

Chapter 12

Models of Effective Writing Methods in Teacher Preparation: Perspectives and Practice

Tracey S. Hodges

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7490-8711>

University of Alabama, USA

Sharon M. Pratt

Indiana University Northwest, USA

Leslie La Croix

George Mason University, USA

Sherry Dismuke

Boise State University, USA

Carol A. Donovan

University of Alabama, USA

Katherine Landau Wright

Boise State University, USA

Susan D. Martin

Boise State University, USA

ABSTRACT

To shed some light on how writing methods are currently taught in a variety of programs across the United States and continue examining high-quality writing educators, the present chapter presents five distinct models for teacher preparation. These models are the result of meeting state-level standards; national standards through the International Literacy Association (ILA); and core competencies from research, theory, and practice. The course models represent the Pacific Northwest, Midwest, Southeast, and Northeast, showing diversity across the United States. Specifically in the present chapter, the researchers (1) present effective models of writing instruction; (2) provide examples of integrated approaches to research, theory, and practice for writing instruction; and (3) examine limitations and opportunities within each model. The goal of the present chapter is to outline these models in the hopes that other programs can modify and replicate the models that best fit their unique demographics, needs, and literacy standards.

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, only one-quarter of fourth graders write at the proficient levels and those scores do not improve in eighth grade or 12th grade (NCES, 2018). In addition to these low scores, teachers report feeling under-prepared to teach writing effectively (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Low writing proficiency in the United States and low self-efficacy for teaching writing by teachers may be the result of limited exposure to high-quality writing methods in teacher preparation (Hodges, 2015; Myers et al., 2016; Scales et al., 2019). In fact, only 28% of teacher educators indicated that they taught a stand-alone course focused on writing instruction, while the remaining 72% indicated that they taught integrated reading and writing courses (Myers et al., 2016). Additionally, Brenner (2013) found that only five courses across three undergraduate teacher preparation programs focused solely on writing and called for increased writing instruction in teacher preparation.

To shed some light on how writing methods are currently taught in a variety of programs across the United States and build on the work of Scales and colleagues (2019) examining high-quality writing educators, the present chapter presents five distinct models for teacher preparation. These models are the result of meeting state-level standards, national standards through the International Literacy Association (ILA), and core competencies from research, theory, and practice. The course models represent the Pacific Northwest, Midwest, Southeast, and Northeast, showing diversity across the United States. In the present chapter the researchers

- Present effective models of writing instruction,
- Provide examples of integrated approaches to research, theory, and practice for writing instruction, and
- Examine limitations and opportunities within each model.

The goal of the present chapter is to outline these models in the hopes that other programs can modify and replicate models that best fit their unique demographics, needs, and literacy standards.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR WRITING METHODS

Theoretically, writing courses borrow from the work of Pam Grossman and colleagues (2000) and by Martin and Dismuke (2015, 2019). Writing methods pedagogy relies on candidates' immersion in repeated learning progressions that include opportunities to (1) decompose models of mentor texts in a genre and create anchor charts of key features, (2) approximate the practices in their own writing, planning, or peer teaching, receive feedback from the instructor or peers, and then engage in revision processes, and (3) experience instructors modeling effective writing practices while providing an explicit example and naming the practice. The pedagogy is experiential, active, and constructivist. The success of this model has been researched and teachers using this model demonstrated significantly more writing instructional practices than those that had not had a standalone course.

Two additional examples of theoretical approaches covered in writing methods courses include Halliday's (1989) theory of spoken and written language development and Vygotsky's social theory of learning (1978) with his Zone of Proximal Development. Additionally, Moll et al. (1992)'s Funds of

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