post-bachelor's teaching certificate ● Empowering Writers PD ● TeachWrite ● Ethical ELA 	Military spouse, moved states, career change
Emily	15	VA	9-12	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PD for Jane Schaffer model ● PD for <i>180 Days</i> (Kittle & Gallagher) ● AP lit social media ● AP conferences ● authors as mentors 	
Erica	9	AR	10-12	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's in English ● Little Rock Arkansas Writing Project ● TeachWrite ● Ethical ELA ● Advance Placement Mosaic ● authors as mentors 	Moved states
Hanna	9	OK	3-5	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's in literacy ● creative writing courses ● Poetic Justice leadership 	
Jennifer J.	25	MI	7-8	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peninsula Writing Workshop ● novel publication ● Ethical ELA ● authors and colleagues as mentors 	Grandmother death
Jennifer P.	15	AR	7-12	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's in Rhetoric & Composition ● Ph.D. ● APSI ● Arkansas Writing Project 	Moved states
Jennifer W.	25	OK	5-10, 12	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6+1 Analytical Traits Trainer ● NBCT scorer ● Academy of Reading trainer ● APSI; AP reader ● authors as mentors 	Moved states, 5 generations of teachers
Karen	13	OK	11	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's degree ● Poetic Justice instructor ● PD with Penny Kittle & Kelly Gallagher 	Moved due to husband'

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • author & colleagues as mentors 	s job
Kimberly	18	CT	2-6	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in Elementary Education • 12x12 Writing Club on Facebook • working on a creative book • author & colleagues as mentors 	
Krista	6	OK	10-12	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APSI • working on NBCT 	
Matt	13	MI	7-12	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in Education • Oregon Writing Project • education book publication 	Family illness, moved states
Stacey	35	CA	3-6	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in Education Administration • NBCT • UCLA History-Social Science Project • UCLA Writing Project • Cal State Dominguez Hills History Project • Ethical ELA • Writing group as mentors • author of poetry anthology 	Multiple family deaths

*NBCT: National Board Certified Teacher **NWP: National Writing Project

Consenting to participate in a study of “exemplary” writing teachers without anonymity implies a high degree of self-efficacy or confidence in one’s ability to teach writing (Hodges, 2015; Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Valiante, 2006; Zimmerman et al., 2014). Given many inservice teachers report feeling underprepared to teach writing (Cutler & Graham, 2008), and given studies indicate teachers of writers do not see themselves as writers (Beck, 2022; Tondreau & Johnston, 2023; Yagelski, 2012), we wanted to hear stories from teachers who self-identify or who are peer-recommended as knowledgeable writing teachers to understand how their practice evolved.

We did not collect extensive demographic data; however, the group included 15 females and 4 males who had taught from 4 to 36 years, across nine states, at the following levels: 12 high school, 3 middle school, and 4 elementary school teachers. The participants are further described in Table 2 and their representative composite narratives.

Table 3
Semi-structured narrative interview questions.

Narrative element	Invitation
Open-ended question inviting story	Tell me your biography as a writing teacher. How did you learn to teach writing and what kind of writing teacher have you been at different points in your career?
Exposition: Eliciting vignettes of relevant experiences including people and places	<p>What is the first experience you can recall where you learned how to teach writing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do you remember how that experience felt for you as a learner and as a teacher? ● Who were the people who helped you learn about teaching writing? ● Was there any part of that learning experience that you struggled with and/or found easy? ● How did you feel as a writing teacher at the end of that first experience?
Flashback	After you completed your initial teacher preparation program and started teaching, who were you as a novice writing teacher? Who or what encouraged/supported you in teaching writing? Who or what challenged you?
Zooming in	<p>As an early career teacher, what did (or does) your writing instruction look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What did a writing lesson or day involve in your class? ● What did a week of writing instruction typically involve?
Rising action: Eliciting critical experiences	Did your writing instruction change at any point? Why? What sparked that change? Did you participate in any advanced training or learning experiences in writing instruction, such as workshops, graduate studies, professional books or reading, social media conversations, etc.? Tell me the story of that learning experience.
Climax: Vignettes of success, understanding, realization	Was there a point at which you hit your stride as a writing teacher and felt especially confident in what you were doing?
Denouement: Self-identifying	Who are you now, as a writing teacher?
Next chapter: Imagining future selves	Tell us the biography of your future self as a writing teacher.

Data Collection and Analysis

To elicit writing teachers' experiences of PCKW development, we conducted semi-structured, 60- to 80-minute narrative interviews (see Table 3) as our primary data source for capturing their biography of initial teacher preparation, early years of teaching, and current writing practices. Each of us conducted a fourth of the interviews via Zoom software; asked follow-up questions to clarify meaning; elicited details related to critical actors, contexts, and implications of critical experiences; and gathered memories that emerged.

In the first phase of analysis, we transcribed and analyzed the interviews, first by the interviewer and then by a second researcher. Collaborating in Dedoose, we used open and axial line-by-line coding for each transcript and then conducted cross-case pattern and narrative analysis to inductively identify narrative elements and participant actions, until saturation was evident (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). For example, we open-coded for actions, trajectory factors, critical experiences, and anything that influenced participants' development as teachers broadly and writing teachers specifically, totaling 1,091 codes applied 2,924 times across 2,614 excerpts (see Table 4). We operationally defined *critical experiences* as any event, action, or encounter that the participants expressed as a point of change, an impetus, or a tension that shifted their understandings of writing or writing pedagogy.

During weekly collaborative analysis conversations, we wrote analytic memos using commonplaces of narrative--temporality, sociality, physicality, and continuity--to attend to the plot development of teachers' PCKW (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). We worked to maintain a sense of the narrative whole by memoing the narrative elements of teachers' experiences, keeping the connections among events, people, and places foregrounded in the analysis. Tension existed as we moved between micro and macro analysis to conduct both a thorough micro-analysis associated with grounded theory and the more holistic analysis of narrative inquiry.

One strategy we used to analyze patterns across participants was to create a data table of all 19 teachers' critical experiences. For example, we noted which teachers participated in a writing methods course as part of their teacher preparation program, who engaged in PD experiences such as conferences, and who published writing. Further, we noticed some life events prompted writing engagements; thus, we considered these as critical experiences contributing to PCKW and traced, when possible, what prompted such engagements. After seeing the cases side-by-side in this way, we began to group teachers with similar critical PCKW experiences. Four to six teachers with similar career experiences, events, contexts, timelines, tensions, agents of change, and narrative elements were grouped in a composite.

Table 4
Data coding.

Category (No. of coded passages)	Category definition with the first three to five prominent subcategories (No. of coded passages)
Trajectory (801)	Inservice teachers highlighted higher education opportunities (127), community connections (93), teaching assignments (83), and critical events (75) throughout their careers as impacting their careerspans.
Pedagogical Philosophy (436)	Inservice teachers emphasized teaching as teacher-writers (19) and motivation (47), making writing authentic (44) and giving students' choice (54).
Process Pedagogies (385)	Inservice teachers taught PCKW through modeling (61), mentor texts (35), and workshop approaches (36).
Reading/Writing Connection (321)	Inservice teachers emphasized reading and writing connections through genre (41), technology (43), and curriculum (79), especially noting curriculum they adjusted to meet students' needs (27).
Mentors (274)	Inservice teachers addressed mentors' influences on their careerspan, including published authors (87), colleagues (29), and social media connections (16). They also chose to mentor, especially as published authors (29) or as mentors of teacher candidates (22).
Assessment (235)	Inservice teachers emphasized experiences with pushing back (40) against standardized assessments (40), especially the five-paragraph essay (44), while focusing on effective feedback (97).
Professional Development (157)	Inservice teachers participated in professional development opportunities, such as National Writing Projects (58), other writing organizations (24) (e.g., Ethical ELA, NCTE, and TeachWrite), and social media (17).

Because we aimed to investigate how teachers came to and continue to become informed, confident writing teachers, we selected composite narratives to synthesize the data and our analysis. We did not see individuals as the unit of analysis; rather, we focused on critical events and actors (e.g., colleagues, mentors) to identify the forces at work in teachers' PCKW development trajectories. The procedures we used for creating these composites were drawn from Wertz et al. (2011), Willis (2019), and Johnston et al. (2021), and our own decision-making. Each of us individually drafted one third-person composite to story participants' shared critical experiences of participatory PCKW (defined in the section: Theoretical Modeling), such as connecting with writing mentors or engaging in transformative PD. We added quotations from interview transcripts representative of the teachers' shared narrative experiences or attributes. We took care not to

impose judgments into the narratives; rather, statements of feeling, value, or effect were those made by the participants. Each member of our team read and member checked each composite narrative against the raw data, and we collaboratively revised them to reflect shared interpretations.

Each teacher is represented in only one composite narrative: Alex, Melanie, Peyton, and Sam. All the details, including settings, actors, and events, in each composite, were taken directly from one or more of the represented teachers' interview data, including the direct quotes grounding the narratives. We include abbreviated composite narratives as part of our theory building and to contextualize our findings and theoretical model. See DeFauw et al. (2023, in press) and Sanders et al. (2023, in press), for full composite narratives and detailed methods for creating composites.

Composite narratives allowed us to present findings from the 19 stories while maintaining cohesiveness through teachers' shared narrative arcs. One affordance of composite narratives is that they "reflect the complex theoretical categories, properties, and dimensions of a grounded theory" and relationships among those components in a storied form (Johnston et al., 2021, p. 3). Composite narratives are a form of theory building that concisely capture multiple participant voices (Creese et al., 2021; Johnston et al., 2021; Porter & Byrd, 2023); therefore, they embody the blend of methodologies we employed. In addition, composites have a high potential for transferability "because stories are readily incorporated into readers' existing schema" (Johnston et al., 2021, p.15).

Because the composites highlight teachers' shared experiences, as interpreted by the researchers, member checking was an important step in our data analysis; thus, we asked the teachers to complete an open-ended reader-response activity. Eleven of the initial 19 teachers read the four composites, described which details of each composite resonated with or differed from their own story and why, and ranked the composites in order of personal relevance. We compared the teachers' self-ranking with our composite groupings and noted the people, places, personal attributes, and events that teachers felt were salient in their writing-teacher experiences, identities, and PCKW development. These processes of collaboratively writing and revising the composites and member checking them with participants help to counter potential researcher bias in these narrative findings.

The final phase of data analysis involved theoretical modeling (Charmaz, 2006). Theorizing involved conceptualizing the processes in which the teachers were engaged and the "relationships between experiences and events" into an interpretive frame representing their narrated experiences (Charmaz, 2006, p. 136). We identified critical experiences (see Table 2) across all 19 teachers' and put them in a narrative sequence to trace their collective PCKW development trajectories as detailed in the next section.

Composite Narratives

These composites embody our theory of writing teachers' PCKW development and serve as grounding for our theoretical model of writing teachers' careerspan development (Figure 1). One important note: Although each teacher is only represented in one composite, these experiences are not exclusive to one another. A teacher might resonate with multiple composites. In addition, the composites are not created or presented in any ranked or hierarchical manner.

Alex

Alex didn't necessarily plan to become a teacher, even though teaching runs in the family. She studied Communications and spent a few years in the business world until alternative certification options made the career change to teaching possible. However, the first few years were challenging. She stated, "It was so hard, and I didn't feel supported or even know what I was doing."

At first, she taught writing like her colleagues: "I now view it as pretty formulaic and not authentic. It was guided by prompts not created by me, were not created for my specific students." Later, Advanced Placement (AP) and school district training offered her "a framework and a language for actually talking about writing." Alex also began to follow educators on social media where she learned about peer feedback and student blogging. Taking notice of Alex's PD initiative, her principal invited her to become a district writing trainer.

In the subsequent years, Alex engaged in self-PD: "I'm self-taught. And I read everything. So, I bought every book that my budget would allow . . . Some of my mentors are actually from books . . . I just go find what I need." However, while some colleagues began to attend professional conferences, she just didn't have a lot of time for that given her growing family and side jobs. She occasionally taught at the local college, which offered new perspectives on how writers develop.

Last year, Alex proposed a PD book study for her English department to include more "authentic writing." She stated, "We are able to talk more about students' writing lives and see where they start out in the year and then where they end up."

After several years of teaching, Alex feels like she is just finding her stride. She recognizes the five-paragraph essay structure and Six Traits framework as tools but emphasizes the need to develop writers' identities and capacity to make writing choices in school and beyond: "We're trying to cultivate a life of writing here, we're trying to cultivate you as a writer and everyone can be a writer . . . as a daily practice that also includes conversation, that includes making mistakes, that includes making edits and changes and revisions. That you're not in trouble for having to make edits. That's part of the messy, beautiful process of writing."

Melanie

Melanie chose to major in English education in college because she enjoyed reading and writing. She has taught in the same school for nine years, recently assuming curriculum leadership. "I'm one of the only teachers who's still here from when I started," she says. "So, I have my hand in a little bit in every curriculum." She teaches AP Literature and 11th grade Language Arts and Literature.

In her teacher preparation program, Melanie had a barely memorable writing methods course, and most of her classes focused on literature analysis. Her student-teaching mentor and a colleague were her most influential writing teachers and helped Melanie work through pedagogical problems as they arose. She still uses many lessons she learned from these mentors.

Having little preparation in writing instruction led to early-career struggles. "I had to teach them [students] and go back and teach myself analytical writing. Because they would write the most vague analysis, and I knew when I read it that something was wrong, but I had to go back and teach myself, why is that wrong?" Not only did she have to reteach herself analytic and argumentative writing, but she also had to learn to teach students at varying skill levels.

The AP and British literature anthologies, novels, and curricula define her instructional scope and sequence. Most assignments reflect genres or skills on the AP exam and the kinds of literature-based analytic writing or argumentative writing that students are tested on, but she wants to include more creative nonfiction and fiction writing. Melanie doesn't usually write for personal enjoyment, but when students are given assignments, she writes to the prompts with them and models her thinking. She wants students to be familiar with the academic essay structure, which often takes a five-paragraph form. "When I first started teaching writing, I said I was never going to teach the five-paragraph essay, ever, and that lasted—not very long—because I realized that students needed that simple structure." Templates or essay outlines are mainstays of her writing instruction.

Significant moments of reflection have led to strategic instructional changes, including helping students become more independent writers. Melanie's instruction now includes more explicit teaching of writing devices. She gets excited about seeing students' writing breakthroughs, seeing them take ownership of their revisions, and watching them solve writing problems with peers. "What I love about asking them questions and offering them advice is that they will get to the point where they will offer up their own solutions. And... they just puzzle it out on their own."

Advanced, university, or NWP kinds of PD aren't accessible in her rural community, but National Board Certification is, and she is in the midst of that reflective process. She is also beginning process-focused PD, reading books like

Penny Kittle and Kelly Gallagher's *180 Days*, with colleagues and implementing process approaches such as conferencing. Melanie will keep teaching for the foreseeable future. She loves being in the classroom with students who make each day interesting.

Peyton

Peyton identifies with the teachers as writers, teacher-writer, and/or writer-teacher philosophy inherent in teacher writing groups (e.g., NWP, TeachWrite). She found writing communities supported her writer identity and lived experiences. Peyton stated, "The writing group that we write with on a weekly basis . . . that's probably been the most significant, for me as a writer, that's impacting how I instruct as a teacher, as a writing teacher."

Childhood writing experiences (e.g., school projects, writing festivals, contests) provided a strong foundation for her writer identity. Peyton has always enjoyed writing, aside from moments when a teacher, elementary through higher education, may not have given her the grades or feedback she felt she deserved.

As Peyton learned to be a teacher, she would have enjoyed a writing methods course in her teacher preparation program, but such learning opportunities were not available. Because of Peyton's love for writing, she felt confident teaching writing. She modeled her messy writing process to show students that the reciprocal writing process is hard work for everyone.

Peyton helped students write about topics that mattered to them within required genres. She loved conferencing with students and aimed to make writing authentic, ensuring the purpose and audience for students' writing expanded beyond the classroom. She encouraged students to submit writing to authentic publication opportunities. Supporting her students in seeking publication was rewarding, albeit the feedback process was challenging to balance.

In some seasons of life, Peyton focuses more on who she is as a writer, while in other seasons, especially when the grading load is daunting, she focuses on her teacher role. But when Peyton teaches, she models her writer identity, which informs how she teaches writing and impacts how her students view themselves as writers. She knows she teaches writing well because she knows what it means to live a writer's life, and she also wants to nourish her students' writing identities.

Peyton dreams of publishing her own work. She embraces her writer identity within genres of choice for the audiences she seeks to influence, even if the audience is only herself. For now, living a writer's life is rewarding, even if Peyton hasn't succeeded in publishing. Still, she blogs, journals, reflects, and writes, because not writing leaves a hole within the center of who she is, personally and professionally.

Sam

Sam has been teaching for quite a while. Growing up, Sam thought about being a writer because it provided sanity and an escape from the hardships of life but ended up pursuing teaching. Over the years, his confidence and voice have grown stronger. He shared, "I see retirement in four or five years...between now and then, I will continue to be uncompromising. I don't intend to ever lessen my expectations. I don't ever intend to compromise on what to expect from kids."

Although Sam felt like he didn't always fit in with colleagues, he stayed strong in his belief about teaching in a way that benefits students. The role of choice has always been key in Sam's teaching. He reflected, "The fact that we could write about whatever we wanted really ignited a sense of love of writing." He wants to develop students' love of writing, so they feel like he did about writing growing up.

About mid-career, a principal suggested Sam present the information from a PD he led at a state literacy conference. Sam loved talking to teachers about teaching almost as much as he loved teaching students. However, his colleagues didn't understand: why can't he just be happy doing what they were doing? He shared, "I think I've been true to my style of teaching to the best of my knowledge, but I think there's always that pressure early on to do what all the other teachers are doing."

Over the years, Sam has hosted numerous student teachers. His understanding and use of technology have grown exponentially from working with them. For example, he stated, "using Google Classroom ... has allowed such collaboration between student and teacher." Sam embeds various technology tools into instruction in authentic ways, allowing students to experience various school-based, and hopefully personal, purposes of writing.

Due to a long career, Sam is at the top of the pay scale and has no intention of leaving the district. Although he did not choose to earn another degree, he kept moving forward in professional growth. In addition, he never considered moving into higher education or becoming a principal, although many have described him as a natural leader. He recently began writing professionally: "About five years ago, I started writing myself, at first just for myself, but then, about writing pedagogy. And then, people started to read it slowly, but surely...that's been a lot of fun to do that now." This work has been well received and compels Sam to engage in continued inquiry. When attending conferences, he makes sure to connect with other teachers and met the co-author of the first book he is writing. Sam truly values the interdependence of both scholar and teacher identities.

Theoretical Modeling

Drawing on the composites and data corpus, we created a model of writing teachers' professional experiences and trajectories (Figure 1). This model is not hierarchical, nor is it strictly linear despite its narrative chronology. Instead, the experiences, actors, and events overlap and intersect in patterned but flexible ways. The teachers have learned from other teachers through programs, PD, texts, students, mentors, and social media, so their ideas about teaching writing are inherently relational.

The 19 writing teachers shared ways in which temporality (the constantly evolving nature of autobiographies), sociality (the social conditions affecting experiences), and physicality (the specific places and spaces in which these events occur) shaped their pedagogical thinking (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Our work was to narrativize fragmented stories of their lives to understand the continuity (consistent existence) and wholeness of K-12 writing teachers' careerspan. The recurring or shared critical experiences reveal participatory PCKW and form our model of writing teachers' PD across the careerspan. We define *participatory PCKW* as the process of actively, agentively, and iteratively seeking and engaging in critical experiences to learn and grow as writers and teachers of writing in ways that tackle self-determined problems of practice.

Exposition: Teacher Induction

Teachers described the influence of the presence or absence of training in writing content and pedagogy. Sixteen of the participants were certified through a teacher preparation program (TPP); however, only nine reported taking a writing methods course. Several teachers were alternatively certified following a career change. Without formal teacher training, they drew on writing experiences from general education coursework such as creative writing and college composition courses, which are more content focused than pedagogical.

Although Carol completed a TPP, she did not have a writing pedagogy course, recalling, "No one ever taught me how to teach writing... and yet it's in everybody's subject matter." Andy echoed similar sentiments:

I never really had anything that taught me methods and structures and ways of how to teach writing to young people. It was almost as though...reading is probably the most important thing because we want kids to read, but when it comes to writing, that's just something that...you'll figure out.

Teachers without writing methods instruction recalled having to figure it out on their own, teach themselves, or search for professional scholarship on writing pedagogy.

Most teachers shared that replicating what they saw colleagues do or how they were taught as K–12 students strongly informed their writing instruction. Jennifer J. described the experience of emulating other teachers' practices:

We didn't really learn how to teach writing. I feel like I was emulating what I had seen teachers do, and most of that was you assign something and then you turn it in, and then you give a content grade and a punctuation, editing kind of grade, and then those two things are your final score.

We theorized this learning as an exposition of their writing teacher development because *they* narrated these actions as where they began as early teachers. This lack of thorough writing teacher training and foundational PCKW across most of the teachers' experiences created problems of practice in their early career years.

Rising Action

As teachers began their careers, they felt a restrictive influence from standardized curricula, and that pedagogical tension led them to connect with actors (e.g., mentors and colleagues) and communities of practice to expand their PCKW.

Standardized Instruction. Early on, many teachers relied heavily on scaffolds such as language arts textbooks, five-paragraph essay formulas, and graphic organizers, particularly if they did not experience a writing methods course. Some teachers felt obligated to use required district curricular materials, and others used those materials out of necessity because they lacked deeper PCKW to design curricula. Karen described this feeling of being restricted in her practice:

At that point in my career teaching writing . . . I feel it was very prescriptive. When I became a teacher, we still were so guided by a textbook, teaching students a five-paragraph essay... very much guided by prompts that were not created by me, were not created for my specific students, which were kind of supposed to work as one-size-fits-all prompts.

All the teachers were past the novice phase of teaching, and nearly all of them characterized their early instruction as prescriptive. Emily stated, "I started off very formulaic, which was because I didn't have a strong writing background, as in teaching writing." Many teachers felt required to follow a prescriptive curriculum because they felt they did not have the PCKW expertise to counteract it.

In addition, teachers reflected on the lack of culturally responsive writing curricula. Jen P. shared these concerns: “Most of my students were students of color, Hispanics, and African Americans. The administration gave us [a packaged model] for the curriculum for essay writing, and they explained to us that we need to teach it with fidelity.” The challenge was that, even though the teachers instinctively felt these practices were not in students’ best interests, they didn’t know of options or did not yet have the agency to advocate for different practices. Narratively, these experiences created the internal and external conflict necessary to propel change and cause a wave of rising action, especially with other actors.

Engagement with Actors. Actors are individuals who influenced teachers’ development. Mentor teachers played a significant role in writing teachers’ early practices; teachers often imitated their mentors’ practices or sought their writing instructional support. Mentors were found in student teaching supervisors, peer teachers, or distant colleagues connected through technology in various educator communities. Teachers like Ashley and Krista, who had been teaching for four to six years, relied on the guidance of more experienced mentor teachers, adopting their mentors’ writing practices as their own. Matt described the vital role of mentors, particularly for teachers without writing methods preparation:

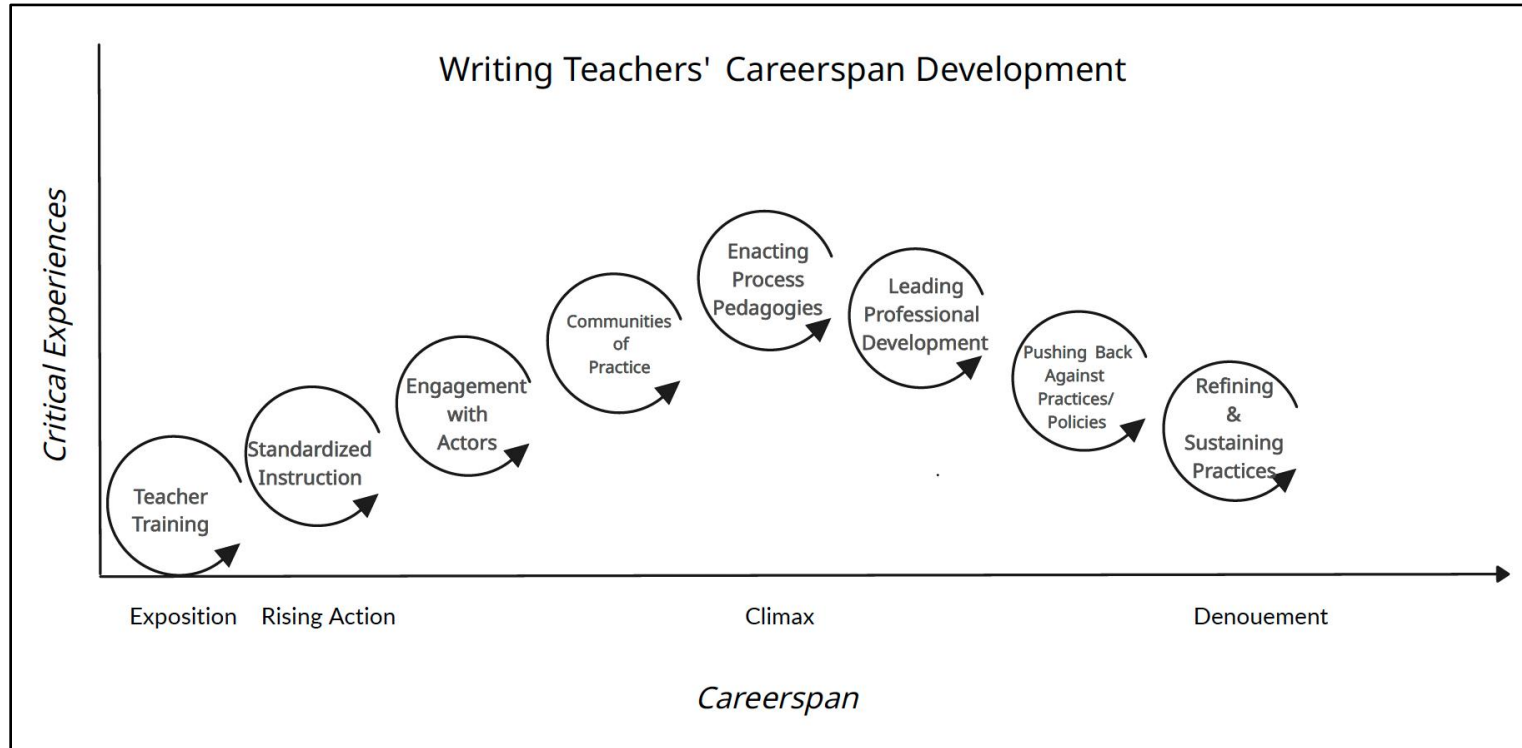
Without the right mentors and help along the way, you can easily settle into something where you're just trying to make it to tomorrow, and you want to do well, but you don't know how because the pathways are not particularly clear.

Matt also noted that finding a mentor shouldn’t be “just luck.” Other teachers reached out to peers in virtual spaces (described in the next section) because of rural geographic isolation or the disciplinary isolation of being their school’s only language arts teacher.

Eventually, several teachers were nudged by colleagues to join professional groups to grow and share their PCKW. Andy was one such teacher:

I was trying to reconnect with people about how to become a better teacher and find like-minded people, which is hard to do sometimes. And a friend of mine had said, ‘I know you'd like to do that presentation stuff. And I know you kind of enjoy this. I think this would be up your alley. Have you ever heard of the Writing Project before?’ I'm like, ‘I have no idea what you're talking about. Tell me more.’

Figure 1
Writing Teachers' Careerspan Development



The intersections of teachers with supportive actors, whether in the form of a long-term relationship or a brief nudging encounter, were often critical experiences in their learning trajectory that connected them to a larger community of writing teachers. Engagement with these individuals--external agents of change--facilitated teachers' PCKW development and provided support for their internal struggles, which prepared them to enact process-oriented writing pedagogies.

Communities of Practice. We understand communities of practice as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, n.p.). At various points in their teaching careers, the teachers experienced dissonance during writing instruction, students' responses to that instruction, and/or their instructional goals. They were agitated by this dissonance and enacted agency in finding communities of practice to discover new writing practices, seek out professional resources, develop new learning goals for students, and construct new identities for themselves as writers and writing teachers.

Several teachers developed a teacher-as-writer identity through critical personal experiences that imbued PCKW development in content knowledge of genres and processes. Donnetta connected with the TeachWrite group on Twitter and participated in their 100 days of writing activity. After experiencing authentic writing, herself, she noticed the segmented, isolated skills approach in her district textbook and shifted her instruction: “Now, as a teacher-writer myself, I found as I've just started writing myself, that's not really how we write. We don't really do piece by piece by piece, and I think that was kind of the frustration of it.” She began incorporating writer's notebooks as a core pedagogy in her writing instruction, using them as a place for her students to “just write” and experiment with genres and an opportunity “to conference with them” about idea generation. Andy stated: “I was fortunate enough to be able to have a [NWP] site that was directed by Dr. Troy Hicks. He...began to push my thinking about what writing looks like, what writing we can have in our classes.” As these experiences illustrate, the writing community was more than engagement with actors; the generative learning experiences propelled teachers forward toward process pedagogies to support students' writing development.

Sometimes a shift in teaching context instigated change rather than instructional dissonance. They were exposed to new writing pedagogies and curricula that deepened their practices. For example, Karen learned about writing portfolios as a tool for authentic assessment when she changed schools. For others, completing a graduate degree in education, reading professional books by writing educator scholars, or joining a writing group served as critical experiences in their developmental trajectories. These engagements with other writing educators apprenticed the teachers into communities of practice, “social learning systems”

through which people develop competence, establish a sense of belonging, and adopt a philosophical or pedagogical alignment (Wenger, 2000, p. 226).

At other times, personal or familial experiences motivated teachers to connect with other writers through the NWP or other writing groups to explore the emotion inherent in the challenges they faced (e.g., death of a family member, moving across states, career changes, or facing illness/disease). Through such groups, teachers developed their teacher-writer identity as they used writing to help them process life experiences. Learning to write as writers supported their self-efficacy as teachers of writing or teacher-writers using PCKW within their teaching contexts to help their students utilize the writing process fully for personal and school-related purposes.

Climax: Enacting Process Pedagogies

Collectively, teachers described a move toward process pedagogies as a growth and evolution of their instruction, which they asserted resulted in better instruction. They claimed process pedagogies as a deeper, more authentic, and more responsive pedagogy than the traditional, textbook, or form-focused pedagogies of their early careers. Matt narrated his experience of implementing the process pedagogies he learned in a master's degree program and a NWP summer institute:

I think the thing that helped it to start working was the moment where I let go of some control: the moment where students started to self-assess more, or set their own goals, or where I trained them in peer review, and then let them actually do it with each other, or gave them space to write in class.

Other teachers, such as Karen, Donnetta, and Andy, also spoke of this process of a "gradual release of letting go of what I was doing before," as Matt stated. They let go of early practices that weren't serving their students well and transitioned to a "focus on the process," incorporating substantial feedback (i.e., conferring, peer feedback) and writing strategies (i.e., idea generation, drafting, and revision).

Although a few early-career teachers were in the emergent phases of enacting process pedagogies, other teachers developed process pedagogies more comprehensively. We theorized this movement as part of the climax of their writing teacher development because *they* narrated these actions as hitting their stride in teaching and as providing solutions to their problems of practice.

Denouement

After shifting to writing process pedagogies, teachers experienced the implications of this change within their contexts. They described various external forces that influenced their pedagogical stories and how they sustained process-oriented

practices. Teachers encountered various complications in moving toward rich writing process pedagogies. As a final narrative element, *denouement* is French for “unknotting” and presents the unraveling of a story by attempting to resolve conflicts, answer questions, and explain complications. The types of denouements in teachers’ PCKW development included leading PD, pushing back against discordant practices and policies, and refining and sustaining practices.

Leading Professional Development. Perhaps it is natural for teachers to share what they have learned with others. Many teachers facilitated writing PD because they became known in their professional spaces as “a writing teacher.” Some teachers were approached individually by colleagues, principals, or district leaders and asked to share their practice. Matt, who authored a book about giving writers feedback, stated the following: “It’s really important that somebody sees you as a teacher and as a human being and values you along the way...you’re doing [that] in your leadership, in your presenting.”

Andy and Jennifer P. became involved in leading writing PD with local NWP sites or state chapters of professional organizations. The more they learned, the more they wanted to share because, through their sharing, they could push back against problematic practices and policies.

Pushing Back Against Discordant Practices and Policies. Teachers described how their understanding of process pedagogies from various perspectives—writer, writing pedagogy scholar, and professional-community-of-practice teacher—empowered them to push back against problematic mandates or practices. For example, after completing her master’s degree, Hanna saw herself as a student, pedagogical advocate, and change agent; when students in her school were retained because of a high-stakes testing policy, she pushed back with a new instructional model:

What if [my colleague] and I just took all the kids who failed, because it was about 25 kids, like a full class, and we kept them...with fourth graders who would actually be their same-age peers... and we don’t use the curriculum that the district already tried to teach them with, and it failed. We use our knowledge as [literacy] specialists, and we try to make it better.

Hanna was disrupting the status quo, stigmatizing practices literally hold back students and negatively impact writer identity. For experienced teachers like Hanna, David, Kimberly, Andy, and others, enacting agency and advocacy sustained their practice.

Unfortunately, teachers enacting a deepened PCKW were not always welcomed by their peers. Stacey noticed some colleagues “were on the same page

with me...open to ideas and wanted to hear all about it," but many were reluctant to try the new practices themselves. In these cases, teachers often found support in communities of practice outside their immediate school contexts. With over thirty years of teaching experience, Stacey became Google certified, ready to engage new tools in her writing instruction, and Andy co-authored a writing pedagogy book with his mentor. These teachers developed a capacity for enactment through communities of practice, including self-authorizing new practices in contexts where status quo or resistance from colleagues endured.

Refining and Sustaining Practices. After engaging with transformative mentors, critical learning events, and critical change points that shifted their writing pedagogies, teachers found ways to iteratively refine and sustain themselves as writing teachers. Overwhelmingly, rather than leave the K-12 classroom for other roles or careers, all 19 teachers expressed a desire to stay in the classroom, which offers a counterpoint to the common teacher exodus narrative. Their experiences fueled them to sustain teaching careers. Jen P. talked about her "new knowledge and skills" as "layered," shaping her role as a learning facilitator. Jennifer J. talked about changing her instruction when she noticed something was not working:

I'm just constantly adapting. So midstream, if I see something that's not working in the way I thought, we'll just change it up. I'm really happy and comfortable with what I'm doing with writing right now...but I also know that will continue to change for as long as I'm teaching.

In addition to ongoing pedagogical revisions, several teachers served as mentors for student or beginning teachers. The processes of sharing their knowledge, connecting with another teacher, and/or learning from the student/beginning teacher helped sustain their sense of belonging and purpose in teaching. The journey continues.

Discussion

As teacher educators, we were privileged to learn from the 19 inservice writing teachers who participated in our research study to understand teachers' PCKW developmental trajectories. Schmidt (1998) notes, "Language invokes an eternal present: moments of reading, writing, teaching, and storytelling that offer opportunities for change, growth, and renewal" (p. 11). We hope the eternal presence conveyed in these narratives suggests paths for writing teachers' growth when they experience professional tensions and seek learning opportunities to solve problems of practice, context-specific problems that emerge as practices change over time (Lampert, 2001).

Multiple Perspectives of Participatory PCKW

Tensions between and across teachers' responses encouraged us to engage composites as a way of embracing narrative tensions (Polkinghorne, 1988), critical experiences (Kelchtermans, 1993), and a "working self-concept" (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Multiple voices in people's stories merge with and contest each other, revealing participants in a continuous process of PCKW development (Polkinghorne, 1988) or PCKg (pedagogical content knowing) of writing, as teachers are constructing and becoming confident writing teachers across myriad contexts (Cochran et al., 1993). Likewise, we could not create a single composite of an effective writing teacher, or an ideal trajectory to develop PCKW, as it is not a state of *being* but one of *becoming*, with an iterative and participatory quality.

Looking at the learning-experience contexts of participation, we noticed writing teachers' individual, historical, and cultural catalysts for PCKW development and a connection between local (e.g., prescribed writing curriculum) and system-level (e.g., availability of NWP sites) influences on their trajectories (Hong et al., 2017). Development is created in the actions situated in the teachers' biographies. Therefore, we resist a linear development model or a normative conception of writing teacher development. We conclude that we cannot trace a writing teacher's pedagogical story by years of teaching or neat stages (Katz, 1972). Furthermore, the journey of one's career is neither "predictable nor identical" to another, nor necessarily chronological or cyclical (Huberman, 1993, p. 195).

Through our participants' stories, we discovered activities that drive teachers through and potentially into "new (and not always predictable) situations" (Dippre, 2019, p. 24). As evident in our model of writing teachers' careerspan development, PCKW evolved throughout teachers' biographies through their participation in PCKW: learning in teacher preparation programs, engaging with key actors and communities of practice, enacting process pedagogies, leading PD, pushing back against discordant practices and policies, and refining/sustaining practices. The teachers' PCKW development depended on critical experiences that shaped their writing instruction but varied widely by time, space, people, access, readiness, and responsiveness. These pedagogical experiences involved small, nested stories with their own tensions, problems of practice, and resolutions that differed in time, place, and intensity. Together, however, these narratives tell a collective story that resonates across contexts and is propelled by a participatory experience.

Participatory PCKW involves teachers surfacing their own problems of practice, specific to their learning contexts, and designing their own development; it is not PD done *to* them but done *by* them and, in many cases, *for* them. By actively participating in the life of a writing teacher, they serve their students, colleagues, and profession. As writing teachers teach their content, they determine the level in which they "work with/against...pedagogical invitations" (Segall, 2004, p. 500);

thus, they determine the PCKW that aligns with their evolving writing teachers' identities.

The Role of Professional Dispositions and Access to Learning Opportunities

The choices teachers made to engage in communities of practice stemmed from professional dispositions that demonstrated their “pedagogical thoughtfulness” (Dottin, 2006, p. 40). The dispositions of the agentive learner, problem-poser, and problem-solver were key to these teachers' experiences and success as writing teachers. Sockett (2006) defines teacher dispositions as “the professional virtues, qualities, and habits of mind and behavior held and developed by teachers on the basis of their knowledge, understanding, and commitments to students, families, their colleagues, and communities” (p. 23). Teachers demonstrated commitment to their students, colleagues, and profession, which fueled their engagements and participation. Reciprocally, their dispositions as reflective, inquiring practitioners were nurtured “through the negotiations between the personal and social worlds” (Billett, 2008, p. 154) of their lives.

Throughout their careers, teachers make personally-subjective choices, shaped by social interactions that impact their visions for their teaching (Billett, 2008; Parsons et al., 2017). For several teachers in our study, this was a matter of luck or access to an opportunity to work with a writing mentor or proximity to an NWP site, but for others, especially teachers working in small schools, they took the initiative to grapple with pedagogical tensions. Technology made problem-solving and community more accessible. Thus, teachers' sense of self as writing teachers (e.g., confident, informed) connected to strategic decisions to accept invitations to writing groups, engage in social media, seek mentors, and write/publish their thinking, all of which are evidence of participatory PCKW.

We do not advocate for a haphazard approach to writing teacher education that relies on luck or specific dispositions for teachers to seek their self-professional development. Also, we do not intend to standardize or prescribe a process for becoming a confident writing teacher. Instead, our goal is to broaden ideas of how a writing teacher *becomes* to illuminate, celebrate, and support how writing teacher educators may support writing teachers' experiences. Because participatory PCKW is active, PCKgW (pedagogical content knowing of writing), per Cochran et al.'s (1993) PCKg, encapsulates how becoming a writing teacher is ongoing; thus, teacher educators and other vested stakeholders must support PCKW development in writing teachers strategically so that writing teachers can impact students' writing development. Like Cynthia, we “wish that there was a faster way to learn,” but most teachers “need better access to the information that fits in with all the other demands” that are required of them. Stakeholders should engage preservice and inservice teachers in participatory PCKW purposefully through teacher preparation

and PD. As teachers engage in participatory PCKW, they are better equipped to support their students' writing development.

Limitations

In qualitative research, particularly narrative inquiries, the limitations can also be viewed as affordances. Clandinin (2013) states, “narrative inquirers understand experience as a narratively composed phenomenon,” which highlights the ways in which we, as researchers, are the composers (p. 16). Thus, these composite narratives and this narrative grounded theory are the compositions of a particular set of narrative tellings by us four narrative inquirers and these 19 teachers. They are told by these people for particular purposes, for particular audiences, at a particular moment in time. We recognize the many socio-cultural and discursive influences that may have shaped these narratives, and we acknowledge these narratives may have been very different with different tellers, audiences, rhetorical purposes, moments in time, and so forth. While some scholars may view these as limitations, we view them as affordances of the methodology, and we have taken care to outline our choices in creating these narratives to enable readers to determine the limitations. Willis (2019) argues that a limitation of a composite narrative is reliance on researchers to create the composites, which we attempted to mitigate with collaborative data analysis and narrative composing, in addition to member checking.

Because of the number of participants at each instructional level, we were not able to look across grade levels to create composites at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, for example. One might also argue that if we had chosen different participants, they may have been satisfied with standardized instruction, chosen not to seek out a community of practice, and resisted pushing back. Future studies could include different types of teachers supporting students' writing development across various countries and contexts to see how/if their stories might be different. Although “writing practices worldwide differ based on educational systems, government requirements, and what individual cultures view as best practices within education,” we need to learn from inservice teachers regarding the pathways that supported their self-efficacy with PCKW (Lacina, 2018, p. 60). In this study, we chose to learn from teachers who self-identified or were identified as effective writing teachers within the U.S.

Implications

Previous PCKW scholarship does not account for teachers' life experiences within and beyond the classroom. Our findings and theoretical model of writing teachers' careerspan development address this gap and have implications for both inservice teachers and writing teacher educators.

For our participants, problems of practice iteratively spurred them to seek experiences that provided communities of practice, mentors, or networks that cultivated PCKW. These critical experiences often occurred beyond the classroom. Although they informed the teachers' instruction, the critical experiences with people and events took place at the intersection of teachers' personal-professional lives as writers and teachers of writers, unique to the discipline of writing instruction, and empowered teachers to apply PCKW. Using our model as a guide, stakeholders who work with inservice teachers can intentionally facilitate PD to connect teachers with participatory events that foster PCKW. We also argue that the theoretical model could be used to create, facilitate, and support PD opportunities potentially beyond writing since it shows the impact of engaging in participatory experiences.

Overwhelmingly, teachers felt unprepared to teach writing in their early careers. Nine teachers took a writing methods course through their teacher preparation program. Our study demonstrates that writing methods courses need to include whole-person curricula that nurture teachers who write for personal healing, expression, creativity, *and* learning. Using our theoretical model, teacher educators and other stakeholders can advocate for focusing on the preservice or inservice teacher as well as the outcomes (i.e., students, student products), consider how they encourage candidates/teachers to delve into the nuances of PCKW, and facilitate intersecting experiences that contribute to candidates'/teachers' growth and development as writers and writing teachers.

Conclusion

For the field of teacher education, our data showed that even when teachers are not provided the level of preparation needed, they are resilient and resourceful, seeking and finding growth opportunities in PCKW. This study contributes to research on writing classroom instruction (Assaf et al., 2016; Finlayson & McCrudden, 2022; Gadd & Parr, 2017) by examining ways teachers self-author their PCKW. We advance critiques of the artificial separation between PCK and a teacher's cultural norms and values (Deng 2018; Gudmundsdottir, 1990) by surfacing ways, beyond institutional practices, that a writing teacher *becomes*, attending to critical experiences that propel new ways of teaching writing and writers.

Although we admire teachers' resiliency, they should not have to take it upon themselves to develop as writing teachers. Writing teacher educators and stakeholders must improve K–12 teacher preparation and PD through professional learning communities, networking opportunities, and systematic PD experiences that will support teachers' participatory PCKW development throughout their careerspans. No matter where writing teachers find themselves within their narrative arcs, teacher educators, especially, must meet them where they are to purposefully support participatory PCKW. Participatory PCKW is a process of

actively, agentively, and iteratively seeking and engaging in critical experiences to learn and grow as writers and teachers of writing who are empowered to solve problems of practice.

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