THE ANALYTICAL WRITING PROGRAM: AN OBJECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING MODEL FOR ACADEMIC WRITING IN SECONDARY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent in which the Analytical Writing Program (AWP), an objective teaching and learning model for academic writing within a secondary school, influences the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing. Quantitative data was gathered using cross-sectional survey design research. Two survey instruments were developed to statistically measure the frequency in which teachers and students demonstrate favorable attitudes and favorable behaviors when using the AWP in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The results of the study conclude that teachers of AWP writing ($n = 36$) agree/strongly agree that the AWP favorably impacts: (a) instructional pedagogy and instructional practices in the teaching and learning of academic writing (83.37%), (b) teacher-teacher alignment (89.33%), and (c) teacher-student alignment (92.85%). Students in the study ($n = 475$) also agree/strongly agree that the AWP favorably impacts: (a) classroom learning for academic writing (64.16%), (b) student-teacher alignment (67.6%), and (c) student-student alignment (63.66%). Additionally, both teachers of AWP writing (81.02%) and students (69.86%) favorably agree/strongly agree that the AWP’s program format and program resources are useful and appropriate for the teaching and learning of academic writing. The findings indicate that the transparency of the AWP objectifies the characteristics of effective writing criteria for academic writing for both teachers and students, leading to the improvement in the teaching and learning of writing within a secondary learning environment.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Social, historical, and cultural phenomena shape teachers perspectives regarding their instructional role, instructional pedagogy, and their perceptions of effective writing criteria in the teaching and learning of academic writing (Beck, 2006; Vitella, 2006). The inter-subjectivity between the perceptions of teachers’ and their colleagues and the perceptions of teachers’ and their students creates an exhaustive dichotomy; this dichotomy continues to dramatize reform initiatives which aim to improve the teaching and learning of writing.

In an effort to bipartite the juxtaposing views between teachers, between teachers and their students, and among schools and state and federal agencies, most educational organizations have adopted the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the American Psychological Association (APA) stylization frameworks and/or learning models such as the six traits of writing, the six plus-one trait learning model, or the toulmin method. Today’s popular stylization frameworks and learning models are considered rhetorical frameworks or frameworks that generally identify the qualities or characteristics of effective writing criteria for written works. For teachers and students, rhetorical frameworks are philosophical guidelines that identify, explain, and standardize the characteristics of effective writing in accordance with state and federal performance goals (Bizup, 2009; Jacobson, 2005; Kozlow & Bellamy, 2004; Larson, Britt, & Kurby, 2009). For schools, these frameworks attempt to standardize characteristics of effective writing criteria between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and their students.
They also provide a way to help organizations hold teachers and students accountable to the same standards. Yet, these rhetorical frameworks and learning models raise controversy when it comes to the teaching and learning of analytical/academic writing at the secondary level. A large majority of school across the nation specifically struggle with the teaching and learning of academic writing. National reports gravely unveil that more and more students are graduating high school without the proper knowledge and skills on how to write a cohesive academic essay using primary and/or secondary sources (Kracker & Wang, 2002).

In today’s educational realm, it is no surprise that students feel unprepared for college when state, federal, and national reports indicate that in 2008-2009 only 51% of schools across the nation met Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) performance requirements; these performance requirements include an evaluation of student performance in both reading and writing. At several universities throughout the United States, faculty who teach freshman level compositions courses strongly agreed that a large percentage of entry-level college students demonstrate skills far below the basic expectations for entry-level college writing (Kracker & Wang, 2002; Montgomery, 2009; Tench, 2001). In a number of other research studies, entry-level college students agreed and further stated that they felt incompetent in their abilities to effectively compose a persuasive composition for college writing (Kracker & Wang; Montgomery; Tench). In fact, a high percentage of entry-level college students also reported that they did not learn how to research and/or write academic compositions until they completed entry-level composition courses in college (Wilson, 2009). Despite these claims, high school teachers are expected to teach academic writing and high school students are expected to
demonstrate their academic writing ability on college placement exams and on local, state, and federal performance assessments. Therefore, secondary schools must continue to find ways in which they can improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their own curriculum frameworks.

As schools start to engage in their own reflective practices, they begin to understand the human and organizational complexities that impede teaching and learning within their own environment. Through the process of inquiry and collaboration, schools become knowledgeable and capable of identify insightful pathways that can creatively align curriculum standards and performance goals with the needs of their teachers and students. These pathways can lead to practices that help teachers and students acquire a deeper knowledge and understanding on how to address important curriculum objectives (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). In an effort to create a new pathway aimed to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing, English teachers at Mater Dei Catholic High School (Mater Dei), a vastly diverse college preparatory high school located in the southern portion of a Pacific state, implemented the Analytical Writing Program (AWP). The AWP attempts to unify analytical/academic terminology and evaluation criteria both vertically and horizontally across the curriculum.

Today, the AWP is a rhetorical framework and learning model for academic writing that meets the developmental learning needs of high school students. Unlike other rhetorical frameworks or learning models, the AWP has four learning phases (Series 1, 2, 3, and 4) that sequentially progress in difficulty. In each of the four learning phases there are specific learning objectives and essay length requirements that aim to meet the needs of high school students as they develop from beginning freshmen writers into senior
college-ready writers. Currently, the AWP is the only learning model that objectively identifies, defines, and exemplifies the characteristics of effective writing criteria for each sequential part or segment of an analytical/academic composition (introduction, body paragraph(s), and conclusion). At Mater Dei, teachers use the AWP format to help their students conceptualize the structural layout of an essay as it relates to each essay assignment.

The AWP’s rhetorical framework also incorporates the teaching pedagogies of the MLA stylization framework. The MLA framework defines the stylization rules for the structural layout of an essay including proper pagination, spacing, citation formatting, font sizing, quotation formatting, and works cited formatting. At Mater Dei, when students are assigned an AWP essay, they are expected to adhere to the stylization rules defined within the MLA handbook. The AWP pedagogy also incorporates the holistic characteristics of writing identified under Spandel’s six traits of writing. Many teachers of the AWP writing incorporate Spandel’s trait concepts into their lessons in an effort to teach students the characteristics of quality writing. Trait concepts include ideas, development, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

The AWP is also a college preparatory writing philosophy that aligns with the University of California’s (UC) university-wide academic placement and proficiency objectives; these objectives are identified and tested under the UC system’s Analytical Writing Proficiency Exam (AWPE). Starting in 2011, all students who are accepted into a UC system’s school will be required to take the AWPE to determine his or her command of the English language and to also determine his or her ability to demonstrate entry-level proficiency for college writing (The University of California, 2011). Students
who do not demonstrate proficiency on the AWPE will be placed into a freshmen entry-level composition course in an effort to further refine and develop the student’s command for academic writing.

Overall, three primary objectives of the AWP are to build consistency across the curriculum, align teaching and learning pedagogies in writing, and to improve student achievement in writing. However, no quantifiable research exits on the AWP and its impact on teaching and learning. Yet, Mater Dei continues to raise their expectations for the teaching and learning of the AWP and writing across the curriculum. Studying the AWP and its impact on teachers and students at Mater Dei will clarify the value, appropriateness, and placement of the AWP as a writing initiative in their quest to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their school.

Thus, this study will include an examination of the AWP and its impact on teachers and their perspectives regarding their instructional roles and instructional pedagogies when teaching academic writing and evaluating student work at Mater Dei. The research also includes evidence that clarifies the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their colleagues and between teachers’ and their students regarding effective writing criteria. The second layer of this study will unfold the extent in which the AWP impacts students in the learning of academic writing. The research will determine the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between students’ and their teachers and between students’ and their peers regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. Importantly, the results from this study will contribute to the already vast field of scholarly literature that attempts to explore and define the internal and external forces that characterize and define effective teaching and
learning of analytical/academic writing within secondary schools. Additionally, answering these questions will also contribute to a new understanding on how objective pedagogical approaches and objective writing program frameworks may contribute to school-wide advances in the teaching and learning of writing within secondary settings (Beck, 2006).

**Background of the Study**

Writing program frameworks were developed in response to the growing need to identify and standardize characteristics of effective writing criteria within schools (Franz & Spitzer, 2006; Smith & Eggleston, 2001). Educational organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the Association of Teachers on Technical Writing (ATTW), the Modern Language Association (MLA), and the American Psychological Association (APA) have responded to: (1) the emerging need to identify, align, and promote acceptable rhetorical writing frameworks for teaching and learning; and (2) the urgent need to create and develop applicable teaching resources for teachers who teach technical writing in various disciplines (Franz & Spitzer, 2006; Kynell & Tebeaux, 2009). Today, MLA (founded in 1883) continues to create a forum of opportunities where scholars across the nation come together annually to discuss trends and behaviors for effective writing and stylization practices for humanities research (MLA, 2010). Currently, MLA handbooks are one of the most accepted stylization handbooks for effective writing criteria for humanities writing in high schools and colleges across the nation (Clawson, 2009; MLA).
In the 1930s social scientists organized under the American Psychological Association (APA) in an effort to further define stylization and effective writing criteria for research and writing in the social science disciplines (APA, 2010). Today, APA communicates their stylization criteria in their APA Publication Manual. Currently, the APA framework is the only accepted stylization framework for social science programs and post-graduate programs within the United States (APA; Goddard, 2003; Smith & Eggleston, 2001). Both organizations (MLA and APA) continue to develop new editions to their stylization handbooks in an effort to create consistency in formatting and consistency in stylization practices for writing in variety of disciplines (Clawson, 2009; Onwuegbuzie, Combs, Slate, & Frels, 2009).

While an abundance of research supports the quality and benefit of these handbooks in the teaching and learning of writing, other research questions the applicability of these handbooks in today’s middle and high school learning environments (Morse, 2009). Critics argue that the MLA and APA frameworks are far too advanced for high school settings. Research unveils that neither frameworks, APA or MLA, scaffold to the developmental learning needs of beginning and/or early intermediate writers in middle and high school classrooms (Addison & McGee, 2010; Franz & Spitzer, 2006; Smith, Gabie, Eggleston, & Tami, 2001). For many scholars, the MLA and APA handbooks are tools of reference, similar to the practice of using a dictionary (Morse, 2009). With both handbooks being over 400 pages long, it is not surprising that middle and high school writers, especially English Language Learners, struggle with the rhetorical nature as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria defined under MLA and/or APA. Neither handbook provides teachers nor students with a
common frame of reference regarding the most appropriate sequential pattern or sequential format when writing appropriate introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions for academic compositions; compositions that use direct quotes from primary and/or secondary sources (Franz & Spitzer, 2006). For beginner writers especially, teachers and students need a common conceptual understanding regarding what qualifies as effective writing criteria for the internal components of an academic essay (Franz & Spitzer; Jacobson, 2005). Franz and Spitzer’s contend, “While there are many resources available to help students create and organize prose, relatively few are available that focus solely on teaching the mechanics and nuances of a specific formatting style” (p. 13).

Clearly, it is understandable that both MLA and APA handbooks teach the characteristics of effective writing criteria through a rhetorical approach. For upper-intermediate to advanced writers, making templates and rules on the internal components of an essay is almost inconceivable considering the vast variety of organizational patterns and formats that can be used to effectively establish a credible argument under the rules of MLA and/or APA (Smith, Gabie, Eggleston, & Tami, 2001). For advanced writers, the subjectivity of a rhetorical framework allows for flexibility in the essay structure, which also allows advanced writers to create their own persuasive approach to achieve greater effectiveness in their argument. Kramer (1998) specifically found that females particularly are already over-restricted by the masculine rhetoric of MLA and APA “rules of research” (para. 3). Adding templates would further restrict the voice of many advanced writers (Kramer). However, for beginning writers and teachers of academic writing, the subjectivity of any rhetorical framework leads to the inter-subjectivity
between teachers and between teachers and their students as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria in written compositions (Beck, 2006).

For most middle and high school teachers, the MLA and APA handbooks attempt to align general practices and principles of effective writing criteria, but when it comes to evaluating student work, teachers consistently find that their interpretations of the MLA and/or APA standards are significantly subjective between them and their colleagues (Kan, 2007; Mertler, 2001). Researchers found that when teachers assign analytical/academic essays, including essays on the same topic (or writing prompt), a teacher’s self-made evaluation rubric or grading rubric often varies significantly between them and their colleagues when comparing rubrics (Kan, 2007; Mertler, 2001; Thorton, 2010). The discrepancies are even more significant between teachers of English and their colleagues who teach writing in content areas outside of English (Beck, 2006; Thorton, 2010). One way to eliminate the inter-subjectivity between high school teachers and their colleagues and between high school teachers and their students is to develop and implement a cross-content evaluation framework, such as the AWP. The AWP adheres to the stylization principles of the MLA framework so that when students transition into college, they are equipped with the basic practices and principles of MLA and/or APA stylization formats.

Over the last 60 years, independent authors and textbook publishers have attempted to eliminate the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and their students by developing objective learning models or learning frameworks that include scaffolding resources that cater to the developmental needs of elementary, middle, and high school learners. Today, such models include the six traits of
writing, originated by Spandel and her coworkers in the late 1980s, and later Culham’s offshoot, the six plus-one trait program. Both programs aim to eliminate the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and their students in K-8 classrooms that aim to improve the teaching and learning of all genres of writing. For both Spandel and Culham, the trait programs attempt to diffuse the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their colleagues by aligning instructional pedagogies through trait concepts. For students, the trait programs help learners conceptualize their teachers’ expectations for quality writing. Most elementary and middle school educators would agree that the six traits of writing and the six plus-one trait program both continue to successfully shape a new era in the teaching and learning of writing. For these schools, the trait programs have not only aligned teachers perceptions regarding the characteristics of effective writing criteria in their schools, but have also been highly successful in aligning teachers perceptions in K-8 settings and above across the nation (Blasigame, 2000; Collopy, 2008; Milleman, 2007; Werkmeister, 2010).

Yet, even with such heightened success, the value of these programs for secondary education and specifically for teaching and learning of academic writing debatable. Researchers argue that specifically for teachers and learners of academic writing at the secondary level, the broadness of the traits of writing and the six plus-one trait model are still subjective between teachers and between teachers and their students (Collopy, 2008; DeJarnette, 2008; Ohrtman, 2007; Spence, 2010). Although many schools adopt the trait programs at the secondary level, currently there is no existing evidence proving any significant correlation between the trait programs and their impact on student achievement in academic writing within secondary settings. Educators could
agree that at the secondary level, the six traits of writing model and the six plus-one trait program both have successfully lead in the nations effort to improve the teaching and learning of writing for all genres of writing. Still, for many teachers of writing and especially teachers of beginning writers, agreeing on the characteristics of effective writing criteria does not mean that teachers automatically understand and agree on the characteristics of effective writing for the internal structure of an academic composition. In fact, for many teachers the inter-subjectivities between teachers’ and their perceptions as to what qualifies as effective writing for the internal structure of an essay still varies tremendously between them and their colleagues and between them and their students.

In contrary, scholars and critics would argue that objective writing program frameworks cannot effectively exist because writing in itself is subjective by nature. This may be true, but beginning writers and teachers of beginning writers would agree that they as teachers would greatly benefit from a clear, consistent, and conceptual writing program framework that also standardizes writing criteria for the internal structure of an academic composition. The consistency will help eliminate the discrepancies between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and their students as to what qualifies as effective analytical/academic writing criteria when specifically teaching, learning, and evaluating the internal structure (introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion) of an academic essay. Today, many organizations continue to seek applicable writing program resources that are specific to academic writing, and also specific to the needs of teachers and students at the secondary level. However, the successful adaptation of any writing program resource will ultimately depend on the consistency in which teachers agree on the characteristics of writing.
Educational organizations continue to undergo evaluation studies that examine the perceptions of individuals within their community and how these perceptions transcend into classroom teaching pedagogies and instructional practices (Hudon, 2010; Knight, 2010). The variances between these interpretations are clearly evident when teachers have opportunities to dialogue with other colleagues regarding their teaching philosophy, their expectations for writing, and their teaching and evaluation practices. The differences between teachers’ and their perceptions have been specifically equated to the social and historical experiences of each individual teacher. These differences are most often shaped by an individual’s own experiences in learning how to write themselves and their attitude regarding the teaching of writing within their content area (Beck, 2006; Ruckold, 2007; Thorton, 2010; Vitella, 2006). Albeit, in order to improve academic writing in secondary schools across the nation, schools must continue to make stronger efforts to diffuse these perceptual differences. Schools must also increase opportunities for academic writing within all content areas (Andrade, 2001; Vitella, 2006). Yet, even with honest attempts, organizations often find that the transferability of a school-wide vision ultimately depends on the knowledge, motivation, and understanding of each teacher (Collopy, 2002; Isernhagen & Kozisek, 2000). Others claim that the transferability depends on the opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development practices in the teaching and learning of academic writing in accordance with their school’s vision (James, Abbott, & Greenwood, 2001).
Statement of the Problem

Currently, there is no existing research on the AWP. Therefore, it is not formally known to what extent the AWP impacts the perceptions of teachers and their students regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing within Mater Dei Catholic High School (Mater Dei). Over the last several years, administrators and teachers at Mater Dei have witnessed a stronger alignment between teachers’ and their colleagues and between teachers’ and their students, and between students’ and their peers regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. Administrators and teachers have also witnessed significant improvements in the teaching and learning of academic writing. With such responsive success, Mater Dei continues to raise performance standards for the teaching and learning of the AWP, and writing across the curriculum.

Although teachers in all content areas are strongly encouraged to use the AWP as a tool to teach academic writing within their content area, English teachers particularly are required to have their students write a minimum of one academic essay in AWP format every six weeks. Students at Mater Dei are also expected to apply the AWP framework to AWP academic compositions that are assigned by teachers in different content areas. Additionally, during their sophomore year, all students are required to take the Sophomore AWP Competency Exam (AWPCE) and students who do not pass the exam after a second attempt are required to take a six week intensive AWP writing course in order to meet requirements for graduation. With the increasing demands for academic writing within Mater Dei, and with the increasing demands for the demonstration of academic writing ability at the college entry-level, it is imperative that
Mater Dei determines the extent in which the AWP impacts the teaching and learning of writing within their school.

**Purpose of the Study**

Currently, there are no other schools in the nation that use the AWP for the teaching and learning of writing. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out to what extent the AWP impacts teachers and student in the teaching and learning of academic writing within Mater Dei. For this study, the research will to determine the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their colleagues, between teachers’ and their students, and between students’ and their peers in the teaching and learning of writing. The research will also determine the frequency in which teachers and students use the AWP’s resource materials in the teaching and learning of writing.

The findings of this study can help educators examine the efficiency of the AWP and determine ways in which the program may be improved and/or modified in order to become a program that is holistically effective within various teaching and learning environments. Since there is no formal evidence or research on the AWP, the results of this study will contribute to a new field of research on how objective writing program resources can diffuse the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their colleagues, between teachers and their students, and between students’ and their peers. Understanding the AWP’s impact in secondary settings can ultimately lead to an improvement in teaching and learning how to write academic compositions in diverse settings across the nation.
Rationale

The AWP learning model is an objective writing framework because it identifies and outlines coined terms and learning objectives for each segment of an academic essay. Regardless of the essay topic, the AWP’s learning model requires that students begin their introduction paragraph with a general statement, followed by an author/work/tie section, and finally a thesis. Each body paragraph must include topic sentences, followed by a concrete detail (which includes lead sentences and a quote), an interpret section, analyses section, and finally a transitional section. The conclusion of an essay must include a section that finalizes, restates, and extends the overall message.

The purpose of the AWP learning model is to provide a conceptual learning framework that helps teachers and students understand appropriate techniques or strategies for each segment of an academic essay. The need for an objective writing program framework developed as a result of Mater Dei’s need to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their highly linguistically diverse population. Prior to the development and implementation of the AWP teachers at Mater Dei lacked consistency regarding their instructional pedagogy, classroom strategies, and evaluation criteria for the teaching and learning of academic writing. The inconsistency between teachers combined with the complexities and challenges of teaching beginning writers immobilized students and their ability to conceptualize effective writing as they moved from one classroom to the next. As a result, the AWP was developed as a hands-on approach to standardize the teaching and learning of academic writing. Today, Mater Dei continues to struggle with the AWP as a writing-across-the-curriculum initiative.
However, teachers of AWP writing, and especially teachers of English, can hold students accountable for the same learning objectives, regardless of their content area specialty.

Understanding the impact of the AWP in the teaching and learning of writing will help administrators and teachers at Mater Dei determine the quality, effectiveness, and the future of the AWP within their school. This study will also provide Mater Dei, as well as other districts and schools, with valuable information that may enable administrators and teachers to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their own secondary learning environments. While much is known about the value and impact of writing initiatives that aim to improve writing across the curriculum, researchers and educators continue to find evidence that even in the best reform environments, many teachers feel unequipped and/or inapt when it comes to teaching rhetorical writing frameworks (MLA, APA, and/or six plus-one trait) to their students. For students, the quality of effective writing still rests on the interpretive perspectives of their teachers. Thus, the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of students often associate with the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of their teacher(s). When students move from one classroom to the next, the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of both teachers and students change as perspectives or interpretations regarding effective writing criteria also change.

Ultimately, research shows that the inconsistencies between teachers’ and their perceptions affect both the quality of teaching and the quality of learning in secondary settings (Beck, 2006). In an effort to improve the teaching and learning of writing across the nation, it is essential for administrators and educators to continue to research ways in which schools can build comprehensive support systems that aim to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their own settings.
Research Questions and Hypotheses

The quantitative study on the Analytical Writing Program (AWP) was designed to measure the extent in which the AWP impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing within Mater Dei Catholic High School. The following six research questions guided this study:

Q1. To what extent does the AWP impact classroom instruction for academic writing?

Q2. To what extent does the AWP impact classroom learning for academic writing?

Q3. To what extent does the AWP impact teacher-teacher perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q4. To what extent does the AWP impact teacher-student perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q5. To what extent does the AWP impact student-student perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q6. To what extent are the AWP’s program resources useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing?

In addition, the following six research hypotheses guided this study:

H1. The first research question used a 5-point Likert frequency scale to statistically measure the extent in which teachers demonstrate the same level of frequency in using AWP resources and AWP pedagogies when teaching students how to write
academic essays. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and classroom instruction for academic writing.

H2. The second research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP aligns the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of students in the learning of academic writing. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and the learning of academic writing.

H3. The third research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their colleagues in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-teacher pedagogical alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

H4. The fourth research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their students regarding writing expectations for academic compositions. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing.

H5. The fifth research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between students and their peers regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and student-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing.
H₆. The sixth research question used 5-point attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP’s program resources are useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP’s program resources and their use in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

**Significance of the Study**

The information presented in this study can help educators examine the quality and efficiency of the AWP and determine ways in which the program may be improved and/or modified in order to become a program that is holistically effective within various teaching and learning environments at the secondary level. This study also provides statistical data to help Mater Dei make informed decisions on whether or not it would be beneficial to their teachers and their students to invest more time and resources in further developing and implementing the AWP across the curriculum. Additionally, the research from this study will determine if objective writing program frameworks, such as the AWP, significantly impact the perceptions of teachers and their students regarding effective writing criteria for holistic academic writing.

The information from the AWP program evaluation can also help educational organizations across the nation understand the valuable difference between subjective and objective writing frameworks when implementing school-wide writing program initiatives. Many schools may find the information from this study helpful as they evaluate their own existing writing program frameworks or as they negotiate or create new frameworks altogether. Some schools may determine that the AWP may be helpful
in their quest to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their own environment. When teachers and students are equipped with resources that further objectify effective writing criteria, the perceptions between teachers and their students regarding what qualifies as effective writing criteria are somewhat minimized.

Ultimately, since the AWP is new writing program framework for the teaching and learning of academic writing within secondary education, this study will also contribute to a new understanding on ways in which administrators and teachers may overcome challenges within their own schools and/or learning environments. Schools across the nation continue to struggle with writing program initiatives and as a result, the struggle transcends onto their students where the quality of instruction directly impacts their students’ and their performance in writing. Implementing a writing initiative is difficult and the quality and impact of a writing initiative will also depend on several interacting variables. These variables include leadership, support, teacher buy-in, and the quality and availability of the school’s academic writing resources.

**Definition of Terms**

To further clarify the parameters of this study, the following terms and their definitions are operationally defined:

*Analytical, Academic, Expository Compositions.* Analytical or expository compositions are evidence-based essays that include primary and/or secondary sources, critical discussion and/or analyses, and a cohesive message to an audience (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2010). For this study, the terms analytical, academic, and/or expository writing do not necessarily mean writing that requires the
AWP format. For the purposes of this study, academic writing is defined as formal writing that requires students to use persuasive prose to defend a topic, concept, or idea. Academic writing can, but does not necessarily include the use of primary and/or secondary sources (quotes, paraphrasing, etc). Unless otherwise stated, academic writing does not mean “AWP”.

Analytical Writing Program (AWP). The Analytical Writing Program (AWP) format offers a Language Arts Program Series and a Cross Content Program Series. The Language Arts Program Series and the Cross Content Program Series are identical in that they incorporate the same writing philosophy and format, but they use different examples in their program outlines in order to demonstrate the application and use of the program as it applies to academic writing in the different content areas (Willich, 2011). Both series are also designed into four specific, yet identical targeted learning phases. The Freshmen Series (Series 1) is designed for beginner writers, including English Language Learners who have developed average to intermediate verbal, comprehension, and written communication skills strong enough to write the minimum of a one body paragraph essay. The Sophomore Series (Series 2) is the second developmental writing phase where students are ready to write a standard two paragraph essay. The Junior Series (Series 3) begins the advanced writing stage, where students begin developing upper level writing skills and demonstrate their ability through a three body paragraph essay. The final stage of the AWP, the Senior Series (Series 4) is where students write three to four body paragraph essays that exhibit college level writing ability.

Each series template is designed to assist students in the planning, pre-writing, drafting, and revision phases of their writing; thus, each level is accompanied with
student resources to help students maximize their potential for learning in their learning level (Willich, 2011). The program also includes resources for teachers. The resources include classroom resources that are applicable to each phase of writing instruction.

**Attitudes.** The term *attitude* is defined as mental position, emotion, or feeling towards a subject or state (*Merriam-Webster’s*, 2010). For this study, the term *attitude* is defined as the manner or disposition, position, or feeling towards the AWP design and teaching and learning pedagogy. The research measured the extent in which the attitudes of teachers and students agree on different variables that relate to the teaching and learning of the AWP.

**Behaviors.** Behaviors are defined as the response or action to a subject, state, or stimulus (*Merriam-Webster’s*, 2010). When an individual perceives a stimulus as desirable, they will respond with behaviors that support will maintain that desire. For this study, the research examined the extent in which the AWP impacts thematic behaviors or actions (including motivation) of teachers when teaching writing to their students. For students, the study measured the extent in which students’ show similar learning behaviors (both conscious and unconscious) when using the AWP to complete writing assignments.

**Objective.** The term *objective* is used to describe how the perspectives and/or choices of individuals are minimized due to fixed conditions or concepts (*Merriam-Webster’s*, 2010). The AWP program claims to be an objective program over a subjective program because the program’s design specifically outlines requirements for each part of an academic essay. The purpose of the AWP is to limit vague interpretations on what qualifies as effective writing criteria from one individual to the next.
Opinions. Opinions are defined as the subjective thoughts and/or statements of individuals based on their perceptions, experiences, and/or interpretation of facts (Merriam-Webster’s, 2010). This study aimed to disclose the extent in which the AWP impacts the opinions of both teachers and students within Mater Dei in the teaching and learning of writing.

Perceptions. The perception’s of an individual involves the processing of their conscious and unconscious thoughts and behaviors towards an object, person, or a concept. An individual’s perceptions can also be determined by their cognitive processing of information, their understanding of new information, and their ability to retain information (Merriam-Webster’s, 2010). For this study, the research was interested in determining the extent in which teachers and students agree and/or disagree with actions, opinions, and behaviors that relate to their beliefs and practices in the teaching and learning of writing through the AWP model.

Rhetorical framework. Rhetoric is defined as the art or practice of using language to communicate persuasively and effectively to a given audience (Merriam-Webster’s, 2010). Therefore, a rhetorical framework for technical and/or academic writing is defined as a common philosophy or set of principles that defines the rules and guidelines for quality writing. This study argues that today’s rhetorical frameworks (MLA, APA, and etc.) are subjective frameworks, causing inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning how to write. This study also claims that the AWP is an objective rhetorical framework, a framework that can eliminate the inter-subjectivity between teachers and between teachers and students regarding effective writing criteria.
*Subjective/Subjectivity and Inter-subjectivity.* Subjective or subjectivity refers to an individual’s mental perceptions or interpretations when relating to a condition or concept (*Merriam-Webster’s*, 2010). For example, a room full of individuals may perceive or interpret an object or experience differently based on each individual’s intelligence, belief system, background, and/or personal experiences. The term inter-subjectivity is defined as the disconnecting perceptions or interpretations of individuals in relation to a specific condition or concept. For this study, inter-subjectivity refers to the disconnected perceptions between teachers and between teachers and their students when determining effective writing criteria and/or interpreting effective writing criteria from a common rhetorical framework such as MLA, APA, six traits of writing, and/or the six plus-one trait model (Beck, 2006; Thornton, 2010).

**Assumptions**

The following assumptions are present in the AWP evaluation:

1. The AWP program evaluation includes a wide representation of students who demonstrate different linguistic abilities (English Language Learners to fluent speakers of English), cognitive academic abilities (learners who perform below average in writing to advanced writers), and motivation levels (low motivation to high motivation for learning). It can be assumed that most middle and secondary learning environments include a representation of students who demonstrate the above defined variables and that these variables may be an indicating factor in the results of this study.
2. This study includes a wide representation of teachers from different content areas who each have their own personal experiences in learning how to write analytical/academic compositions themselves. This study assumed that these variables impact each teacher’s perspective as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria, and that these experiences can perspectives can transcend into the teaching the AWP.

3. The AWP is a writing program used to assess student learning for academic writing in the classroom and on school-wide authentic and performance measure in writing. Teachers use the AWP to evaluate the quality and improvement of student writing in accordance with their content area curriculum. Administrators and teachers implement the AWP Sophomore Competency Exam (AWPCE) as an opportunity for students to be formally assessed on their writing ability.

4. A large majority of the parents of students who attend Mater Dei support the schools effort to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing through the use of the AWP learning model. It can also be assumed that most parents at the school rely on the teachers, not themselves as parents, to actually teach the AWP format to their child.

5. It can be assumed that a majority of students in this study come from a variety of different elementary and middle schools across the southern portions of the Pacific and their exposure to academic writing and academic writing program frameworks vary tremendously. The different backgrounds may impact
students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their perceptions of the AWP learning model.

Limitations

The following limitations were present in the AWP evaluation:

1. The research will not measure the extent in which the AWP impacts student achievement in writing. The research in this study will only unveil the AWP’s impact on the teaching and learning of academic writing based on the perceptions, behaviors, opinions, and attitudes of teachers and students.

2. The research will not measure a statistical correlation between professional development on the AWP and its impact on the teaching and learning of writing in all content areas. At Mater Dei individual teachers who teach in content areas outside of English are encouraged, but not required to use the AWP format in their content area. Teachers who use the AWP are expected to initiate support from the English Department. The study may reveal that many teachers outside the content area of English do not use the AWP and/or do not require their students to write formal compositions altogether.

3. This study will not determine the extent in which the prior experiences of teachers and students influence their perceptions, behaviors, attitudes, and opinions in learning how to teach and write analytical/academic compositions in AWP format. This study only aims to measure the extent in which the AWP impacts the behaviors and perceptions of teachers and students since their introduction to the AWP.
4. Although Mater Dei has a large Spanish speaking population, the majority of Mater Dei’s students are proficient in English. Currently, the AWP’s writing resources are written only in English. Thus, the research in this study will not determine whether a student’s English language ability impacts their attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and perceptions of the AWP. Also, the research will not determine whether or not a student’s language ability impacts their success and/or failure as an AWP writer.

5. The research in this study will not provide evidence that graduates of Mater Dei are better prepared for entry-level college writing when compared to students from other districts/schools. Although there is an abundance of research that claims that a student’s writing experience in high school impacts their writing success as entry-level college freshmen, the correlation between the two extend beyond the magnitude of this study.

6. As of today, Mater Dei is the only school in the nation that uses the AWP as a model for the teaching and learning of academic writing. Therefore, the research in this study is limited to the perceptions, experiences, behaviors, and opinions of a single research site.

7. At Mater Dei, teachers of English continue to review, refine, and further develop the AWP. The invested interest of the English Department may affect their perceptions of the AWP in the faculty survey where teachers are asked to examine the teaching and learning of AWP writing within their content area. Although several cautionary parameters have been taken to reduce research bias, it is important to consider this factor as a limitation to this study.
Nature of the Study

Using a quantitative approach to evaluate the effectiveness of a school-wide writing program initiative is a highly appropriate research method when educational communities are interested in measuring the value and impact of a writing initiative as it applies to the improvement of teaching and learning within their unique community. Through quantitative research, researchers can examine different families of variables and constructs through statistical measurements (Creswell, 2008).

For this study, a quantitative design was the most appropriate method of research because the statistical calculations can help educators identify measurable strengths between variables through correlational and inferential statistics; these measurements can provide statistical answers to the research questions (Goldring & Berends, 2009). School officials at Mater Dei are interested in collecting statistical information on the extent in which that AWP favorably impacts the perceptions of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing. School officials can determine the credibility of the AWP by identifying the correlational strengths between the AWP and the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of both teachers and students through survey design research (Creswell, 2008).

Additionally, scientifically based evidence is an attribute to quantitative designs and this form of evidence is accepted by educational lawmakers and school officials as high-quality research that is reliable, valid, and relevant to today’s standards (Brimley & Garfield, 2008). Thus, acquiring scientifically based evidence or numeric evidence on the AWP can help decision-makers identify the usefulness of the program in accordance to their initiative goals. Likewise, the evidence can also help school officials identify
deficiencies in the AWP’s program design and/or program initiative. Either way, a quantitative study will provide a strong foundation for educators to make informed decisions regarding the continuation of the program within their school (Lauer, 2006). A quantitative research design method is not only the most appropriate method for the AWP study, but it is also the preferred method of study.

A quantitative approach is also the preferred method of research because quantitative methods are cost-effective, time efficient, and feasible. Today’s educational environments are high-stakes reform environments that are already complicated by a myriad of factors; these factors consume and differentiate the attention of educators and reform leaders (Lauer, 2006). Therefore, educational researchers must consider the time and feasibility of their study in order to limit complications that could inhibit the completion of their study (Creswell, 2008). Additionally, the statistical results from quantitative studies are considered objective and unbiased; this is especially important in research studies where the researcher and/or the school are invested in the research and/or in the advancement of curriculum initiative being studied. Lastly, Mater Dei can use the quantitative statistics from this study as a comparative foundation when conducting future studies on the AWP.

**Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter 1 included an introduction to the problem, the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the rationale for the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the definitions of terms, the assumptions and limitation of the study, and finally, the nature of the study.
Chapter 2 presents a review of literature that discusses and analyzes research on the social and historical variables that contribute to the perceptions of teachers and perceptions of students regarding effective writing criteria. The chapter further explores how the inter-subjectivity between the perceptions of teachers and their colleagues and the perceptions of students and their teachers can affect the teaching and learning of writing. The middle of Chapter 2 presents theories on professional development and/or training on school-wide writing initiatives and their impact on the perceptions of teachers. The literature review includes extensive research on how professional development/training opportunities can help communities align their perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing, while also increasing teacher buy-in and motivation, which are all variables that can impact student achievement. The final section of Chapter 2 includes a body of literature that examines the cognitive and behavioral readiness of high school students in learning how to write academic compositions at the secondary level. The concepts presented in Chapter 2 provide a theoretical foundation that aims to achieve a further understanding on the theory and pedagogy behind the creation, development, and implementation of the AWP.

Chapter 3 presents information on the research methodology, research design, the population and sampling procedures, the instrumentation, and the validity and reliability of this study. Chapter 3 ends with information on the data collection and data analyses procedures, and finally, the ethical considerations that were taken to complete this study. Chapter 4 presents the numeric data collected from the surveys instruments and provides data analysis in relation to the research questions and hypotheses that guided this study. The final chapter, Chapter 5, presents a final synopsis of the study that includes a
summary of the study, a discussion of the findings, and a final conclusion. Chapter 5 ends with a discussion on the implications of this study, the reliability and ethical considerations of this study, and lastly, the recommendations for future studies.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In today’s multifaceted communities, educational leaders are now more than ever challenged in their efforts to meet the cognitive, linguistic, cultural, and physical demands of their students (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). Under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiative, a reform that pushes towards standardization and increases school accountability, educators are striving even harder to find comprehensive solutions to close achievement gaps in writing proficiency within diverse learning environments (Murphy, 2009). In educational settings, it is no surprise that the alignment of vision, teacher preparedness, quality resources, professional development, and effective leadership all contribute to the soundness and effectiveness of school-wide writing reform initiatives (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001; Knight, 2007). These concepts are specific to the theoretical foundation, the pedagogical framework, and ultimately, the purpose of this study.

Studies conclude that quality learning environments are environments that aim to improve the teaching and learning of writing by diffusing the inter-subjectivity between teachers and between teachers and their students as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria (Andrade, 2001; Beck, 2006; Ruckoldt, 2007; Thorton, 2010). Organizations have discovered that through dialogue and discussion, teachers will debate and determine ways to improve the teaching and learning of writing. When teachers align perspectives on writing theory and teaching and learning pedagogy, they have the ability to create an environment that attempts to eliminate the inter-subjectivity as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria for their students as well (Hudon, 2010). These practices provide an opportunity for educational systems to create environments where students have the
ability to holistically understand the writing expectations of their teachers (Beck, 2006). For both teachers and students, the criteria to meet effective writing frameworks becomes less interpretive and more objective, especially for students in secondary settings who throughout each day, move from one teacher to the next.

Yet, even with volumes of research supporting theories on the value and impact of curriculum alignment in relation to the improvement in the teaching and learning of writing, there is little evidence of any writing program framework or learning model that authentically meets the social, linguistic, and cognitive needs of secondary teachers who are learning how to teach writing and secondary students who are learning how write academic compositions. People can reasonably assume that there is a lack of research in this area simple because these learning models do not exist.

Although several secondary schools have adopted programs such as the six traits of writing or the six plus-one trait program into their high school curriculum frameworks, these models were originally designed to define effective writing criteria for all genres writing, and to meet the learning needs of K-8 audiences, not secondary audiences with a goal to improve academic writing skills for college readiness writing. Likewise, the MLA and APA stylization frameworks were originally designed to standardized writing criteria for scholarly writers; scholarly writing occurs at the college level where students are expected to demonstrate writing proficiency of an advanced writer. Since the AWP is the only framework designed for the teaching and learning of academic writing at the secondary level, researchers are interested in determining the extent in which the AWP eliminates the inter-subjectivity between teachers and between teachers and students at Mater Dei Catholic High School (Mater Dei). This study also determines the extent in
which the AWP writing program framework and learning templates impact the teaching and learning of academic writing at the secondary level.

The review of literature for this study examines different theories, characteristics, and concepts on the social and historical variables that influence the perceptions of teachers and the perceptions of students regarding effective writing criteria. While much is known about the social, linguistic, and cognitive needs of teachers and students when teaching and learning how to write, there are inconsistencies, shortcomings, and even contradictory evidences on how today’s highly publicized writing frameworks impact the teaching and learning of academic writing within different settings. The review of literature contributes to existing theories regarding the characteristics of effective writing processes and writing program frameworks that could be used at the secondary level. The review of literature concludes with a discussion on how the teaching and learning pedagogy of the AWP writing framework supports current understandings on social, linguistic, and academic needs of secondary teachers and students.

**Inter-subjectivity Between Teachers and Their Perceptions on Effective Writing Criteria**

The inter-subjectivity between teachers and their perceptions on effective writing criteria continues to perplex researchers and educators, resulting in differentiated theories on the best practices for evaluating academic writing across various content areas (Beck, 2006; Craft, 2007; Kynell & Tebeaux, 2009). Research studies have aimed to discern these variances by analyzing the historical and social phenomena that shape one’s knowledge and one’s belief regarding effective instructional practices in the classroom.
These perceptions have lead to further studies on a teacher’s values and opinions when assessing student work. The dichotomies between teachers and their underlying perceptions of effective writing criteria stagnates reform efforts aimed to improve writing in today’s standard’s based classrooms. The unpredictable nature between these different variables justifies a need for an objective writing program framework, where teachers adhere to curriculum standards when assessing written work.

**The Historical and Social Phenomena that Shape Teachers Perceptions**

Historical and social phenomena have shaped teachers and their perspectives regarding their instructional roles and instructional pedagogies when teaching expository writing and evaluating student work (Kynell & Tebeaux, 2009). In *The Association of Teachers of Technical Writing: The Emergence of Professional Identity*, researchers Kynell and Tebeaux discovered that the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their perspectives on effective writing criteria can be further explored by analyzing how technical writing has been valued and taught at various institutions. They also explored how teachers’ social values and historical experiences in learning how to write transcended into their teaching pedagogies and instructional practices. Kynell and Tebeaux confirmed that one’s historical and academic experience transcends into an individual’s teaching attitude and instructional pedagogy. Thus, the instruction and evaluation of technical writing is profoundly influenced by the experiences of each individual when learning how to write themselves. Therefore, a teachers’ historical and academic experience will become the avenue in which they evaluate the quality and
effectiveness of their student’s written work. Yet, not all teachers are confident in their writing abilities nor are they motivated to teach writing altogether.

Researchers have also discovered that teachers who teach in content areas outside of English significantly vary in their perceptions regarding their roles and responsibilities as teachers of academic writing when compared to teachers of English. Many teachers feel that the instruction of writing should be reserved for English classrooms and that teaching writing in their content area imposes unrealistic expectations on them as teachers. Not to mention, the teaching of writing takes time away from valuable instruction that should be designated for core subject area curriculum (Kynell & Tebeaux, 2009). Brooks (1999), Craft (2007), and Knight (2010) found that many teachers outside of English do not perceive themselves as avid readers or writers, let alone teachers of reading or writing. Kynell and Tebeaux (2009) agree and state that, “Many middle and high school teachers have achieved levels of expertise in their content areas but don’t see themselves as competent teachers of writing” (p. 18). A teacher’s internal lack of confidence and/or motivation can negatively impede their willingness and ability to effectively be teachers of academic writing. This can be especially true at the secondary level where students tend to be more directive and inquisitive about their grades on essays (Beck 2006; Craft, 2007; Thorton, 2010). These findings suggest that there needs to be further research on the development and implementation of instructional models or methods for the teaching and learning of academic writing; models and/or methods that can be used across the curriculum. Research suggests that teachers can use these models or methods (such as the AWP) to improve their understanding, their confidence, and
ultimately, their motivation as teachers and evaluators of academic writing within their specialty area.

Educational experts argue that despite a teachers’ confidence or motivation to teach writing, the difference between teachers’ and their perceptions of quality writing can be equated to each teacher’s perception of his/herself regarding their fundamental role as a teacher of writing in accordance with their school’s learning priorities (Abrams & Madaus, 2003). Teachers tend to perceive the quality of their students’ work differently and these differences can be attributed to the level of emphasis in which a school’s curriculum framework caters to the learning objectives that are tested on state and federal performance assessments (Abrams & Madaus). A large majority of state and federal performance assessments puppeteer local curriculum frameworks and several of these assessments do not include an authentic writing component. In many schools, students are evaluated on their ability to properly identify the use/misuse of surface level criteria such as grammar, word choice, and sentence fluency, over student voice and their synthesis and analysis of a given topic (Abrams & Madaus). This reality concludes that even when students write compositions, many teachers may view their role as editors rather than facilitators of higher-order thinking and persuasive writing (Beck, 2006). Thus, the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their perceptions of quality writing indicates the need further understand ways in which schools at the secondary level can authentically improve the teaching and learning of academic writing while also hold both teachers and students accountable to the same performance standards.
For students, the phenomena of deciphering subjective academic writing standards between and among content areas teachers and understanding the lesson or value behind these standards can be confusing and even detrimental to the overall expository growth of the learner (Beck, 2006). The inter-subjectivity between each teacher-teacher assessment pedagogy and assessment practices for the teaching and learning of academic writing may ultimately hinder their students' motivation and/or ability to learn (Beck, 2006; Vitella, 2006). In many cases, students are forced to dissect their teachers’ expectations for academic writing; these expectations are defined by each teacher and their perceptions regarding effective writing for their given classroom (Beck, 2006; Thorton, 2010; Vitella, 2006). The inter-subjectivity between teachers and students permeates inconsistent practices in the teaching and learning of writing and may inhibit a student’s ability to focus on the writing task altogether. Some researchers argue that this confusion leads to a forum of excuses, excuses students will use to justify their lack of ownership or motivation to complete the assignment (Beck, 2006).

As researchers continue to dispel the correlational variables that contribute to students’ perceptions regarding effective writing criteria, they are finding that the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their students' perceptions are both caused by the historical, social, and cultural phenomena that shape both. Studies reveal that the existing gap between these two dichotomies continues to rapidly grow further apart each year.
Historical, Social, and Cultural Phenomena That Shape Students' Perceptions

Like teachers, students' perceptions regarding academic writing is a result of that student’s historical, social, and cultural influences combined with their academic background and teacher-student experiences in writing (Beck, 2006). Researchers found that students' perceptions can be analyzed by looking at how well students write, how much students write in English and across the curriculum, and the type of instruction they receive (Applebee & Langer, 2007). Other researchers argue that students' perceptions can be analyzed by looking at ways in which they interpret and negotiate an assignment; these negotiations are based on the “social and cultural assumptions the student brought with them” (Ackerman, 2009, p. 42).

Cultural and linguistic variances also contribute to a student’s perception of themselves as writers. In several studies, research reveals that a students’ ethnic background, a students’ previous educational experiences in another country, and a students’ English language ability transcend into their perceptions of the writing process and their perceptions of themselves as writers (Beck, 2006; Ovando, Combs, and Collier, 2006; Semma, 2009; Shafer, 2007). Huang’s (2009) examined over 20 empirical studies that analyzed the impeding variables that affect English Language Learners (ELLs) and their perceptions of themselves as writers. He concluded that many factors affected ELL students including their “English proficiency, mother tongue, home culture, and previous learned style of written communication” (p. 1). In American systems, ELLs especially struggle with the concept of a five paragraph essay. This concept combined with the pragmatics of writing an entire essay in English can be inconceivable for any ELL. 
student (Huang). For ELLs, the cultural and linguistic variances clearly impact their perceptions of themselves as writers and their confidence in their ability to write cohesive essays in English.

Other researchers such as Zaman (2008) and Hillcocks (2010) revealed that sex and/or gender plays a significant role regarding a student’s perception of him or herself as writers as well as his or her perceptions regarding the usefulness of the writing process when learning to write academic compositions. Both researchers claimed that females projected themselves as more confident writers than males, especially when comparing the confidence of white females with minority males. Yet, even though many researchers agree that a student’s language ability, his or her ethnicity, sex, and/or gender all play a role in their perception of themselves as writers, other researchers would argue that that a students’ perception regarding the purpose of writing ultimately characterizes the success of each student as a writer.

In Strong’s (2003) study, Writing across the Hidden Curriculum, she examined students and their perceptions regarding the value and purpose of their writing assignments. For a large majority of middle school students, Strong revealed that writing is perceived as “something you do to get a grade; school is something you do to get a diploma or certificate” and for these students, “The main purpose of writing in school is to tell the teacher what the teacher already knows, not to explore a topic or idea” (p. 3). In order to diffuse the negative perceptions students have regarding the value and purpose of writing assignments, Strong suggests Writing-to-Learn. Writing-to-Learn is a concept where students produce several drafts of their written composition and as they undergo the drafting processes, they record their improvements in a learning log. The learning log
in itself becomes the graded assessment over the end product of the essay. Strong found that when students perceive writing as a learning experience rather than a grade, their perceptions on writing, their confidence, and their motivation to learn are positively impacted.

Other researchers such as Kania-Gosch (2009) found that a student’s high school experience with writing and writing assessment both positively and negatively influenced his or her confidence, desire, and perceptions of themselves as writers as entry-level freshmen college students. Kania-Gosch argued that students’ who had teachers that highly valued writing; teachers that provided authentic learning experience for students to express their opinions through written compositions, were teachers that also typically planned learning experiences that transcended the same values onto their students. When interviewed, students in the study felt that their positive experience with these types of teachers helped them build confidence and improve their perception of themselves as writers when compared to students who attended high schools where their teachers and/or curriculum frameworks rarely required students to write. Unfortunately, many students who enter college with low confidence and poor perceptions of themselves as writers often face severe financial losses when they realize that their perceptions of themselves are a matter of fact. These same students do not understand and/or cannot meet the academic writing demands that are expected at the college level, and they find themselves struggling to stay afloat in courses that require advanced writing assessments that not only evaluate their writing proficiency, but their knowledge on a specific topic (Kania-Gosch). These circumstances are further complicated by the fact that not all faculty members at universities perceive their role as teachers of writing. Rather, many
professors perceive writing as an assessment of knowledge, and they act as evaluators who judge the quality of a finished product. Ultimately, a student’s perception of his or herself as a writer is strongly influenced by the number of opportunities he or she has in learning how to write and the quality of each learning experience.

Clearly, there are many variables that can impact a student’s perception of themselves as writers, their perception of the writing process, and their perceptions as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria for academic compositions. The research presented in this section begs for further investigation on ways in which schools can positively influence: (a) the experiences of students when learning how to write analytical/academic compositions, and (b) students perceptions of themselves as confident writers. This investigation includes a need to further identify and discuss the inter-subjectivities that lie between teachers’ and their perceptions of effective writing criteria when compared to their students’ perceptions of effective writing criteria.

**An Examination of Inter-subjectivity Between Teachers and Their Students**

Further theories claim that there is existing evidence that the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ perceptions on effective writing criteria juxtapose with the perceptions of their students. Beck’s (2007) popular study, *Subjectivity and Inter-subjectivity in the Teaching and Learning of Writing*, explored the external forces that shaped the discrepancies between teachers’ perspectives regarding effective writing criteria and their students’ perspectives regarding effective writing criteria. In her qualitative study, Beck identified the inter-subjectivities between teachers’ and their students by examining their
perceptions of the writing process and their understanding of effective writing competencies when evaluating written work. The results of Beck’s (2006) study validates that teachers and students “employ different criteria when evaluating writing” and when students revise their essays, they approach the evaluation process with “different stances or purposes” when compared to their teachers (Beck, 2006, p. 5). More significantly, Beck discovered that students who most often achieved high marks on their essays, were also the same students who understood their teacher’s vision; a vision of taking pride in one’s written work, while also carefully adhering to the descriptive standards of the assignment. Most students who performed below average in writing, which Beck indicated as the majority, either resisted to complete the writing task altogether and/or they did not understand their teacher’s vision of the writing assignment. Beck concluded that teachers can help students perform at higher levels when they clearly communicate “their goals of a good essay” (p. 453).

However, for many teachers, communicating the goals of a good essay can be quite difficult. In academic writing, multiple characteristics can define effective writing criteria and each of these characteristic continuously shift among different hierarchies of importance. The characteristics at the top of the hierarchy are the characteristics that are perceived to be the most valued and these values often depend on the values of each teacher and the objectives for each writing assignment. For students, these expectations need to be clearly communicated and in many cases, they are not communicated clearly enough. In Beck’s (2006) study, she discovered that the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their students partially stemmed from a teacher’s inability to effectively define and communicate his/her writing philosophy and writing expectations to his/her
students. The inter-subjectivities between teachers’ perceptions and their students’ perceptions became evident when students in her study were asked to evaluate their teachers’ written feedback on their graded work. Beck’s research revealed that many students failed to understand their teacher’s comments and a few of these same students took their teacher’s comments personal. Beck explains that this phenomena exists because “student’s fail to share the background knowledge that would allow them to interpret their teacher’s instructive remarks as she [his or her teacher] wishes them to be interpreted, leading to exasperation and confusion concerning the intent of the comments” (p. 5). The student’s exasperation and confusion complicated his/her understanding of the instructional intent of his/her teacher, which caused many students to remain stagnant and even decline in their expository growth. Additionally, Beck also discovered that for many students, the sole purpose for reading and reflecting on their teachers’ comments was solely guided by their motivation to get a higher grade over actually improving their writing skills. Ultimately, Beck ends her study by encouraging writing program frameworks such as the six traits of writing or the six plus-one trait model as a means to diffuse the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their students regarding effective writing criteria.

Similar to Beck’s (2006) study, Flower (2003) study, Negotiating Academic Discourse, observed the dialogue between teachers’ of writing and their students during teacher-student writing conferences. During the teacher-student conferences, students were asked to evaluate and discuss his/her interpretations of his/her teacher’s comments on their written work. Flower found that when a teacher and his/her student examined the written work of the student together, the act itself became a negotiation between the
teacher's expectations and the student’s perceptions of those expectations. Flower argues that in many cases, the rapport between the teacher and his/her student impacted the student’s attitude towards his/her teacher’s perceptions and criticisms. If a negative rapport existed, students most often perceived his/her teacher’s comments as unconstructive and personal. Flower suggested that “a more accurate conceptual framework” could diffuse the ambiguity between teachers’ perceptions and a student’s interpretations of their teacher’s perceptions (p. 83). Arguably, a conceptual framework such as the AWP presented in this study.

Further understandings concluded that inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their students behold in their perceptions of the actual writing process. Bontrager’s (2004) study, *Perceptions of Writing Process: A Study of First Year Composition Students*, discovered that many students perceived writing as a linear process, rather than a recursive process of planning, revising, and editing. Students who perceived writing as a linear process focused on the *end product* and not the *writing process* when composing their written work. Like students, teachers also carry their own perceptions regarding their role as teachers and facilitators of the writing process. When Bontrager surveyed college professors, he found that many professors perceived their roles differently, where some professors emphasized the traditional paradigm of *an error free written product* and others valued the *recursive process* of writing. Bontrager’s study reinforces the lack of consistency between teachers’ and their perceptions of themselves as teachers of writing and the writing process and students’ perceptions of their teachers as facilitators of learning. The disambiguation between these variables could detrimentally challenge the
authentic learning experience of any student regardless of the writing program framework (Beck, 2006; Bontrager, 2004; Kania-Gosch, 2009).

As presented, there is an abundance of research that identifies the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their perceptions of themselves as instructors and evaluators of writing and students perceptions of their teachers, themselves as writers, the writing process, and the purpose of writing (Andrade, Du, & Mycek, 2010; Beck, 2006; Flower, 2003; Strong, 2003). Most studies reveal that the disambiguation between these perceptions can result in a hit or miss learning experience for many students; a concept that underpins the No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001) initiative (Strong, 2003). Schools, including post-secondary universities, are recognizing and taking responsibility for the stifling percentages of students who perform below average in writing; these organizations are now required by law to create the most optimal learning experience for all students.

**Attempts to Standardize Characteristics of Effective Writing Criteria Including Advances in Current Writing Program Initiatives**

State and federal accountability initiatives continue to impact nation-wide movements to identify and standardize the characteristics of effective writing criteria. Under the NCLB initiative, public schools are required annually to provide state and federal agencies with an Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) report that documents the academic performance of their students. The AYP report provides state and federal agencies with statistics regarding student performance on standardized performance assessments. The AYP report is also a means for the federal government to monitor the
accountability of schools. The United States Department of Education (2010) defines the AYP report as “A statewide accountability system mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts meet Adequate Yearly Progress” (p. 1). Ultimately, the impact of the standard’s movement has brought significant attention to the way in which organizations identify, define, and hold teachers and students accountable for writing within their curriculum.

Historically, the aim to standardize the characteristics of effective writing criteria was initially created as a response to justify the foundation to teach technical writing and research in schools (Kynell & Tebeaux, 2009). Today, schools continue to look to popular teaching and learning models in an attempt to refine curriculum goals and to align teaching and learning pedagogies in writing. Writing stylization frameworks such as the MLA and APA frameworks and learning models such as the six traits of writing, the six plus-one trait model, and the toulmin method are all examples on how current writing initiatives attempt to standardize characteristics of effective writing criteria within education. The value and impact of these efforts at the secondary level remains controversial.

**Aim for Standardization: The Impact of Standardized Assessments**

Reform efforts defined under the NCLB Act mandates public schools to administer state and federal performance assessments; these performance assessments also require each student to produce evidence of their proficiency in reading and writing. However, the definition of what qualifies as evidence of proficiency is highly debatable.
and interpreted differently from state-to-state. Title VI, under the NCLB initiative even claims that the federal government will provide federal funding for each state in order to allow each state to test their students using valid and reliable instruments in accordance with their state standards (United States Department of Education, 2002). Some states mandate multiple-choice performance assessments to measure student performance in writing, while other states mandate evidence of written work. With these opposite proficiency dichotomies, it is no surprise that educational experts and researchers propose contradicting theories on the affects of state and federal performance assessments in writing and their influence on local reform goals.

To further illustrate, the last national assessment in writing was administered in 2007 by the National Assessment for Educational Statistics (NAEP; 2010) where 165,000 eighth and twelfth grade students from more than 7,600 schools and 45 states participated. The national writing assessment measured the writing skills of students on informative, narrative, and persuasive writing tasks. The Nation’s Report Card revealed that the “average writing scores and the average percentages of students performing at or above Basic were higher than in both previous assessments in 1998 and in 2002” (NAEP, para. 1). Although this claim is true, the increase was only marginal when compared to statistics from the United States Department of Education (USDOE). In 2009, the USDOE documented over 51 million students who were nationally enrolled in public education. One can question as to whether or not the results of 165,000 students represent the general population (USDOE, 2010). In fact, according to the USDOE (2009), only 50.1% of schools nationwide met AYP performance goals in 2008-2009.
The implications of these findings present opposing controversies regarding state and federal performance assessments and their impact on local curriculum frameworks for the teaching and learning of writing. On one hand, research reveals that on the national level, students are maintaining an average level of writing proficiency even when many schools have adopted curriculum frameworks that ‘teach to the test’. In these environments, teachers commonly implement formative assessments as pre-assessment measures to assess student learning toward testing objectives. The results of the pre-assessment help teachers identify deficiencies in student learning prior to the test date. In many cases, this method leads to a marginal increase in student performance on the final assessment, which also leads to a higher AYP score for the entire school (Oberg, 2010, Tuttle, 2009). Yet, not all tests require students to produce their own written work and critics argue that teaching to the test unjustly undermines the value of writing in the curriculum. Statistically, a school may meet AYP performance objectives; yet, students can leave the same school severely unprepared to communicate persuasively in college and/or in the workplace (Wilson, 2009).

Many states have recognized the need to incorporate alternative authentic assessment practices in order to accurately measure student proficiency in academic writing. For example, in the state of California all public schools administer various authentic performance assessments in writing at different grade level intervals. This demand was initiated under the state of California’s Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. Under the STAR program, fourth and seventh grade students are required to take the California Standardized Test (CST) for writing, and high school students are expected to take the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). On the
CAHSEE students are required to read a prose passage and develop a cohesive two and a half page analytical response in order to graduate from high school (California Department of Education [CDOE], 2009). Yet, even with these assessment practices, a large percentage of students who attend schools in California still demonstrate below average in their writing proficiency on college readiness exams such as the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, and the ACT.

The College Board, the corporate developers of these proclaimed readiness exams vouch that their “standards for college success align with the common core state standards” of high school curriculum frameworks (College Board, 2010). Yet, if this is true, than one can conclude that neither these tests nor high school curriculum frameworks emphasize writing the way they should. The PSAT/NMSQT specifically, does not require students to write, yet many high schools continue to use this test to measure their schools proficiency in reading and writing, including Mater Dei. Unlike the PSAT/NMSQT, the SAT requires students to write academically, but schools cannot require students to take the SAT, nor can they require students to report their scores to their high school. Therefore, high schools cannot use SAT scores to authentically measure student proficiency in writing. Despite these realities, the College Board undoubtedly claims that their tests can be used as a guide to help administrators and teachers develop their own curriculum:

The College Board Standards for College Success were designed to articulate clear standards and objectives with supporting, in-depth performance expectations to guide instruction and curriculum development. These standards are
intentionally specific in order to assist educators in designing lessons, curricula, and assessments. (p. 1)

The College Board even further posits that there is a strong alignment between their standards and state standards for English Language Arts and writing. Although the College Board may guide various curriculum frameworks within secondary schools, one needs to rightfully question how they guide standards for academic writing for college readiness.

The derailment between high school curriculum frameworks and college readiness exams can be explained in Shafer’s (2005) study, *Standardized Testing and the College Composition Instructor*. In his study, Shafer interviewed first year college students and their perceptions of their writing experiences in high school. Shafer found that a large majority of the students in his study were highly critical of their high school writing experiences. The participants strongly agreed that their experiences in high school did not prepare them for college writing. The participants also agreed that in order for students to be prepared for the demands of college writing, they must be given opportunities to write and to write often in high school. Unfortunately, students in many schools are not given the opportunity to write academically, let alone the opportunity to write often within various content disciplines. Thus, it is no surprise that many students are graduating from high school without the essential knowledge or skills to be successful writers in college.

Clearly, schools nation-wide are still struggling to find comprehensive solutions that will bridge the demands of state, federal, and college agencies with the authentic needs of their students. As a result, many organizations depend on motivated teachers and
various professional learning communities (PLC) within their organization to drive internal change (Martin-Kneip, 2008). PLC environments that aim to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing must first be given opportunities to engage in discussions that identify, define, and align teaching pedagogies that are authentic to the needs of their students.

**Advances in Professional Development**

**Aimed to Standardize Writing**

There is an abundance of research that explains and explores the relationship between professional development and/or training sequences on school-wide writing initiatives and their impact on the teaching and learning of writing (Collopy, 2008; Craft, 2007; Hudon, 2010; Ruckoldt, 2007). Researchers defend that appropriate and effective professional development and/or professional training on school-wide writing initiatives increases teacher-teacher alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. When communities align their perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing, they further eliminate the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and their students.

More specifically, in response to the growing nationwide effort to improve school-wide accountability, researchers began to study advances in professional development and/or training sequences that aim to improve writing across the curriculum. Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) or write-to-learn initiatives, a concept developed in the early 1990’s, is a curriculum alignment philosophy where teachers from all content areas have constructive opportunities to collaboratively: (a) define the characteristics of
effective writing criteria, and (b) determine ways in which writing can be incorporated and evaluated into their content area (Kozlow & Bellamy, 2004). Most WAC initiatives begin by engaging teachers in meaningful discussions that define and outline the best practices for effective academic writing (Craft 2007; Hudon, 2010; Strahan & Hedt 2009). This identification process ultimately leads to debate and negotiation, which eventually leads to inter-curricular and co-curricular alignment (Craft, Bullough, 2007; Hudon, 2010; Strahan & Hedt, 2009).

Researchers found that professional development in the traditional sense is meaningless unless teachers are given opportunities to strategically plan and implement the new curriculum framework into their current framework (Roberts, 2008; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). Craft (2007) agrees and further contends that the most effective professional development practices include opportunities for teachers in the same content area to collaborate with one another on strategic unit designs that align with WAC initiatives. When teachers work together they “will undoubtedly see the virtue of their practice” (p. 2). In WAC initiatives teachers become the agents of change, and administrators must support change appropriately (Calabrese, 2002; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006).

Yet, even though there is a positive correlation between professional development and its ability to diffuse the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their colleagues, there are inconsistencies and even inconclusive evidences in research proving that this training correlates to a significant improvement in student learning in writing. In fact, Ruckoldt (2007) suggests that a teacher’s confidence and his/her own knowledge, skills, and abilities to teach writing will ultimately predict student learning in writing.
Supporting Ruckolt’s theory, Collopy (2008) was interested in determining the extent in which a professional training sequence on the six plus-one trait program impacted student learning in writing. Collopy concluded that the training itself only minimally impacted student learning in writing. Her findings also concluded that many teachers in her study reverted back to their fossilized methods after the training sequence. Although Ruckolt and Collopy revealed insignificant findings between professional development and student achievement, they still defend theories that value the concept of professional development as a means to align teachers’ perceptions with students’ perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing.

Oppositely, other researchers would undoubtedly argue that there is a strong correlation between professional development training and student achievement in writing. The National Writing Project (NWP; 2002) has conducted several studies that assessed the relationship between professional development opportunities and their affects on student achievement in writing. The overall magnitude of these studies revealed that when teachers collaborated and clarified their content goals prior to instruction, student learning in writing significantly increased (NWP).

Although there are contradictory evidences regarding the extent in which professional development sequences impact student achievement in writing, it is clear that these sequences align teachers’ and their perceptions as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria in WAC initiatives. WAC professional development sequences also provide teachers with opportunities to develop curriculum frameworks that aim to improve the teaching and learning of writing within their own content area. Many experts further claim the creation and implementation of a WAC rubric not only standardizes
effective writing criteria, but it also provides a pathway for teachers to efficiently communicate these characteristics to their students (Andrade, 2000; Evans, 2007).

**Efforts to Standardize Writing through WAC Evaluation Rubrics**

There are many studies that agree that the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their perceptions on effective writing criteria can be minimized through the implementation and use of standardized WAC resources, such as evaluation rubrics (Andrade, 2000; Evans, 2007). Evaluation rubrics are a way to align characteristics of effective writing criteria between teachers and can be a tool to communicate these characteristics to their students. Vitella’s (2006) study, *Promoting Positive Teacher Attitude and Student Achievement in Writing through Effective Professional Development*, examined the relationship between a school’s implementation of a WAC rubric and teacher’s evaluations of his/her student’s work. Vitella found that the WAC rubric improved consistency in the evaluations between teachers in her study. However, she cautioned that the improvement in this alignment cannot be credited to the rubric template alone; rather the impact of change was strongly associated with the professional development training sequences on the rubric and in writing.

Like Vitella (2006), Grande (2003) also found that when teachers in his study used the six plus-one trait rubric to evaluate the quality of his/her students’ written work, teacher’s believed that the evaluation process was less interpreted, and the works he/she evaluated individually resulted in similar feedback as a whole. Both Vitella and Grand argued that when it comes to WAC evaluation rubrics, further professional development
and/or collegial opportunities to negotiate perceptions on effective writing criteria could lead to even closer evaluations between teachers when assessing student work.

Alternatively, Tierney and Simon’s (2004) discovered that many teachers, especially teachers’ who lack confidence in their own writing ability, found it difficult to effectively communicate the evaluation criteria on the evaluation rubrics to their students. These findings suggest that even though teachers may agree on evaluation criteria for writing, many teachers do not have a comprehensive understanding on how they themselves would use the criteria as a reference to teach and evaluate their students’ writing proficiency. Many researchers discovered that the use of rubrics alludes to assumptions that all teachers have the same knowledge, skill, motivation, and ability to cohesively transfer each learning objective meaningfully into their lessons. Rubrics alone do not provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and tools to teach writing effectively. Many teachers even admit that when in doubt, they revert back to their own fossilized teaching and evaluation practices (Kynell & Tebeaux, 2006). The effective implementation of a rubric may depend on the extent in which teachers receive professional development sequences in the teaching of writing (Vitella, 2006). Despite these controversies, rubrics continue to be an evaluation instrument that teacher’s use to determine the quality of writing for written compositions in WAC initiatives.

With so much at stake in education, it is evident that there is a nationwide need to develop a further understanding on ways in which teachers can holistically improve the teaching and learning of writing within their content area at the secondary level. This study argues that a writing program framework such as the AWP can assist educators in their ability to holistically teach the characteristics of effective writing criteria for
academic compositions in accordance with the learning objectives on the AWP rubric. These claims can be further supported by examining research on independent and organizational efforts that aim to improve writing through stylization frameworks and popular learning models such as the traits of writing, the six plus-one trait program, and the toulmin method.

Efforts to Standardize Writing through Stylization Frameworks and Learning Models

Kynell and Tebeaux (2009) revealed that prior to the standards movement, institutions across America severely lacked resources for the teaching and learning of academic writing. In response, organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) combined efforts to provide teachers and students with qualified literature that defined and outlined effective practices for technical writing. Yet, Franz & Spitzer (2006) stated, “While there were many resources available to help students create and organize prose, relatively few are available that focus solely on teaching the mechanics and nuances of a specific formatting style” (p. 13). Further efforts from the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychology Association (APA) supported the nations need to not only standardize writing, but to provide teachers and students with resources that teach the characteristics of effective writing criteria through stylization frameworks. Today the MLA and the APA stylization formats are now formally recognized and implemented nationwide in K-12 schools and post-secondary organizations. All students
are required to demonstrate effective theory and use of MLA and/or APA stylization frameworks in their written work.

Although there is an abundance of research that examines the relationship between different variables regarding the value, use, and impact of MLA and APA handbooks for college settings, there is extremely limited research on how these handbooks are used by teachers and students to improve the teaching and learning of writing within secondary settings. In fact, the research is so limited that studies on writing and on writing achievement in high school settings only mention MLA and/or APA stylization frameworks when describing the requirements of the writing assignment in their study. Yet, even with no existing evidence proving that these frameworks lead to the improvement in the teaching and learning of writing, high schools across the country announce in their curriculum handbooks and on their district/school websites that students are required to demonstrate their proficiency in writing by adhering to MLA and/or APA styles.

To demonstrate further, in Andrew-Vaughan and Fleisher’s (2006) study, *Research Writing: The Unfamiliar-Genre Research Project*, high school students were asked to investigate and define a genre of writing and present their findings in a research paper. As part of their learning experience, students were asked to keep a journal on what they learned about their genre and what they learned about writing research papers. In the end, students presented their journals and their essay in a research binder. The results of the study revealed that throughout the entire project, students only referred to the MLA handbook when learning how to properly stylize their annotations and bibliographies (Vaughan & Fleisher). Although students were required to adhere to MLA principles,
students did not use and/or find the MLA handbook useful in the creation or development of their actual persuasive compositions. Aside, it is important to note that neither association (MLA or APA) actually claims that their handbooks are to act as agents to the teaching and learning of writing; rather both organization are solely founded on their efforts to only identify the common rules and accepted theories of writing. From Vaughan and Flesher’s study, one can only deduce that both teachers and students do not find the MLA and/or APA handbooks useful when teaching and learning how to write the internal prose of an academic composition. Onwuegbuzie, Combs, Slate, and Frels (2006) agree and further conclude that most middle and high school students are incapable of learning and synthesizing over 400 pages of theory and stylization. They also conclude that it is difficult for teachers to find optimal ways teach these frameworks efficiently and effectively to their students.

In an effort to improve the teaching and learning of the MLA and/or APA principles, many organizations began to investigate and implement writing program frameworks or learning models such as the six traits of writing, the six plus-one trait program, or the toulmin method into their writing curriculum. These writing program frameworks include the holistic theories and stylization criteria of the MLA framework. However, unlike the MLA and APA handbooks, these learning models provide teachers and students with a teachable approach to writing; an approach that meets the needs of beginning to advanced writers.

Thus, it is important to further understand how these frameworks impact teacher’s perceptions and students perceptions regarding effective writing criteria, and how these models impact the teaching and learning of writing in different settings. Under the
Northwest Regional Education Laboratory’s (NREL) Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Program, Kozlow and Bellamy (2004) conducted an experimental study that examined the six plus-one trait learning model and its impact on student achievement in writing. The purpose of their study was to examine the “efficacy of professional development for teachers using the six plus-one trait learning model with respect to improving student writing skills” (p. 3). Kozlow and Bellamy found that the combination of effective professional development and the use of a structured writing model helped teachers’ align their perceptions regarding effective strategies when teaching students how to write academic essays in different content areas. However, the actual results of their study determined that there was an insignificant strength between the professional development training and student achievement in writing. The results of their study suggests that although the six plus-one trait learning model helped align the teachers’ perceptions, it may have not helped teachers’ align their perceptions with their students. When it comes to academic writing, students may significantly benefit from a learning model that specifically defines and outlines the internal components and criteria of an academic composition. The toulmin method attempts to provide teachers and students with a learning model that objectively outlines effective writing criteria for the internal components of a persuasive composition.

The toulmin method, also referred to as Claim-Data-Warrant, is a rhetorical framework that specifically focuses on an individuals formation of writing strong argumentative analyses through the application of a linier formula: a method that identifies the argument’s claims, the reasons, the evidence, and the anticipated rebuttals and objections (Conner, 1998; Lunsford, 2002). In compositions, students are to make a
claim, provide data for that claim, and then warrant their claim with his/her argument. The Toulmin method is a rhetorical framework that equips teachers and students with an objective formula or objective pattern for effective argumentative writing. Many researchers and educators who favor the Toulmin method like the simplicity of the program and the teach-ability it has to offer when teaching and learning how to write academic essays.

In support of the Toulmin method, Larson, Britt, and Kurby’s (2009) action research study, Improving Students’ Evaluation of Informal Arguments, examined both high school and college students and their ability to critique the structural quality of an argument before and after a tutorial on the Toulmin philosophy for claim-reason arguments. Larson et al, argue that if students are unable to identify weak and/or invalid claims of other writers, they will not be able to produce effective arguments in their own writing: “A student who cannot distinguish between a claim supported by a valid reason and one supported by a disassociated reason...will be unable to critically analyze arguments and unable to produce them with much proficiency” (p. 341). The results of the study concluded that prior to the tutorial, a high percentage of both high school and college students could not detect flawed arguments when compared to results after the tutorial. In this study, the Toulmin method helped students improve their ability to identify, comprehend, and communicate effective versus ineffective reasoning within written compositions. The conclusion of the study revealed that when students understand the Toulmin method, they are better equipped with insight on how to critically evaluate the quality of their own writing (Adkinson & Tchudi, 2001; Bizup, 2009).
However, other researchers found that the toulmin method focuses too much attention on the argumentative aspects of an essay and overlooks the value and importance of the cohesiveness between introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions (Hertzberg, 1998; McMinn 2003). For these critics, the toulmin method does not provide a consistent teaching and learning framework for each part of the essay. Rather, several parts of the essay are still interpretive and subjective to interpretation. In *Contextualizing Toulmin’s Model in the Writing Classroom*, Lunsford (2002) examined the subjective nature of the toulmin model during a summer composition course for high school students. Lunsford found that the meaning, relations, and application of toulmin’s terms often shifted as teachers and students engaged in discussions on writing. Lunsford (cited in Bizup, 2009) further states that “All parties involved in the program, were continuously re-construing the toulmin model in various forms . . . depending on their goals at any single time” (p. 15). Consequently, Lunsford concluded that the toulmin method still causes inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their colleagues and between teachers’ and their students when it comes to defining and interpreting effective writing criteria for academic compositions.

Ultimately, the impact of the toulmin method and the six plus-one trait model in the teaching and learning of writing at the secondary level remain contradictory and even inconclusive. Today, many schools still struggle with the implementation of a school-wide writing program that is truly objective and also caters to a wide spectrum of learners.
Critics like Hekler (2006) questioned whether or not academic writing can be even taught since every essay and every assignment aims to achieve a different purpose. These same critics strongly opposed the concept of teaching and evaluating academic compositions from a single formatting sequence because a single formatting structure limits a writer’s ability to express their prose creatively (Hekler, 2006; Correa, 2008). Although these claims are important to consider, many of these same critics are also advanced writers, who through years of reading and evaluating the works of others and writing often themselves, already understand the definitions of quality writing and are able to express their views more creatively. For these critics, it may be true that a single formatting sequence may restrict a writer’s ability to creatively express their persuasive argument. However, educators need to question whether or not adolescents even have the cognitive ability and developmental skills to tackle the depths of a persuasive topic and also express their views analytically, persuasively, cohesively, and creatively to their audience in accordance with MLA and/or APA stylization frameworks (Belland, Glazewski, & Richardson, 2008; Correa, 2008). Cognitive and Behavioral theorists suggest that the biological readiness of students will determine their ability to retain new information and demonstrate complex thinking and reasoning skills. Administrators and educators can improve the teaching and learning of writing when they understand classical learning theories and incorporate strategies that align these theories with the cognitive ability and biological readiness of their students.
Learning Theories

Piaget (1971), a behavioral psychologist and constructivist theorist, claimed that meaning-making happens when learners can adapt their own knowledge and experiences to the context of the new information presented. Analytical thinking in itself requires students to demonstrate complex reasoning, which according to Piaget does not develop until the formal operations stage around the adolescent ages of 11 or 12 years old (Belland, 2008). Cognitive scientists have argued that children and/or adolescent teenagers, who they also characterize as beginner writers, have not developed the advanced cognitive abilities to be able to identify and express on their own ways in which an essay could be structurally and analytically improved (Belland, Glazewski, & Richardson, 2008). Piaget’s theory further supports the need for objective writing frameworks. When teachers provide students with writing program frameworks that identify and objectify effective writing criteria, students begin to conceptualize ways to improve their own writing.

Additionally, Information Processing theorists believe that meaning-making happens when a person understands the value of the new information being presented to them. In this case, a person subconsciously decides to make-meaning of the new information depending on the value he/she places on the new information being presented to him/her. The process of meaning-making involves gathering information, encoding the information, and finally retrieving the information when needed. Individuals have to decipher what information stays and what information goes; a concept explained through the characteristics of short-term and long-term memory (Miller, 1956). For young learners, the ability to determine what is important and what is not important can be an
intellectual pursuit novice learner’s find difficult to cognitively decipher (Belland, Glazewski, & Richardson, 2008). This can be especially true when young learners are learning how to write analytical/academic compositions. According to previous findings, in many schools the expectations for effective writing criteria are vast and obscure. In these cases, when students do not understand what is expected of them or they are muddled in confusion regarding the assignment expectations, they will also find it cognitively difficult to grasp the information in such a way that allows them to retain it and make-meaning of it. Students who are confused may choose to reside in their confusion. The combination of the vast and obscure expectations for effective writing criteria and a student’s inability to decipher the expectation presented to them, limits opportunities for students to engage in authentic meaning-making experiences. Although there is no perfect system, educators continue to make striving efforts to implement meaning-making strategies that scaffold to the developmental needs of their students. These strategies include the process approach, teacher conferencing, and individual and peer-editing.

**Learning to Write: The Process Approach**

In Wilson’s (2009) qualitative study, *A Phenomenological Study of Writers and the Epistemological and Ontological Implications of Teaching Writing*, experienced writers were interviewed in order to better understand how successful writers learn how to write. Wilson argued that when secondary educators understand how successful writers learn how to write, they will have better insight on effective ways to construct a secondary curriculum that aims to improve the learning experiences for all students. Not
surprisingly, Wilson discovered that successful writers most often spoke of the process approach.

The process approach is a teaching method that mimics the cognitive sequences in which students learn how to write. Students develop their ideas and arguments through different stages of writing. These stages of writing traditionally include: (a) the pre-writing stage, where students brainstorm their ideas through diagrams, grids, or boxes; (b) the drafting stage, which includes outlining ideas and the initial writing of a draft and/or drafts; (c) the revising stage, which can include individual and/or peer-editing where writers edit for a deeper analysis, voice, sentence structure, stylization, and grammar; (d) the editing stage, where students proofread their essays; and (e) the publishing stage, where writers present their final product to an audience.

The process approach can impact each learner differently. According to the United States Department of Education (USDOE; 2009) when students took the National Performance Assessment in Writing, 81% of females (compared to 67% of males) used the blank space in their test booklets for pre-writing. The statistical results between the scores of males and females also revealed that females performed higher than males by an average of 20 points. The significant difference in performance between males and females could be associated to the 14% marginal difference between males and females and their use/non-use of pre-writing strategies before composing their essay (USDOE). However, the marginal difference may also be a result of gender differences between males and females. Stereotypically, females tend to develop social skills faster than males because females are generally more communicative, which could lead to their ability to express themselves more effectively than males during adolescence (USDOE).
For most individuals, the writing process, whether recognized or not, naturally exists. However, an individual’s perception of the writing process and the level of time he/she spends on each stage may vary based on the writer’s developmental learning stage and/or experiences with writing. Olson (1999) argued that advanced writers perceive and apply the writing process differently when compared to beginner writers. Her findings revealed that beginner writers viewed the writing process as a linear practice where students would often complete one stage and then sequentially move to the next stage. Unlike beginning writers, advanced writers did not perceive the writing process as a linear practice; rather the writing process was a recursive practice, a practice that more naturally existed as students composed their written work. Olson argued that advance writers greatly demonstrated a meta-cognitive understanding or knowledge about their own thinking and writing. Wilson (2009) affirmed Olson’s findings and further states that for advanced writers, the “drafting and prewriting stages may intersect, and revision may occur at any point of the process” (p. 24). Beginning writers, however, were more interested with surface level issues. Issues such as grammar, handwriting, and the stylization of their paper were more important than using the writing process to develop new ideas and insights and to organize or reorganize their arguments for better presentation.

In contrast, some researchers argue that the process approach to writing is a practice that cannot be taught (Warne, 2008). Post-Process theorists argue that writing “is a practice that cannot be captured by a generalizable process or a Big Theory” (Kant, 1999, p. 1). Both Warne and Kant support the same opinion in that the process approach is relative and institutionalized. For many writers, the process approach is a series of
monotonous tasks, rather than strategies to improve an individual’s argument. Wilson (2009) concluded that Warne and Kant’s theories may suggest that teachers are experiencing a lack of success in the teaching of writing because they are trying to teach the un-teachable. However, writing is teachable and many researchers claim that the learning of writing stems from the constructive interactions that students experience with their teachers and with their peers during the writing process.

**Learning to Write: Teacher-Student Conferences and Peer Editing**

In today’s classrooms, students are learning how to write by being involved in interactive writing and revision feedback strategies with their peers and with their teachers. Tomlinson and McTighe (2007) contend that appropriate and constructive feedback during the process of learning provides “critical ‘along the way’ information to guide instruction in response to the nature and needs of diverse learners” (p. 71). Tomlinson and McTighe’s theory on the essence of feedback strongly associates with the teaching and learning of writing. In several studies, teachers most often see significant improvements in writing when teachers have one-on-one opportunities to tutor their students (Claude, 2010; Tobin, 2010).

In his study, *A Qualitative Study of the Systemic use of One-on-One Teacher-Student Writing Conferences in a Secondary Environment*, Taylor (2010) found that teacher-student conferencing profoundly impacted the writing experiences of many secondary learners of writing. In her study, teachers and students were asked to be observed as they both engaged in teacher-student conferences that discussed and
analyzed the written work of the student. The intent of the teacher-student conferences were designed to: (a) provide teachers with an opportunity to monitor the progress of their students, and (b) help students facilitate ideas, analyze structure, and determine the direction of their paper. Initially many students were very shy and somewhat reluctant to meet with their teacher. Other students simply dreaded the meetings altogether. However, after a series of short meetings, Taylor observed that students became more expressive and inquisitive about their writing and that the conferences appeared to become more enjoyable and appreciated altogether. Many students claimed that the conferences made them become better writers by helping them improve their writing skills and their abilities to see their own faults in their writing. In the end, students in the study significantly valued their overall conference experience.

Although teacher-student conferences are ideal, they are not always practical (Taylor, 2010). In today’s high school settings, teachers usually have the opportunity to meet with each student for only few minutes, and in many cases, those few minutes are interrupted by the needs of other students. At the secondary level, many teachers may have over 100 students with 30 to 35 students in one given period. For these teachers, to manage their large class sizes while also productively conferencing with each student is an overwhelming and even an inconceivable demand to place on a teacher. As a result, many teachers rely on peer-editing. The value of peer-editing is controversial.

Students who become excellent writers learn how to write by examining the writing of others (Patterson, Schaller, & Clemens, 2008). Yet, some researchers argue that when it comes to peer-evaluations, many students do not have the language, the discipline, or the knowledge to suggest structural and/or analytical/academic revisions. In
In many cases, students will make suggestions on surface level errors such as stylization, grammar, and/or sentence clarity. Although these claims are valid, studies also reveal that if teachers provide their students with resources to facilitate their role as a peer-editor, writing achievement improves.

In Thomas’s (2010) study, *Eighth-Grade Writing: A Mixed-Methods Study on the Impact of Criterion-Referenced Peer Feedback on Students’ Writing Achievement*, he examined the extent in which eighth-grade students benefited from peer-feedback strategies. Thomas’s empirical results revealed that when teachers’ provided their students with revision resources during the peer-revision process, their peer-feedback, their editing, and their overall performance in writing improved. It is important to note that the students in this study were given peer-feedback strategies to facilitate the peer-feedback process. Without this component, it is questionable as to whether or not the study would reveal the same findings.

**The AWP: Meeting the Needs of Teachers and Their Students in WAC Initiatives**

The AWP provides teachers and students with an objective writing program framework that attempts to eliminate the inter-subjectivity regarding effective writing criteria between teachers and their colleagues, between teachers and their students, and between students and their peers. This study suggests that the AWP’s teaching and learning framework aligns with accepted theories on the developmental stages of learning, the biological readiness of students, and effective teaching pedagogies that lead to the improvement of student learning in writing.
The AWP meets the different developmental levels and biological abilities of secondary students by offering four developmental sequences or series options. As students develop as writers, they sequentially progress from Series 1 to Series 2, 3, and 4. Series 1 contains writing objectives and length requirements that are manageable for beginning writers who are typically freshmen. Series 2 contains writing objectives and length requirements for beginning-intermediate writers who are typically sophomores. Series 3 includes writing objectives and length requirements for intermediate-advanced writers who are typically juniors. Series 4 offers two AWP writing frameworks that adhere to the developmental skills of advanced writers. The term *advanced* associates to the skill level of writers who have met proficiency requirements for Series 1, 2, and 3, and are now practicing skills that will facilitate their ability to become proficient writers in college or the work place. Mater Dei Catholic High School (Mater Dei) does not assume that all students develop at the same level, thus the AWP series options can be adapted to the developmental learning needs of each student. For example, a senior who is also identified as English Language Learner (ELL) may be required to analyze the same essay topic of his/her peers, but the classroom teacher may choose to scaffold his/her essay requirements into a Series 2 or 3 framework depending on his/her language ability and his/her past demonstration of writing proficiency.

Additionally, the AWP offers student resources that provide assistance and guidance to students as they undergo the developmental stages of writing and the writing process itself. The pre-writing resources are specifically designed to guide students as they initially develop and organize their ideas. The pre-writing resources also provide an easy way for teachers to monitor the progress of their students. For writers, especially
beginning writers, producing a rough draft can take an enormous amount of time and effort. If students produce drafts that are off topic, unorganized, and/or missing thoughtful prose, and there is limited time for revisions, many students will not have the time, motivation, or desire to re-write their essay and will settle for a lower grade (Taylor, 2010). More specifically, the pre-writing outlining worksheets support the concept of learner-centered classrooms where students can use the outlining worksheets as an organizational tool to outline the organizational structure (or direction) of their essay, including the placement of primary and/or secondary references, prior to writing their rough draft. The planning worksheets are also a simple interactive resource teachers can use to monitor the progress and direction of a student’s essay prior to the development of their prose draft.

Additionally, the AWP framework provides individual and peer-editing resources that not only re-enforce the learning objectives of the AWP, but also facilitate higher-order thinking and learning. The AWP’s individual review workshop is a series of worksheets that helps individual students evaluate their own writing in accordance with the AWP’s teaching and learning objectives. The peer-review workshops include small group activities where each student has an opportunity to engage in different editing tasks. The objective nature of the AWP framework helps students identify and communicate ways in which they themselves or their peers can improve their writing.

**Final Remarks/Conclusion**

The review of literature examined theories on the inter-subjectivity between the perceptions of teachers’ and the perceptions of students’ regarding effective writing
criteria. The literature revealed that the inter-subjectivities between teachers’ perceptions and their student’s perceptions inter-play when evaluating the quality of student work. In order to diffuse these inter-subjectivities, organizations are standardizing the characteristics of effective writing criteria. The findings from these studies reveal an immediate need to further explore methods, strategies, and/or frameworks that aim to improve the quality of teaching and learning of writing for all secondary students.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the AWP on teachers and students when teaching and learning how to write academic compositions within Mater Dei Catholic High School (Mater Dei). The results of this study will help administrators and teachers at Mater Dei determine the value and impact of the AWP as a writing initiative within their secondary learning environment. The results of the study will also contribute to the current body of research that examines and explores writing initiatives that aim to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within secondary schools across the nation.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and defend the research methodology of this study. This chapter opens with a discussion that identifies and explains the research problem as it relates to the appropriateness of each research question and each of their anticipated hypotheses. This section also defends the selection and appropriateness of the research methodology and the research design as they each relate to the research problem. The middle of this chapter introduces the population, the sample group, and the instrumentation used in this study. This section also introduces the panel of experts who reviewed, edited, revised, and approved the instrumentation used in this study. The final section of this chapter includes an examination of the data analysis procedures that were used to effectively and appropriately understand the data as it pertains to the purpose, research questions, and the hypotheses of this study. The chapter ends with a discussion
on the ethical considerations that were considered in order to ensure that this study maintained respect for persons, benefice, and justice.

**Statement of the Problem**

It is not known to what extent the Analytical Writing Program (AWP) favorably impacts the teaching and learning of academic writing within Mater Dei Catholic High School (Mater Dei). Yet, Mater Dei continues to raise standards regarding the program’s implementation within their school. All teachers at Mater Dei are strongly encouraged, but not enforced to use the AWP as a tool to teach academic writing within their content area. Students at Mater Dei are expected to master and apply the basic structure of the AWP to their content studies. In order to fulfill requirements for graduation, all students at Mater Dei are required to take a Sophomore AWP Competency Exam (AWPCE) and students who do not pass the exam are required to enroll in a six-week AWP writing course. In an effort to determine the credibility of the AWP within Mater Dei, it is imperative that administrators and teachers at Mater Dei understand the value and impact of the program in the teaching and learning of academic writing within their school.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The quantitative study on the Analytical Writing Program (AWP) was designed to measure the extent in which the AWP impacts the teaching and learning of academic writing at Mater Dei. The following six research questions were used to guide this study:

\[ Q_1 \] To what extent does the AWP impact classroom instruction for academic writing?
Q2. To what extent does the AWP impact classroom learning for academic writing?

Q3. To what extent does the AWP impact teacher-teacher perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q4. To what extent does the AWP impact teacher-student perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q5. To what extent does the AWP impact student-student perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q6. To what extent are the AWP’s program resources useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing?

The following six research hypotheses also guided this study:

H1. The first research question used a 5-point Likert frequency scale to statistically measure the extent in which teachers demonstrate the same level of frequency in using AWP resources and AWP pedagogies when teaching students how to write academic essays. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and classroom instruction for academic writing.

H2. The second research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP aligns the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of students in the learning of academic writing. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and the learning of academic writing.

H3. The third research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between
teachers and their colleagues in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-teacher pedagogical alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

H4. The fourth research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their students regarding writing expectations for academic compositions. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing.

H5. The fifth research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between students and their peers regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and student-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing.

H6. The sixth research question used 5-point attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP’s program resources are useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing. The research suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP’s program resources and their use in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Research Methodology

Today’s educational communities have become research institutions where administrators and teachers are implementing quantitative research practices in an attempt to identify and improve deficiencies within their learning community (Lauer,
Among the various research methods used to understand different phenomena that arise within educational settings, quantitative designs specifically provide educators, community members, policymakers, and state and federal agencies with hard empirical evidence or statistical evidence on the existing nature of different phenomena within their school (Creswell, 2008; Girden, 2001; Lauer; Leander & Osborne, 2008). Researchers contend that many of deficiencies that are prevalent amongst today’s educational environments are closely linked to misunderstandings, biases, ambiguities, and/or vagueness when diagnosing the various idiosyncratic variables that influence their learning organizations (Lauer). Quantitative research designs can help administrators and teachers understand the statistical strength between different situational phenomena that arise within their own educational setting; particularly when measuring the impact of classroom interventions and/or school-wide reform initiatives (Creswell; Trochim, 2006). The numeric data from quantitative research studies can be used to help organizations understand the academic limitations of their students and in effect, help administrators appropriately and efficiently align state and federal funding with the needs of their teachers and their students (Goldring & Berends, 2009). Within any organization, when administrators and teachers are engaged in effective data-driven decision-making practices, the teaching and learning opportunities within that organization holistically improve (Lauer).

Quantitative methods have helped many researchers effectively examine the statistical strength between variables in environments that aim to improve the teaching and learning of writing (Creswell, 2007). Millemman’s (2007) quantitative research study examined the extent in which the students’ scores are predictable on high-stakes
performance assessments by examining their scores on the school’s Language Arts proficiency exam. Milleman used the independent variable, the six plus-one trait model as a method for teachers to evaluate the quality of student writing on the local assessment in writing. The analyses of scores revealed a statistically significant level of predictability between student scores on the local assessment and the outcome of their scores on the nationally recognized performance assessment used in his study (Milleman).

Other researchers have used quantitative methods to determine the extent in which a statistical strength exists between classroom interventions and student achievement in writing (e.g., DeLong, 2009; Grande, 2003; Taylor, 2010; Wight, 2010; Zumbrunn, 2010). Grande’s (2003) quasi-experimental design examined the effectiveness in using the six plus-one trait scoring rubric as a method for writing instruction. In her study, Grande applied statistics to examine the cause-effect relationship between the six plus-one trait rubric (the intervention) and its effects on student achievement in writing. Grande compared performance results before and after the classroom intervention.

Researchers have also used quantitative designs to examine professional development and its impact on: (a) teachers perceptions of themselves as teachers of writing, (b) the effective implementation of school-wide writing initiatives, and (c) the improvement of student achievement in writing (e.g., Anderson, 2009; Collopy, 2008; Kozlow & Bellamy, 2004; Vitella, 2006). Although these studies vary in their research designs, they are all quantitative studies that used quantitative methods to collect quantifiable data on different phenomena that relate to the teaching and learning of writing.
The AWP program evaluation is a quantitative study that used survey design research to collect and analyze numeric data on the statistical strength between different variables. A quantitative study provides statistical data that will help administrators and teachers at Mater Dei determine the quality, effectiveness, and the future of the AWP. Therefore, it was highly appropriate to implement a quantitative design research method to further explain the extent in which the AWP impacts teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing within Mater Dei.

**Research Design**

The AWP program evaluation is also a correlational study that used cross-sectional survey design research to determine the research questions and the validity of the six research hypotheses presented in this study. In cross-sectional design research, the sample population is measured once, unlike experimental studies where the sample population is usually measured before and after a treatment or intervention (Creswell, 2008; Girden, 2001, Lauer, 2006). In this study, the sample population was measured once since the AWP already exists within Mater Dei’s Language Arts curriculum framework.

In survey design research, a researcher is interested in obtaining numeric data (i.e. percentages, means, frequencies, and ranges of scores) on the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of a given population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2008). The purpose of this study was to obtain numeric data that statistically identified the extent in which the AWP impacts the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students as they relate to the AWP writing initiative. Two survey instruments were designed for
the purposes of this study; a survey instrument for Mater Dei teachers and a survey instrument for Mater Dei students. Each survey instrument included a Likert 5-point item behavioral and attitudinal scale to measure the extent in which teachers and students favorable agree and/or behave in a certain manner in accordance with the AWP. The faculty survey instrument attempted to measure the extent in which the AWP favorable impacts teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The student survey instrument attempted to measure the extent in which the AWP favorably impacts students’ attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors when learning how to write academic essays. The numeric data collected from the survey instruments provided data on ways in which the AWP may impact a larger population of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Survey design research is a highly effective method of research when evaluating program initiatives. In previous studies, several researchers have implemented survey design research to evaluate writing initiatives. For example, both Kozlow and Bellamy (2006) and Vitella (2006) examined the impact of professional development sequences on the six plus-one trait model as it relates to the teaching and learning of writing. For Kozlow and Bellamy, the purpose of their experimental study was to examine the impact of a two-day training sequence on the six plus-one trait model. The teachers in their study were surveyed in order to measure the frequency in which each teacher implemented the desired behaviors from the six plus-one trait training workshop into their classroom practices. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the means, averages, and distribution of frequency from the survey responses.
Vitella’s (2006) study also used survey design research to determine the extent in which a professional development training sequence on the six plus-one trait writing rubrics aligned the perceptions of teachers’ with the perceptions of their students regarding effective writing criteria for different genres of writing. Vitella used a 5-point Likert scale survey instrument to statistically measure teachers’ perceptions regarding their professional development training on the six plus-one trait rubric, and its impact on classroom practices after the training. Teacher’s were asked to rate his/her changes in their behaviors and instructional practices. Vitella also included descriptive statistics to analyze the results of the survey responses in accordance to the purpose of her study.

In addition to these studies, many organizations across America have used surveys to evaluate the perceptions and practices of teachers and students regarding the teaching and learning of writing within their own schools/districts. For these schools, survey research continues to be an efficient and feasibly means to effectively collect data for a variety of research purposes related to their school setting. The results from the survey responses most often govern changes in educational communities that aim to meet the needs of their pluralistic communities.

**Population and Sampling Procedure**

**Population**

This study aims to provide researchers, administrators, and teachers in high school settings with information to further understand the teaching and learning dynamics that impede and facilitate the teaching and learning of academic writing within their own environment. The population of this study targets secondary educational environments
that exhibit similar demographics and internal organizational motivation levels to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their own school or district. Today, many organizations continue to implement and refine their writing initiatives in an effort to align and/or re-aligning the perceptions of teachers and their students regarding the characteristics and definitions for effective academic writing. The results of this study will help similar populations determine if the AWP’s pedagogical approach and learning model could lead to the same alignment in the teaching and learning of writing within their own district or school.

Sample

Mater Dei is private college preparatory high school located in the southern portion of a Pacific state. A large percentage of students who attend Mater Dei are Hispanic and many of those students commute from Mexico each day to attend school. Since Mater Dei is a private sector, students must pay an annual tuition. Most students that attend Mater Dei come from privileged economic backgrounds that have a strong Catholic faith formation. Unlike public schools, students who do not attempt to perform academically can be permanently dismissed from the school.

The AWP evaluation included a convenience sample of 475 student participants who were enrolled in freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior English. Students at Mater Dei have a wide range of academic and language abilities, and come from a wide variety of ethnic, linguistic, and social backgrounds. Other than being a private sector, the student sample in this study represents the same linguistic and ethnical diversities that are fairly typical within most high school settings in the state.
This study also included a convenience sample of approximately 36 faculty members who teach within various content disciplines at Mater Dei. Of the 36 faculty members, 10 faculty members teach English Language Arts, where the AWP is a required component of the curriculum. In content areas outside of English Language Arts, the AWP for academic writing is encouraged, but not required. For this study, is questionable as to whether or not students are writing academically, let alone writing academically in the AWP format in content areas outside of English. However, teachers of all content areas are included in the sample in order to help researchers understand the extent in which students are writing in general and/or in AWP format. Including all teachers at Mater Dei provides researchers with more accurate data regarding the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of all teachers as they relate to the AWP. The data can also help researchers unfold possibly explanations and/or speculations between the different variables that factor in to school-wide writing initiatives aimed to improve the teaching and learning of writing within secondary environments. Since Mater Dei is the only school in the nation that uses the AWP as a tool to teach academic compositions, it is only logical to conduct an AWP program evaluation that includes all willing participants, both teachers and students from the school.

Instrumentation and Sources of Data

The faculty survey instrument and the student survey instrument were both originated for the purposes of this study. However, three influential studies contributed to philosophy, design, and layout of the survey instruments. These studies include (a) the Kansas State Department of Education’s (KSDOE; 2008) Teacher Survey on Writing
Instructions, a survey that measured the frequency in which teachers in Kansas implement a variety of instructional practices that pertain to writing; (b) Kozlow and Bellamy’s (2007) teacher survey (results) that measured the frequency of teacher’s classroom behaviors after a two-day professional development workshop on the six plus-one trait model; and (c) Evan’s (2003) semi-structured interview questions for teachers regarding their perceptions, attitudes, and opinions of standard-based writing and standards-based instructional practices.

Teacher Survey

The faculty survey instrument was divided into three sections. Two sections were used to collect ancillary information and the remaining third section included categories with questions that specifically aimed to statistically measure one of the six research variables in this study. Participants responses were measured using a Likert 5-item frequency scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always) and a Likert 5-item attitudinal scale (strongly disagree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). Each Likert scale item was assigned an ordinal number for statistical analysis.

The first section of the faculty survey collected demographic information on each teacher, including his/her department, his/her gender, and his/her total years of teaching experience. The second section of the faculty survey measured the frequency of each teacher’s current instructional practices as his/her practices pertain to the teaching and learning of writing in general, not necessarily the AWP. The purpose of the second part of the survey was to provide insight on the current behaviors of all teachers in respect to the teaching and learning of writing in general within the various content disciplines. These findings were statistically compared to teachers’ perceptions of themselves.
regarding their role as teachers of writing and/or teachers of writing using the AWP. At Mater Dei, it is likely that if teachers do not teach writing, they most likely do not teach the AWP. Therefore, in order to achieve more accurate results that directly measured teachers’ attitudes, opinions, and current instructional practices as a result of the AWP, only teachers who use the AWP as a framework for the teaching and learning of writing continued to the third section of the survey instrument.

The third section of the survey included a 5-point attitudinal scale and a 5-point frequency scale that measured the extent in which teachers favorably agreed in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding the AWP and its impact in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The questions in the third section were strategically divided into categories and each category included a series of questions designed to statistically measure one of the six research variables in this study. The summated aggregate from each survey category provided appropriate statistics to determine the frequency distributions in the 1-2, 3, and 4-5 Likert scale item categories. These results were then used to determine the validity of each research hypothesis in this study.

**Student Survey**

The student survey was designed to evaluate the extent in which the dependent variable, the AWP favorably impacts students’ perceptions in the learning of academic writing. The student survey instrument also included three sections. The first two sections were added to collect ancillary information and the remaining section included categories with questions that specifically aimed to statistically measure one of the six research variables in this study. The six research variables were measured using a Likert 5-item
frequency scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always) and a Likert 5-item attitudinal scale (strongly disagree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). Again, each Likert scale item was assigned an ordinal number for statistical analysis.

The first section of the survey collected demographic information on each student including his/her grade level, current GPA, first language, and length of attendance at Mater Dei. The second section of the student survey measured the frequency of students’ opportunities to write academically across the curriculum, and his/her actions and behaviors when writing academic/analytical compositions in general, not necessarily compositions using the AWP. The third section of survey included a 5-point attitudinal scale that measured the extent in which the AWP favorably impacts students’ perceptions, attitudes, and opinions, and behaviors when learning how to write academic essays in AWP format. The third section of the survey was divided into four categories and each category included strategic questions designed to statistically measure one of the six research questions in this study. The four categories included questions that provided statistical insight on: (a) students’ perceptions of themselves as writers, (b) students’ perceptions of their teachers as instructors of writing, and (c) using the AWP terminology to communicate, evaluate, and discuss effective writing criteria with their peers and their teachers. The third section of the survey also measured students’ opinions regarding the AWP as a learning framework that leads to student achievement in academic writing. The summative aggregate was used to determine the frequency distribution among the 1-2, 3, and 4-5 Likert scale item categories. The results were then used to determine the validity of each research hypothesis in this study.
Panel of Experts

A panel of experts reviewed the survey instruments in order to establish content and construct validity and reliability of both survey instruments. The panel of experts were asked to provide written comments on: (a) the survey’s structure and readability, (b) the clarity of the questions and directions, (c) the relevancy of the questions, (d) the overall flow of the survey, (e) whether or not the survey instrument represented the purpose of the study, and (f) whether or not the survey was appropriate for the sample. The experts were also asked to provide insight on possible missing elements such as missing questions, topics and/or general information on the survey instruments.

The first panel expert chosen for this study was Mater Dei’s school President and former Superintendent of School’s for a private district in the southern portion of a pacific state. The President also served as a Board Member for the Western Accreditation of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accrediting Commission for Schools for several years. WASC is an accrediting association for colleges and universities and for public and private elementary, middle, and secondary educational organizations. The President’s leadership experience as a former superintendent, a former Board Member for WASC, and his current role as Mater Dei’s President, all confirm his knowledge, judgment, and ability to appropriately and effectively provide high-quality insight and feedback on the survey instruments. As an on-site or on-campus leader, the President’s primary obligations reside within Mater Dei where he is fully committed to ensure and maintain the highest respect for persons on campus. Lastly, the President is also well attuned to the history and development of the AWP at Mater Dei.
The second panel expert was the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Mater Dei. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction has a PhD in Higher Education Administration and Management and a Post-Doctorate in K-12 Superintendent/Principal Administration. In addition to his educational background, he has served in a variety of administrative and leadership roles throughout the United States, including his principalships in Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Illinois. He has also received several educational honors and awards, including the winner of the “Dissertation of the Year Award” on “The History of the Illinois Community” in 1977 and the honor of being recognized by the Charleston Post as the principal of a “Top Ten South Carolina High School” by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. He has authored over 21 publications, and has given several presentations both nationally and internationally on history, education, and adolescent psychological health. He has also served several times as a visiting member for WASC at various schools across the southern Pacific. In addition to his credentials, the Director of Curriculum has been instrumental in providing support for the development and implementation of the AWP within Mater Dei’s curriculum. He has personally taught a remedial course on the AWP to student’s who failed the AWP Competency Exam after their second attempt. Which such experience and knowledge in education and research, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction was able to offer valuable insight on the validity and reliability of the survey instruments.

Since the AWP is a dominant component of the English Language Arts curriculum, it was logical and reasonable to include a teacher from the English Department on the panel. Therefore, the third panel expert was the English Department
Chairperson, who is also a leader, organizer, and coordinator for WASC’s Accrediting Commission for Schools at Mater Dei. The Department Chair is certified by the College Board to teach SAT and Advanced Placement courses at Mater Dei. In addition to these achievements, he has played a fundamental role in the organization, improvement, and alignment of the English Language Arts curriculum. Most importantly, he has contributed to the creation, development, and implementation of the AWP at Mater Dei. His background, experience, and knowledge on the AWP enhanced the conceptualization, accuracy, and precision of the survey instruments.

**Validity**

The validity of a study refers to the degree in which the study accurately assesses and reflects what the researcher intended to measure (Lauer, 2006). For any research study, threats to internal validity (including statistical and construct validity) can skew the results of the study, which can also threaten the validity of the research outcome (Creswell, 2009). For this study, the research identified and addressed common threats to survey design research.

Common threats to research studies include construct and content validity of the data collection materials. For this study, data was collected through two survey instruments that were specifically designed for the purposes of this study. In an effort to minimize threats to construct and content validity, the survey instruments were reviewed, revised, and edited by a panel of three educational experts. The panel of experts eliminated threats to construct and content validity by making sure that the questions on the survey instruments were appropriate and ethical, and that they aligned with the
purposes of this study. When data collection instruments are reliable and appropriate to their research, the study increases its probability that the conclusions will be valid (Lauer, 2008). This study not only made every effort to eliminate construct and content validity of the survey instruments, but it also made every effort to eliminate response bias.

Response bias can be a critical factor in determining the extent in which a research study is valid. In this study, response bias can be discussed in two definitions. First and traditionally, response bias for survey design research occurs when the researcher receives at or below a 70% response rate. For this study, in the effort minimize a low response rate, all teachers were given the opportunity to voluntarily take the faculty survey during their department meetings. Since teachers are required to attend these meetings already, it was predicted that teachers would be more willing to complete the survey during this time. Likewise, students were also given the opportunity to voluntarily take the survey on a pre-designated time and date in their English class. Since students are required to be in class already, it was predicted that students would be more likely to take the survey. Setting aside pre-determined dates and times increased the overall response rate, which ultimately limited response bias and increased internal validity of the findings for this study.

Response bias in its second definition can occur when a certain population shows favoritism towards an idea or concept (Merriam-Webster’s, 2010). For this study, response bias could invalidate the research findings if the research design, instrument, and approach are not carefully considered. To ensure that the study is bias free, the research approach, design, and instruments used in this study were carefully considered in an effort to obtain honest and well-rounded feedback.
This study limited threats to response bias by allowing the entire school population to participate in the study, not just the English department or a select group of students. Not every teacher at Mater Dei demonstrates the same attitudes and behaviors when it comes to teaching writing and/or teaching AWP writing within their content discipline. Likewise, most teachers at Mater Dei come from a variety of professional backgrounds where they have used and taught different writing frameworks altogether. Thus, including the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers from all content areas and different background experiences increases the well-roundedness and holistic value of the survey responses.

Similar to teachers, students in this study also come from a variety of learning experiences prior to entering Mater Dei. In fact, the process of learning how to write academically often begins in middle school. Many freshmen have already been exposed to the six traits of writing, the six plus-one trait program, and/or the toulmin method upon entering high school. Students at Mater Dei are exposed to the AWP their freshmen year and their exposure thereafter will vary based on their teachers’ instructional methods and the intent of the writing assignment. Therefore, extending the opportunity for all students to participate in this study will facilitate feedback from a variety of learning perspectives.

Secondly, the purpose of a program evaluation is to collect quantifiable data that can help school officials make data-driven decisions to improve the teaching and learning within their school (Goldring & Berends, 2009). The underlying purpose of this study is to help school officials understand the extent in which the AWP impacts teachers and students in the teaching and learning of writing. The research findings will be used by school officials to determine ways in which the Mater Dei can improve student
achievement in writing. To obtain this information, school officials rely on the honest and unbiased feedback from their teachers and students. In an effort to further eliminate response bias, all teachers and students received a comprehensive letter that explained the purpose and intent of this study. The letter also explained the benefits of honest, unbiased feedback. Additionally, since the survey instruments are quantitative, thus the results are determined statistically. Statistical results eliminate potential threats to research bias.

In addition to taking appropriate measures to minimize construct validity, content validity, and response bias, this study also took appropriate measures to minimize threats to external validity. External validity is determined by the degree in which the results from the sample population can be generalized to larger populations, different settings, and past and future situations (Creswell, 2008). For this study, external validity is determined by the degree in which administrators and teachers in different schools or districts can use the findings from this study to reflect, evaluate, and/or improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their own environment. To increase the ability to generalize this study, the research included a convenient sample of teachers and students that represent a wide spectrum of cultural, social, cognitive, and linguistic backgrounds that are common in mainstream learning environments (see Sample). The convenience sample used in this study also characterizes the different abilities, skills, confidences, and motivation of teachers regarding the teaching and learning of writing within their own content areas. Likewise, the student sample is a typical representation of the range of academic abilities and motivational levels of students when it comes to learning how to write academically. However, since Mater Dei is a private sector, the results of this study cannot be generalized to public organizations due to factors
associated with tuition and contingency of enrollment based on academic performance (Creswell, 2008).

Nonetheless, threats to internal and external validity were also minimized through: (a) appropriate planning, (b) consultations with research experts, (c) a thorough review of the literature on the topic, and (d) through a thorough review of similar quantitative studies (Creswell, 2008). These precautionary steps validate the research design, the data collected, and the transferability of this study.

**Reliability**

Reliability of a study refers to the degree of the study’s repeatability and consistency of results (Girden, 2001). Under the same conditions, any researcher should be able to conduct the study and obtain the same or similar results. In survey design research, the survey instrument(s) define the reliability of the study. Reliability of an instrument is dependent on whether or not the instrument actually measures the variables the research intended to measure in accordance with the research question(s) (Lauer, 2006). Reliability also means whether or not the scores “from an instrument are stable and consistent” (Creswell, 2008, p. 167). As previously stated, the survey instruments in this study have been reviewed by a panel of educational experts in an effort to increase the reliability of this study (see Panel of Experts).

The reliability of a study can also be jeopardized by the way in which the participants in the study are approached and recruited, and by the way in which data is distributed and collected (Creswell, 2008). Creswell states that “When procedures vary, the researcher introduces bias into the study and the data for individuals may not be
comparable for analysis” (p. 178). If the procedures are unclear and/or teachers and students feel that they are being coerced and/or rushed to complete the study, the reliability of the study can be invalidated. Likewise, if teachers and students do not understand the intent and/or purpose of the study, both teachers and students may hold their own assumptions and biases, which may cause them to respond differently and thus, jeopardizing the reliability of any study.

To minimize factors that could impact the survey conditions and ultimately, the reliability of this study, all participants received the same exposure (within reason) both vertically and horizontally within and among grade levels and content areas. For the student recruitment and data collection process, each teacher in the English department (the data collectors) received written procedures and oral scripts in an attempt to standardize the recruitment and data collection between teachers. For the teacher recruitment and data collection process, all teachers were exposed to the same recruitment speech; a speech that was orally scripted, and the same formal recruitment letter; a letter that was also attached to the faculty survey instrument and a scantron response sheet during their department meetings. The procedures for the student and faculty recruitment and data collection processes were consistent among and between all members within all grade levels and content areas. Since these processes were consistent, the testing conditions can be considered reliable.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process for the student survey took three weeks. Since all of Mater Dei’s students (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors) are enrolled in an
English class, and the AWP is predominantly taught in their English class, teachers in the English department were responsible for distributing and collecting the letters of informed consent, the letters of child assent, and the survey materials from each of their students in each of their classes. In order for a student to participate in the survey study, the student was required to obtain informed consent from a legal parent and/or guardian. Upon legal consent, the student then signed the letter of child assent. Once both letters were signed, the student was allowed to participate in the study. All students received the letters of informed consent and the letters of child assent (in English and/or in Spanish) from his/her English teacher two weeks prior to the designated survey date. On the designated survey date, students who chose to participate in the survey study were given 15 minutes to complete the survey in their English class. When students were finished, he/she turned in their survey and their scantron responses to their English teacher. The survey responses were then compiled for data analysis.

The faculty survey took a total of two weeks. During a school-wide department meeting segment, all teachers received a letter of informed consent along with the survey instrument and a scantron response sheet. Teachers who chose to participate in the study proceeded to take the survey during or after the meeting segment. All teachers who agreed to voluntarily participate in the survey were asked to return his/her survey responses anonymously in a designated mailbox in the faculty mailroom by a designated date and time.
**Data Analysis Procedures**

The Likert scale items on the survey instruments are considered nominal scale items. Nominal scale items can be difficult to measure without numerical representation. Therefore, each Likert scale item was assigned an ordinal number in order to determine the frequency distributions among the 1-2, 3, and 4-5 Likert scale item categories. The following nominal assignments were converted to ordinal numbers: never or strongly disagree = 1, rarely or disagree = 2, sometimes or neutral = 3, often or agree = 4, and always or strongly agree = 5.

The first phase of the data analysis included a single item analysis for each survey question in accordance with each Likert scale item. A single item analysis was completed on both surveys instruments. DataLink- a software program for scantron scoring and reporting, was used to calculate the single item analysis for each survey question. The results from DataLink were then exported to a SPSS software program for further statistical analysis.

Once the single item analysis was determined, the summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category provided statistics to determine the frequency of responses among the same scale item categories. The summative score is the aggregate mean score for each Likert scale item in each survey category. In order to calculate the summative score for each survey category, the percentages from the single-item analysis for each Likert scale item were added and then divided by the number of questions in the survey category. Once the summative mean scores were determined, the scores were used to determine the frequency distribution among the 1-2, 3, and 4-5 Likert scale item categories.
The frequency distributions from the 1-2, 3, and 4-5 categories provided statistical evidence to determine the extent in which teachers and/or students favorably agreed in correspondence with each research hypotheses in this study. If the frequency rating of the 4-5 (agree/strongly agree) Likert scale item categories revealed a number that was significantly higher than the frequency ratings of 1-2 and 3 categories, then the hypothesis was validated. This means, that the majority of participants favorably align in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding the AWP and its impact on teachers and students. The results from each survey category are discussed and analyzed in accordance with their research hypothesis. The findings include tables and charts to illustrate the statistical findings for each research question.

**Further Threats to Validity and Reliability**

Anytime researchers use statistics to examine or explore relationships between variables, there are threats to statistical conclusion validity. Threats to statistical conclusion validity arise when researchers draw “inaccurate inferences from the data because of inadequate statistical power or the violation of statistical assumptions” (Creswell, 2009, p. 164). For this study, threats to statistical conclusion validity can result from the testing conditions, measurement instruments, the interpretation of the statistical results, and/or from a violation of statistical assumptions (Girden, 2001). Threats to statistical conclusion validity can also result from insufficient knowledge in statistics and statistical calculations and analysis (Creswell, 2008).

This study limited threats to statistical conclusion validity by creating a comprehensive research plan; a well-designed study that accurately evaluates critical questions with appropriate instruments and conditions to support the study (Girden,
Threats to statistical conclusion validity were also minimized through external auditing; a process that examines the accuracy of the statistical calculations and statistical analyses (Creswell, 2008).

**Ethical Considerations**

There are several sensitive issues when it comes to reporting and evaluating research studies. These issues include adhering to the design and appropriate structure of a quantitative report, writing in a scholarly nondiscriminatory way, and employing appropriate quantitative research standards and ethics (Creswell, 2008, Girden, 2001). In this study, all ethical considerations have been considered and managed appropriately.

First, ethical studies begin with research approval. For this study, the appropriateness of the research design and structure, and its attention to research standards and ethics were evaluated, reviewed, and ultimately approved by a research committee and by an independent review board (IRB). Additionally, both the President and the Principal at the research site separately approved this research study upon receiving detailed information regarding the purpose of this study, the research questions, the predicted hypotheses, and the specific measures that would be taken to protect the identity and confidentiality all participants. All actions and procedures to complete this study remained in strict alignment with the research permission protocols.

Second, in order to maintain respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, strong efforts were made to properly educate teachers, parents/guardians, and students on the contents, purpose, and aim of this study. Parents/guardians of student
participants were each provided with a letter of informed consent in both English and in Spanish. Students also received a child letter of assent in both English and in Spanish. In order for students to participate in the study, students were required to obtain permission from a legal parent and/or guardian. Upon receiving permission, students signed the letter of informed consent and returned both forms to his/her English teachers. Both letters discussed the aim, purpose, and benefits of this study, and the rights of parents and student participants. Faculty members were also given letters of informed consent that addressed the aim, purpose, and benefits of this study, and their rights as faculty participants. Throughout the entire duration of this study, respect for persons was instilled by maintaining the anonymity of each participant and respecting his/her rights to voluntary participation or sudden withdrawal from the study altogether.

Finally, all protocols and practices to eliminate researcher bias and conflict of interest were addressed. Since the AWP was a curriculum initiative developed and implemented at the research site, the research method, research approach, and the research materials were carefully considered to eliminate researcher bias. Each aspect of the research study was closely examined and formally approved by research committee and by an independent review board (IRB). The research mentors and the IRB both thoroughly reviewed the research study to ensure that the research methods, approach, and materials are removed from researcher bias, are ethical, and that all measures are taken to ensure the protection of research participants and of the research site.
Summary

This chapter explained and defended the appropriateness of implementing a quantitative methodology, including survey design research to examine teachers and students regarding their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors when using the AWP when teaching and learning how to write academic compositions within secondary settings. The characteristics of survey design research aptly align with the purpose, hypotheses, and practicalities of this study. This chapter also justified the population and sample of this study, the instrumentation, and the sources of data that were used to collect and analyze statistics. The final section of this chapter discussed the data analysis procedures as they pertain to the purpose and hypothesis of this study. This chapter ended with a discussion on important ethical considerations involved in this study and ways in which the research took precautionary steps to ensure ethical research practices.
CHAPTER 4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The effort to improve the quality of instruction in the teaching and learning of academic writing at the secondary level has led to an era of pedagogical controversy and radical curriculum reform. Independent authors, scholars, businesses, organizations, and associations combined with state and federal reform efforts continue to invigorate the nation’s urgency to find ways to prepare students for the literary demands of college and the workplace. Many educational leaders argue that the prosperity of change begins by internally examining the pluralistic variations that reside within the organization itself (Beck, 2006; Collopy, 2008; Craft 2007; Kynell & Tebeaux, 2009). Communities of change start when teachers have appropriate leadership along with focused opportunities to discuss, identify, and negotiate their teachers’ perceptions of effective writing criteria (Beck, 2006; Hudon, 2010; Ruckold, 2007; Thorton, 2010). Through ongoing collegial development, teachers of writing begin to conceptualize a common vision; a vision that can lead to the improvement in the teaching and learning of writing within their content area (Vitella, 2006).

However, for secondary learning environments, the subjective nature as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria for academic writing continues to stagnate even the best reform efforts. The inter-subjectivities as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and their students further dramatizes the potential learning experience and learning outcomes of students as they move from one classroom teacher to another. Alarming statistics from national
reports indicated that in 2009 more than 47% of schools across the nation still continue to perform below average in reading and writing on state and federal performance assessments in reading and writing (California Department of Education [CDOE], 2010). Undoubtedly, schools are adopting new methods that contribute to vast improvements in the teaching and learning of writing; these improvements most often include school-wide writing initiatives that identify and align teachers perceptions regarding effective writing criteria through writing program frameworks such as the six traits of writing or the six plus-one trait learning models. Although these frameworks have been implemented by schools at the secondary level, these frameworks are still far too subjective when it comes to the teaching and learning of academic writing within high schools across the nation.

Thus, the AWP’s writing program framework aims to diffuse the intersubjectivities between teachers’ and their colleagues and between teachers’ and their students by further identifying and outlining the characteristics of effective writing criteria for the internal components of a written composition. For secondary teachers of academic writing, the AWP is a teaching framework that aligns teachers’ and their instructional pedagogies through the practice of common terminology and learning objectives. For students, the AWP is a learning model that objectively identifies and outlines the characteristics and expectations of effective writing criteria for academic writing.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the AWP favorably impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing within Mater Dei Catholic High School (Mater Dei). Quantitative data for this study was collected using survey design
research. Two survey instruments were designed to measure the extent in which participants favorably agreed or favorably behaved in ways as a result of the dependent variable, the AWP.

The faculty participants completed a 5-point Likert scale item survey that determined the extent in which teachers expressed the same favorable attitudes and behaviors of other teachers when using the AWP in the teaching and learning of academic writing within their content area. This study predicted that the AWP favorably impacts teachers’ and their instructional practices and instructional pedagogies in the teaching and learning of academic writing. This study also predicted that the AWP favorably impacts teacher-teacher and teacher-student alignment regarding the expectations as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria for the teaching and learning of academic writing. Lastly, this study predicted that the AWP program format and program resources are perceived favorably by teachers of AWP academic writing.

Students also completed a 5-point Likert scale item survey that determined the extent in which they as students expressed the same attitudes and behaviors of their peers when using the AWP in learning how to write academically across the curriculum. This study hypothesized that the AWP strongly impacts’ students’ and their classroom learning experiences. This study also predicted that the AWP favorably impacts student-student and student-teacher alignment regarding expectations as what qualifies as effective writing criteria for academic writing. Finally, this study predicted that the AWP program format and program resources are perceived favorably by students who are learning how to write academically. The quantitative results are presented in this chapter.
The first section in this chapter includes descriptive statistics that identifies the demographic variances between participants. The second section in this chapter discusses the data analysis procedures used to analyze data for the purposes of this study. The third section in this chapter reveals the statistical results of this study in accordance to each research question and their research hypothesis. The final section of this chapter presents a summary of the research findings.

**Descriptive Data**

Mater Dei is a private parochial high school with a vastly diverse student population located close to the United States-Mexico border. Several students who attend Mater Dei live in Mexico and commute daily to attend school. Unlike public secondary sectors, Mater Dei does not receive Title I funds to finance programs and/or resources for students with moderate to severe linguistic, cognitive, emotional, or academic learning needs. Thus, prior to admittance into the school, all students must take an entrance exam. The entrance exam determines a student’s status of admittance. The exam is also used, on the condition of admittance, to determine a student’s academic placement for different classes. A large majority of the students who attend Mater Dei are fluent in both English and in Spanish. Since Mater Dei is a college preparatory school, all students are required to take and pass their required courses. Students who do not meet academic or citizenship (behavior and discipline) requirements can be dismissed by the Academic Review Board and/or the Disciplinary Review Board.

Teachers at Mater Dei were surveyed in order to determine the extent in which the AWP favorably impacts their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors when
teaching students how to write academically. The teachers at the research site represent the same idiosyncratic needs, background experiences, pluralistic behaviors, and levels of teaching experience that are typical to most 9-12th grade mainstream secondary learning environments.

For this study, 40 faculty members were asked to participate in the faculty survey. Of the 40 faculty members, 36 members or 90% of the faculty participated. The percentages of teachers who participated by subject area were statistically determined: 28% of teachers who participated in the survey teach English Language Arts; 9% teach Mathematics; 14% teach Science; 9% teach Social Studies; 14% teach Theology; 9% teach World Languages; 9% teach Visual and Performing Arts; and 4% teach Physical Education. A visual representation of the teacher participants by subject area are illustrated in Figure 1.

![Teacher Participants by Subject Area](image)

*Figure 1. Demographic breakdown of teacher participants by subject area.*

The teachers in the survey study were also asked to provide their total years of teaching experience. 8.3% of teachers indicated that they have 1-4 years of teaching experience, while 52.8% have 5-10 years, 23.4% have 11-15 years, 14.1% have 15-25
years, and 1.4% of teachers have 26 years or more years of teaching experience. The demographic breakdown of teachers and their total years of teaching experience are illustrated in Figure 2.

![Years of Teaching Experience](image)

*Figure 2.* Demographic breakdown of teachers by years of teaching experience.

Students at Mater Dei were also surveyed in order to determine the extent in which the AWP impacts their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors when learning how to write academically. Of the 669 students invited to participate in the survey, 445 students or 71% voluntarily and anonymously participated. The demographic breakdown of student participants reveals that 25.7% are freshman, 23.6% sophomores, 27.6% juniors, and 22.7% are seniors (see Figure 3).

![Student Participants](image)

*Figure 3.* Demographic breakdown of student participants by grade level.
Students in the study were asked to provide their current grade point average (GPA). Of the 475 student participants in this study, 3.80% have below a 2.0 GPA. While, 24.20% have a 2.1 to 2.9 GPA, 30.30% have a 3.0 to 3.4 GPA, 40.00% have a 3.5 to 4.0 GPA, and 1.70% have a 4.0 GPA or above. The demographic breakdown of student participants by GPA is illustrated in Figure 4.

![GPA Breakdown of Student Participants](image)

*Figure 4. Demographic breakdown of student participants by grade point average.*

Since Mater Dei is a highly pluralistic linguistic population, students were asked to provide a yes/no response as to whether or not English is their first (native) language. Of the 475 participants, 41.1% of students stated that English is his/her first (native) language. However, the majority of participants in this study do not claim English as their first (native) language. 56.4% of students responded that they speak English as their second language, while 2.90% of the responses are unidentified. The demographic breakdown of student participants and English as a first (native) language is illustrated in Figure 5.
Data Analysis

On both survey instruments, each Likert scale item was assigned an ordinal number in order to statistically calculate the degree of separation between each nominal scale item category. The data from the survey instruments provided statistics that determined the degree in which participants in the study favorably agreed or frequently practiced behaviors as a result of the AWP. For this study, single item analysis, summative score analysis, and frequency distributions were used to determine the extent in which the AWP favorably impacts teachers and students in accordance with the research variables in this study. The frequency distribution in the 4-5 (agree/strongly agree) Likert scale item categories were used to determine the validity of each research hypothesis.

On both surveys, participant’s responses were tallied for each survey question in accordance with each Likert scale item. The tallied items were then converted into mean scores for single item analysis. Single item analysis is the statistical mean of those participants who responded to the same Likert scale item category for the same survey question. Response frequency tables are used to visually demonstrate the scores from the

Figure 5. Demographic breakdown of participants by English as their first language.
single item analysis. DataLink, a software program for scantron scoring and reporting
was used to tally participant’s responses and determine the mean scores for the single
item analysis.

Once the means scores for the single item analysis were determined, the
summative score (or aggregate mean score) for each Likert scale item in each survey
category were statistically revealed. The summative scores for each Likert scale item
were calculated by adding together the vertical averages for each individual Likert scale
item category, and then dividing the total number by the number of questions in the
survey category. The final percentage is an aggregate mean, which indicates the
summative score for each individual Likert scale item category. The summative score
reveals the frequency in which participants vertically align in their
agreement/disagreement within the entire survey category. The summative mean for each
Likert scale item provided statistics to determine the distribution of frequency among the
Likert scale item categories. Tables are included to visually represent the summative
mean scores for each Likert scale item within each category.

The summative scores from each Likert scale item category were then used to
determine the distribution frequency among the 1-2, 3, and 4-5 scale item categories.
The frequency distributions for the 1-2, 3, and 4-5 scale item categories were calculated
by adding the summative scores for the 1-2 categories, and the summative scores for the
4-5 categories, which revealed the total mean score (or distribution frequency) among
these categories. The extent in which the AWP impacts the perceptions, attitudes,
opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic
writing was determined by the frequency of responses in the 4-5 (agree and strongly
agree) scale item category. If the frequency rating revealed a number that was significantly higher than the frequency ratings between the 1-2 (strongly disagree and disagree), and 3 (neutral) categories, then the majority of participants align in their agreement that the AWP favorably impacts their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors in the teaching and learning of academic writing. For this study, the summative mean scores for the 3 (neutral) categories were isolated. Isolating the neutral variable avoids misrepresentation of respondent’s values due to central tendency bias. For Likert scale item surveys, research cannot assume that a response under the 3 (neutral) category holds the same values as a 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 4 (agree) or 5 (strongly agree) categories. Isolating and comparing the neutral variable independently controls the degree of separation between the Likert scale items, which leads to a more accurate interpretation of the research findings. Response frequency tables are included to reveal the frequency distributions among the different Likert scale item categories.

Responses from teachers and students reveal a statistically significant strength in the 4-5 Likert scale item categories for all six research variables. Research concludes that all six research hypothesis are validated. Thus, the AWP favorably impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing within Mater Dei Catholic High School.
Results

Research Question #1: The AWP and Writing Instruction

To what extent does the AWP impact classroom instruction for academic writing?

The first research question used a 5-point Likert frequency scale to statistically measure the extent in which teachers demonstrate the same level of frequency in using AWP resources and AWP pedagogies when teaching students how to write analytical essays. The suggested hypothesis is that there is a statistically strong relationship between the AWP and classroom instruction for academic writing.

The first phase of the data analysis included a single item analysis for each survey question in accordance with each Likert scale item (see Table 1). Faculty participants were asked to rate the degree in which they agreed with statements that related to the AWP and writing instruction. Responses from the single item analysis reveal that 40% of teachers at Mater Dei use AWP concepts, teaching objectives, resources, expectations, language, and terminology when teaching students how to write academically within their content area. In contrast, over 60% of teachers at Mater Dei do not or have not used the AWP as a standard for academic writing instruction. Therefore, in order to determine the extent to which the AWP impacts teachers of AWP writing and writing instruction, single item analysis results were calculated using only the 1-5 Likert scale item categories from teachers of AWP writing only.

The results from single item analyses reveal that 50.0% of teachers of AWP writing strongly agree and 42.9% of teachers of AWP writing agree that the AWP clarifies teaching objectives for academic writing, while only 7.1% strongly disagrees, 0% disagrees, and 0% remains neutral. Teachers of AWP writing also dominantly agree
(57.1%) and strongly agree (28.6%) that the AWP terms and their definitions help them communicate their expectations to their students. Where only 7.1% of teachers of AWP writing strongly disagree, 0% disagrees altogether, and 7.1% remains neutral. The majority of teachers of AWP writing also reveal that they agree (50.0%) and strongly agree (21.4%) that they use AWP resources to teach academic writing, where 0.0% strongly disagrees, and 14.3% disagrees, and 0.0% remains neutral. Moreover, 42.9% of teachers both agree and strongly agree that they demonstrates effective writing by incorporating concepts from the AWP, while 7.1% strongly disagree, 7.1% disagrees and 0.0% remains neutral. Likewise, 35.7% of teachers of AWP writing agree and 42.9% strongly agree that they use AWP language and concepts in their lessons. The research also reveals that a majority of the teachers of AWP writing agree (42.9%) and strongly agree (42.9%) that they use AWP terminology when giving students feedback on their writing, while 7.1% strongly disagree, 0% disagrees, and 7.1% remains neutral.
Table 1. Single Item Analysis Response Frequency - The AWP and Writing Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Survey: The AWP and Writing Instruction</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP clarifies teaching objectives for academic writing.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP terms and their definitions help me communicate my expectations to my students.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the AWP resources to teach academic writing.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I demonstrate effective writing by incorporating concepts from the AWP.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use AWP language and concepts in lessons.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use AWP terminology when giving students feedback on their writing.</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category was statistically determined (see Table 2). The summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category reveals the frequency distributions among the corresponding questions within the survey category. The summative scores reveal that for teachers of
AWP writing, 5.92% strongly disagree that there is a favorable relationship between the AWP and classroom instruction for academic writing. Whereas, 3.57% of teachers disagree, 4.75% remains neutral, 45.25% agree, and 38.12% strongly agree. The summative scores for each Likert scale item in each survey category reveal that the majority of teachers agree/strongly agree that the AWP favorably impacts classroom instruction for academic writing.

Table 2. *Summative Score and Frequency Distribution- The AWP and Writing Instruction*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative mean scores</th>
<th>Frequency distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>38.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the frequency distributions among Likert scale item categories 1-2, 3, and 4-5 were determined. Teachers of AWP writing demonstrate a substantially high level of frequency in using AWP resources and AWP classroom pedagogies when teaching students how to write academically. The frequency distribution reveals that overall, 9.49% of the teachers of AWP writing strongly disagree and disagree (1-2 rating),
whereas, 4.75% remains neutral (3 rating), and 83.37% agree and strongly agree (4-5 rating) that the AWP favorably impacts writing instruction. The frequency distribution in the 4-5 category exceeds the 1-2 and 3 categories. Therefore, the first research hypothesis is validated. Teachers of AWP writing agree/strongly agree (83.37%) in their alignment that the AWP favorably impacts classroom instruction when teaching students how to write academically.

**Research Question #2: The AWP and Student Learning**

*To what extent does the AWP impact classroom learning for academic writing?*

The second research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP favorably impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of students in the learning of academic writing. This study suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and students’ perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors in the learning of academic writing.

The results from the single item analysis on the study survey \(n = 475\) reveals that the majority of Mater Dei students agree (43.4%) that the AWP format helps them to write academic essays, while 27.4% strongly agree, 18.5% remains neutral, 6.5% disagrees, and 3.8% strongly disagrees. A large majority of students also agree (44.6%) or strongly agree (26.5%) that the AWP format helps them write better academic essays. 18.5% of those respondents remain neutral, whereas only 7.2% disagree and 3.4% strongly disagree. Likewise, the majority of student participants agree (38.3%) that the AWP format helps them set new goals to improve his/her writing, while 15.8% strongly agrees, 28.8% remains neutral, 10.9% disagrees, and 5.1% strongly disagrees. A
significant number of participants also agree (44.2%) that they can identify problems in their own writing using the AWP to guide him/her. Whereas 16.4% of student participants strongly agree, 23.8% remains neutral, 10.7 disagrees, and 4.4% strongly disagrees. Additionally, the majority of students agree (42.1%) that the AWP has helped them build confidence in their own writing, whereas 22.1% strongly agrees, 19.8% remains neutral, 8.6% disagrees, and only 6.7% strongly disagrees. The results from the single item analysis for each survey question in this survey category reveal that most student participants in this study align in agreement that the AWP favorably impacts their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors when learning how to write academically. The results are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. *Single Item Analysis Response Frequency - The AWP and Student Learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Survey: The AWP and Student Learning</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP format helps me write academic essays.</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP format helps me write better academic essays.</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I refer to the AWP format to help me set new goals to improve my writing.</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. *Continued*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Survey: The AWP and Student Learning</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I can identify problems in my own writing using the AWP to guide me.  

|   | 4.4% | 10.7% | 23.8% | 44.2% | 16.4% |

I believe that the AWP has helped me build confidence in my writing.  

|   | 6.7% | 8.6% | 19.8% | 42.1% | 22.1% |

The summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category were statistically determined in order to reveal the frequency distributions among each Likert scale item category (see Table 4). The summative scores reveal that for students, a total of 4.68% strongly disagree that there is a favorable relationship between the AWP and classroom learning for academic writing. Whereas, 8.78% of students disagree, 21.88% remain neutral, 42.52% agree, and 21.64% strongly agree. The summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category reveals that the majority of student participants align in their agreement that there is a favorable relationship between the AWP and classroom learning for academic writing.
Student Survey: The AWP and Student Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative mean scores</th>
<th>Frequency distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1 4.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2 8.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3 21.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4 42.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5 21.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution frequency from the responses reveal that 13.46% strongly disagree/disagree (1-2 rating), whereas 21.88% remains neutral (3 rating), and 64.16% agrees/strongly agrees (4-5 rating) that the AWP favorably impacts student learning when learning how to write academically. The frequency of response in the 4-5 scale item categories (64.16%) once again exceeds the 1-2 and 3 categories. Therefore, the second research hypothesis is validated. Students at Mater Dei agree/strongly agree in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that the AWP favorably impacts student learning when learning how to write academically.
Research Question #3: The AWP and Teacher-Teacher Alignment

To what extent does the AWP impact teacher-teacher perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for analytical writing?

The third research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their colleagues in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The suggested hypothesis is that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-teacher pedagogical alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Faculty participants were asked to rate the degree in which they agreed with statements that related to the AWP and its impact on teacher-teacher alignment in academic writing instruction (see Table 5). The results from single item analyses reveal that teachers of AWP writing both agree (42.9%) and strongly agree (42.9%) that the AWP defines expectations for the teaching of academic writing within their department, while only 7.1% of teachers strongly disagree, 0% disagree, and 7.1% remains neutral. Teachers of AWP writing also significantly align in their agreement that the AWP provides consistency between teachers regarding teachers’ expectations for effective academic writing criteria. 50.0% of teachers of AWP writing agree and 42.9% strongly agree, whereas, 7.1% of teachers strongly disagree, 7.1% disagrees, and 0% remains neutral. Likewise, the majority of teachers of AWP writing also reveal that they agree (35.7%) and strongly agree (50.0%) that other teachers understand them when they use AWP terminology to discuss academic writing. Of the participants, 0.0% of teachers strongly disagree, 7.1% disagree, and 7.1% remains neutral. Statistics also reveal that a high percentage of teachers of AWP writing agree (35.7%) and strongly agree (50.0%)
that they understand other teachers when they use AWP terminology to discuss academic writing, where 0.0% strongly disagree, 7.1% disagrees, and 7.1% remains neutral. The results from the single item analysis in this survey category reveal that most teachers of AWP writing align in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that the AWP favorably impacts alignment and consistency between teachers in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Table 5. *Single Item Analysis Response Frequency - The AWP and Teacher-Teacher*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Survey: The AWP and Teacher-Teacher Alignment</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The AWP defines expectations for the teaching of academic writing within my department.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP provides consistency between teachers regarding expectations for effective academic writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teachers understand me when I use AWP terminology when discussing academic writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand other teachers when they use AWP terminology when discussing academic writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category were calculated in order to reveal the frequency distribution among each Likert scale item category (see Table 6). The summative scores reveal that for teachers of AWP writing, 5.33% strongly disagree, 3.55% disagree, 3.55% remain neutral, 39.3% agree, and 50.3% strongly agree in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that there is a favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-teacher alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Table 6. *Summative Score and Frequency Distribution- The AWP and Teacher-Teacher Alignment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative mean scores</th>
<th>Frequency distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1 5.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>1-2 Distribution</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.88% (n =36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2 3.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>3 Distribution</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3 3.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>4-5 Distribution</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4 39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5 50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine the extent in which the AWP impacts teachers’ perceptions, regarding teacher-teacher alignment for academic writing, the frequency distributions between Likert scale item categories 1-2, 3, and 4-5 were statistically determined.

Teachers of AWP writing demonstrate a high level of frequency in their agreement that
the AWP defines expectations for academic writing and provides consistency between teachers of AWP writing. The distribution reveals that 8.88% of teachers of AWP writing disagree/strongly disagree (1-2 rating), 3.55% remain neutral (3 rating), and 89.33% agree/strongly agree (4-5 rating) that the AWP facilitates teacher-teacher alignment. The frequency distribution in the 4-5 categories exceeds the 1-2 and 3 categories, validating the third research hypothesis. Teachers of AWP writing agree/strongly agree (89.33%) in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that the AWP favorably impacts teacher-teacher alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Research Question #4: The AWP and Teacher-Student Alignment

To what extent does the AWP impact teacher-student perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for analytical writing?

The fourth research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their students regarding writing expectations for academic compositions. This study suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for analytical writing.

The single item analyses reveals that teachers of AWP writing both agree (50.0%) and strongly agree (28.6%) that when they use AWP terminology, they feel that their students understand their expectations for writing (see Table 7). Whereas, only 7.1% strongly disagree, 0.0% disagrees, and 14.3% remain neutral. Teachers of AWP writing also agree (50.0%) and strongly agree (28.6%) that students understand them when they use AWP terminology to discuss writing. Whereas, 7.1% of teachers strongly disagree,
0% disagrees, and 14.3% remains neutral. The findings also reveal that teachers of AWP writing dominantly agree (57.1%) and strongly agree (28.6%) that students use AWP terminology when they ask their teacher questions on their writing. Only 7.1% of teachers strongly disagree, 0.0% disagrees, and 7.1% remains neutral. Likewise, 57.1% of teachers agree and 21.4% strongly agree that students use AWP terminology with other students to talk about their own writing, whereas only 7.1% strongly disagrees, 0.0% disagrees, and 14.3% remains neutral. The single item analysis also unfolds that a high percentage of teachers of AWP writing agree (42.9%) and strongly agree (28.6%) that students use AWP terminology to discuss their grades on writing assignments. 7.1% of teachers strongly disagree, 0.0% disagrees, and 21.4% remains neutral for this question. Teachers of AWP writing also agree (50.0%) and strongly agree (28.6%) that their students refer to the AWP handouts to evaluate his/her own writing, where 0% strongly disagrees, 7.1% disagree, and 14.3% remains neutral. Lastly, a high percentage of teachers of AWP writing agree (21.4%) and strongly agree (57.1%) that the AWP has contributed to an overall improvement in student writing. Whereas, 7.1% of teachers strongly disagree, 7.1% disagree, and 7.1% remains neutral.

The results from the single item analysis reveal that a significantly high percentage of teachers of AWP writing align in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that the AWP favorably impacts teacher-student alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing. Thus, the AWP favorably diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their students regarding what qualifies as effective writing criteria and writing performance for academic writing.
Table 7. *Single Item Analysis Response Frequency - The AWP and Teacher-Student*

Teacher Survey: The AWP and Teacher-Student Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I use AWP terminology, I feel that students understand my expectations for their essays. 7.1% 0.0% 14.3% 50.0% 28.6%

Students understand me when I use AWP terminology to discuss their writing. 7.1% 0.0% 14.3% 50.0% 28.6%

Students use AWP terminology when they ask me questions on their writing. 7.1% 0.0% 7.1% 57.1% 28.6%

Students use AWP terminology with other students to talk about their own writing. 7.1% 0.0% 14.3% 57.1% 21.4%

Students use AWP terminology to discuss their grades on writing assignments. 7.1% 0.0% 21.4% 42.9% 28.6%

Students refer to the AWP handouts to evaluate their own writing. 0.0% 7.1% 14.3% 50.0% 28.6%

I believe that the AWP has contributed to an overall improvement in student writing. 7.1% 7.1% 7.1% 21.4% 57.1%
The summative statistics determined that for teachers of AWP writing, a total of 8.11% strongly disagree, 2.03% disagree, 20.4% remains neutral, 61.21% agree, and 31.64% strongly agrees that there is a favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-student alignment for academic writing (see Table 8). The summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category reveal that the majority of teachers of AWP writing perceive a favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-student alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Table 8. Summative Score and Frequency Distribution- The AWP and Teacher-Student Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative mean scores</th>
<th>Frequency distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>8.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>61.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>31.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency distributions between Likert scale item categories 1-2, 3, and 4-5 were statistically calculated in order to determine the extent in which the AWP impacts teacher-student alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The distribution reveals that 10.14% of teachers disagree/strongly disagree (1-2 rating),
20.4% remain neutral (3 rating), and 92.85% agrees/strongly agrees (4-5 rating) in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that the AWP facilitates teacher-student alignment. Again, the frequency distribution in the 4-5 categories exceeds the 1-2 and 3 categories, validating the fourth research hypothesis. The AWP favorably impacts teachers’ in teacher-student alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Students at Mater Dei were also asked to respond to a series of questions regarding the extent in which the AWP impacts student-teacher alignment in the teaching and learning of writing (see Table 9). The single item analysis reveals that student participants mostly agree (39.4%) and strongly agree (16.4%) that they use AWP terminology to ask their teacher questions on their writing, while 5.9% strongly disagree, 11.2% disagrees, and 27.4% remains neutral. Likewise, the majority of students agree (42.5%) and 26.7% strongly agree that teachers understand them when they use AWP terms to discuss their essay, compared to 2.7% who strongly disagree, 6.1% who disagree, and 21.9% who remain neutral. Student participants also agree (40.6%) and strongly agree (17.7%) that their teachers have the same expectations for AWP writing, while 4.6% strongly disagree, 8.6% disagrees, and 27.8% remains neutral. Results also reveal that 50.3% of students agree and 22.1% strongly agree that the AWP clarifies their teachers’ expectations for the structure of an essay, whereas 1.7% of students strongly disagree, 4.6% disagrees, and 20.2% remains neutral. 47.4% of students also agree and 24% strongly agree that they understand their teachers’ expectations for AWP writing, whereas 3.8% strongly disagree, 5.5% disagrees, and 17.3% remains neutral. Students also dominantly agree (53.3%) and strongly agree (22.5%) that their teachers use AWP terms to help him/her with their essay, whereas, 2.3% strongly disagree, 5.9% disagrees,
and 5.9% remains neutral. Finally, 50.5% of student participants agree and 19.8% of students strongly agree that their teachers use the AWP to communicate their essay grade. Only 3.4% of students strongly disagree, 5.9% agree, and 19.6% remain neutral.

Table 9. Single Item Analysis Response Frequency - The AWP and Student-Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Strongly disagree</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>5 Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use AWP terminology to ask my teacher questions on my writing.</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers understand me when I use AWP terms to discuss my essay.</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers have the same expectations for AWP writing.</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP clarifies my teachers’ expectations for the structure of an essay.</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand my teachers’ expectations for AWP writing.</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers use AWP terms to help with my essay.</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The summative statistics determined that for students, 3.48% strongly disagree, 6.83% disagree, 21.4% remain neutral, 46.29% agree, and 21.31% strongly agree that there is a favorable relationship between the AWP and student-teacher alignment for academic writing (see Table 10). The summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category reveal that the majority of student participants agree in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that there is favorable relationship between the AWP and student-teacher alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Table 10. Summative Score and Frequency Distribution - The AWP and Student-Teacher Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative mean scores</th>
<th>Frequency distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>46.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>21.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency distributions between Likert scale item categories 1-2, 3, and 4-5 were statistically calculated in order to determine the extent in which the AWP impacts student-teacher alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The distribution reveals that 10.31% of students strongly disagree/disagree (1-2 rating),
21.4% remain neutral (3 rating), and 67.6% agree/strongly agree (4-5 rating) that the AWP facilitates student-teacher alignment. The frequency distribution from the 4-5 categories exceeds the 1-2 and 3 categories, validating the fourth research hypothesis. The AWP favorably impacts student-teacher alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

**Research Question #5: The AWP and Student-Student Alignment**

*To what extent does the AWP impact student-student perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for analytical writing?*

The fifth research question also used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between students’ and their peers regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. The suggested hypothesis is that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and student-student alignment in the learning of academic writing.

The single item analysis reveals that 41.5% of participants agree and 14.9% of participants strongly agree that they use AWP terms with other students to talk about their writing (see Table 11). Of those participants, 11.6% of students strongly disagree, 9.1% disagree, and 21.7% remains neutral. Likewise, a large number of students agree (45.7%) and strongly agree (15.4%) that they use the AWP to help them identify writing errors in other students’ writing, while only 5.8% strongly disagree, 10.5% disagree, and 20.6% remain neutral. 47.2% of participants also agree and 13.3% strongly agree that they uses AWP terms to them communicate writing errors in other students’ written work. Only, 5.7% of students strongly disagree, 8.0% disagree, and 23.8% remain
neutral. A high percentage of students agree (52.0%) and 14.9% strongly agree that when their peers revise their essay, they use the AWP to identify writing errors in the essay. Of that group, 3.2% of students strongly disagree, 6.1% disagree, and 24.0% remains neutral. Finally, 50.7% of students also agree and 22.7% of students strongly agree that they understand other students when they use AWP terms to revise their essay, while 1.9% strongly disagree, 5.1% disagree, and 18.9% remains neutral.

Table 11. Single Item Analysis Response Frequency - The AWP and Student-Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Survey: The AWP and Student-Student Alignment</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use AWP terms with other students.</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the AWP to help me identify writing errors in other students writing.</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use AWP terms to help me communicate writing errors in other students’ essays.</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When students revise my essay, they use AWP terms to identify writing errors in my essay.</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand other students when they use AWP terms.</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The summative score for each Likert scale item in each survey category reveals that the majority of student participants perceive a favorable relationship between the AWP and student-student alignment in the learning of academic writing. The summative results reveal that 5.66% strongly disagree, 7.76% disagree, 21.8% remain neutral, 47.42% agree, and 16.24% strongly agree that there is a favorable relationship between the AWP and student-student alignment for academic writing (see Table 12).

Table 12. Summative Score and Frequency Distribution- The AWP and Student-Student Teacher Survey: The AWP and Student-Student Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative mean scores</th>
<th>Frequency distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency distribution between Likert scale item categories 1-2, 3, and 4-5 were statistically calculated in order to determine the extent in which the AWP impacts student-student alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The distribution reveals that 13.42% of students disagree/strongly disagree (1-2 rating), 21.8% remain neutral (3 rating), and 63.66% agree/strongly agree (4-5 rating) that the
AWP facilitates student-student alignment. The frequency distribution in the 4-5 categories surpasses the 1-2 and 3 categories, validating the fifth research hypothesis. The AWP favorably impacts student-student alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

**Research Question #6: The AWP and the Program Format and Resources**

*To what extent are the AWP’s program resources useful for the teaching and learning of analytical writing?*

The sixth and final research question used a 5-point attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP’s program resources are useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing. This study suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP’s program resources and their use in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Teachers of AWP writing and students at Mater Dei were asked to respond to a series of questions regarding their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors when using the AWP program format and program resources in the teaching and learning of academic writing (see Table 13). The single item analysis from the faculty survey reveal that 35.7% of teachers of AWP writing agree and 42.9% strongly agree that the freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior program levels are appropriate to the abilities of students as they progress as writers, while 7.1% of participants strongly disagree, 7.1% disagrees, and 7.1% remains neutral. Likewise, 64.3% of teachers agree and 21.4% strongly agree that the AWP’s writing resources are helpful to students, while 0.0% strongly disagrees, 21.4% disagrees, and 0.0% remains neutral. Additionally, 50.0% of teachers agree and
21.4% strongly agree that the AWP’s revision resources are helpful to students, whereas 0.0% of teachers strongly disagree, 14.3% disagrees and 14.3% remains neutral. A high percentage of teachers of AWP writing (57.1%) agree and strongly agree (35.7%) that the evaluation criteria in the AWP rubric align with the writing objectives of the AWP. While only, 7.1% of teachers strongly disagree, 0.0% disagrees, and 0.0% remains neutral. Further statistics reveal that 35.7% of teachers agree and 42.9% strongly agree that the grades on the AWP rubric appropriately scale from A to F. However, 7.1% of teachers strongly disagree, 7.1% disagree, and 0.0% remains neutral. Lastly, 50.4% of teachers agree and 28.6% strongly agrees that the AWP incorporates a holistic approach to the teaching of academic writing. Of these participants, 7.1% strongly disagree, 0.0% disagrees, and 0.0% remains neutral.

Table 13. Single Item Analysis Response Frequency - The AWP Format and Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Survey: The AWP and Program Format and Resources</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A high percentage of teachers at Mater Dei align in their perception, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding the extent in which the AWP’s program format and program resources are useful in the teaching and learning of academic writing (see Table 14). The summative scores from the faculty survey reveal 4.73% of teachers of AWP writing strongly disagree, 8.32% disagrees, 3.57% remains neutral, 48.87% agrees, and 32.15% strongly agrees that the AWP’s program format and program resources are useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing.
Table 14. *Summative Score and Frequency Distribution: The AWP Format and Resources*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative mean scores</th>
<th>Frequency distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4.73% 1-2 Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8.32% 13.05 (n = 36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3.57% 3 Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>48.87% 4-5 Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>32.15% 81.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency distribution between Likert scale item categories 1-2, 3, and 4-5 were calculated in order to determine the extent in which the AWP’s program format and resources favorably impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors teachers in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The distribution reveals that 13.05% of teachers of AWP writing strongly disagree/disagree (1-2 rating), 3.57% remain neutral (3 rating), and 81.02% agree/strongly agree (4-5 rating) that the AWP’s program format and resources are useful in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The distribution frequency in the 4-5 categories exceeds the 1-2 and 3 categories, validating the sixth research hypothesis. The AWP’s program format and program resources favorably impacts teachers in the teaching and learning of academic writing.
Students at Mater Dei were also asked to evaluate the AWP’s program format and program resources in the learning of academic writing (see Table 15). Statistics from the single item analysis reveal that 47.8% of students agree and 25.7% of students strongly agree that the freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior program series are appropriate to their abilities, while 3.6% of the students strongly disagree, 6.5% disagree, and 14.3% are neutral. Also, 44.6% of students agree and 28.0% strongly agree that the AWP’s writing worksheets are helpful when writing an AWP essay, whereas only 3.6% of students strongly disagree, 5.3% disagrees, and 16.6% remains neutral. A large percentage of students agree (44.0%) and strongly agree (23.4%) that the AWP’s revision worksheets are helpful when revising an AWP essay, whereas 2.5% strongly disagree, 6.5% disagrees, and 21.7% remains neutral. Of these students, 46.9% agree and 22.1% strongly agree that the expectations on the grading rubric are clear. For this question, only 3.8% strongly disagree, 6.1% disagrees, and 19.6% remains neutral. Additionally, 49.1% of students agree and 18.7% of students strongly agree that the expectations on the AWP grading rubric are appropriate, where 4.4% of students strongly disagree, 5.3% disagrees, and 20.6% remains neutral. A dominating 44.6% agree and 20.6% strongly agree that after grading, they use the AWP rubric to help them understand their grade. Only 4.6% of students strongly disagree, 7.8% disagrees, and 22.3% of students remain neutral. Finally, 43.6% of students agree and 29.9% of students strongly agree that the AWP terms help them understand the parts of an essay, whereas 4.2% strongly disagree, 4.2% disagrees, and 13.5% remains neutral.
Table 15. *Single Item Analysis Response Frequency - The AWP Format and Resources*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The program series are appropriate to my abilities. 3.6% 6.5% 14.3% 47.8% 25.7%

The AWP’s writing worksheets are helpful when writing an AWP essay. 3.6% 5.3% 16.6% 44.6% 28.0%

The AWP’s revision worksheets are helpful when revising an AWP essay. 2.5% 6.5% 21.7% 44.0% 23.4%

The expectations on the grading rubric are clear. 3.8% 6.1% 19.6% 46.9% 22.1%

The expectations on the grading rubric are appropriate. 4.4% 5.3% 20.6% 49.1% 18.7%

After grading, I use the AWP rubric to help me understand my grade. 4.6% 7.8% 22.3% 44.6% 20.6%

The AWP terms help me understand the parts of an essay. 4.2% 4.2% 13.5% 43.6% 29.9%

The summative scores reveal that 45.8% of students agree, 24.06% of students strongly agree, 3.81% strongly disagree, 5.96% disagree, and 13.5% remains neutral.
regarding the extent in which the AWP’s program format and program resources impact the learning of academic writing (see Table 16). The summative results determine that the majority of students’ perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors agree and strongly agree that the AWP’s program format and program resources favorably impact the learning of academic writing.

Table 16. Summative Score and Frequency Distribution- The Format and Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative mean scores</th>
<th>Frequency distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>18.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>24.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency distribution between the 1-2, 3, and 4-5 categories were calculated in order to determine the extent in which students’ align in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding the AWP’s program format and program resources in the learning of academic writing. The distribution reveals that 9.77% of students strongly disagree/disagrees (1-2 rating), 18.37% remains neutral (3 rating), and 69.86% agrees/strongly agrees (4-5 rating) that the AWP’s program format and program
resources are useful in learning of academic writing. Again, the distribution of frequency from students’ responses in the 4-5 categories exceeds the 1-2 and 3 categories, validating the sixth research hypothesis. The AWP’s program format and resources favorably impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of students in the learning of academic writing.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the AWP impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing within Mater Dei Catholic High School. 90% of teachers from all content areas and 71% of students from all grade levels participated in the survey study. The frequency distributions reveal that a large majority of teachers and students align in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding the impact of the AWP in the teaching and learning of writing. The findings also reveal that the AWP impacts both teachers of AWP writing and students at Mater Dei favorably in ways that aim to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within their school. The AWP aligns the perceptions of teachers’ and their colleagues regarding instructional pedagogies and practices. The AWP also diffuses the inter-subjectivities regarding effective writing criteria between teachers’ and their students, and students’ and their peers. The AWP’s program format and resources are perceived favorably by the majority of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of writing. The conclusions, recommendations, and implications of these findings are explained in the upcoming chapter.
CHAPTER 5. RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 1 of this study identified the existing realities that both invigorate and stagnate reform efforts that aim to improve the teaching and learning of writing within today’s schools. Chapter 1 also provided a discussion that identified the purpose, rationale, research questions, and hypothesis in this study. Chapter 2 of this study engaged in a literature review that examined existing phenomena, pedagogical theories, and current organizational practices that transcend into the quality of teaching and quality of learning in the teaching and learning of academic writing within nation-wide schools. Chapter 2 also outlined the conceptual and pedagogical framework for the Analytical Writing Program (AWP). Chapter 2 ended with an explanation on ways in which the AWP’s learning model aligns with favored practices that are evident in prosperous communities of academic change. Chapter 3 provided a description of the research methodology, including the research design, the population and sample, instrumentation, and the data collection and data analysis procedures used to conduct this study. Chapter 3 ended with a discussion that focused on the validity and reliability of the research design and methodology used for this study. Chapter 4 presented the descriptive data and included different visual representations that explained the demographic variances between teacher participants and between student participants involved in this study. Chapter 4 also included a chronological description of the data analysis procedures, followed by a presentation and summary of the research results.
Chapter 5 the final chapter of this study restates the purpose and the aim of this study as it relates to the research questions and hypotheses. Chapter 5 also includes a summary of the research findings and provides conclusions and recommendations for future research and practice. The study ends with a discussion regarding the research findings and their potential implications in reform efforts that aim to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within secondary schools across the nation.

Summary of the Study

Over the last several years, Mater Dei Catholic High School (Mater Dei) has implemented the Analytical Writing Program (AWP) in an attempt to eliminate the inter-subjectivities between teachers and their students as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria for academic writing at the secondary level. The AWP’s learning model aims to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing with an objective writing program framework: a framework that identifies, defines, and illustrates specific sequential learning objectives for the internal components of an academic essay. The AWP also was designed to include four learning frameworks or series options (Series 1, 2, 3, and 4) where the learning objectives progress in difficulty as students progress from beginning to advanced writers. Currently, the AWP is a required component of the English Language Arts curriculum. The AWP also continues to expand as an academic writing initiative within Mater Dei. However, prior to this study, it was not known to what extent the AWP favorably impacted the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing at Mater Dei.
Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the AWP impacts teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The following six quantitative research questions were used to guide this study:

Q1. To what extent does the AWP impact classroom instruction for academic writing?

Q2. To what extent does the AWP impact classroom learning for academic writing?

Q3. To what extent does the AWP impact teacher-teacher perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q4. To what extent does the AWP impact teacher-student perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q5. To what extent does the AWP impact student-student perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing?

Q6. To what extent are the AWP’s program resources useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing?

The following hypotheses guided this study:

H1. The suggested hypothesis is that there is a statistically strong relationship between the AWP and classroom instruction for academic writing.

H2. This study suggested that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and the learning of academic writing.

H3. The suggested hypothesis is that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-teacher pedagogical alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing.
H₄. This study suggested that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing.

H₅. The suggested hypothesis is that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and student-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing.

H₆. This study suggested that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP’s program resources and their use in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

The research questions and their hypotheses were statistically determined using cross-sectional survey design research. All teachers and students at Mater Dei were invited to voluntarily complete a 5-point Likert scale item survey in order to measure the frequency in which they favorably agreed and favorably behaved in ways that align with the research hypotheses. The first research question used a 5-point Likert frequency scale to statistically measure the extent in which teachers demonstrate the same level of frequency when using AWP resources and AWP pedagogies when teaching students how to write academic essays. The second research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP aligns the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of students in the learning of academic writing. The third research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their colleagues in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The fourth research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in the AWP
diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their students regarding writing expectations for academic compositions. The fifth research question used a 5-point Likert attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between students’ and their peers regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. Finally, the sixth research question used a 5-point attitudinal scale to statistically measure the extent in which the AWP’s format and program resources are useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing. 90% of teachers and 71% of students participated in the survey study.

Single item analysis, summative mean scores, and response frequency distributions were used to statistically summarize and analyze the compiled data from the survey instruments. The extent in which teachers and students favorably agreed and favorably behaved in ways that align with the research hypothesis were statistically determined by the frequency in which participants responded to the 4-5 Likert scale item categories (agree/strongly agree and often/always). The hypotheses were validated if the distribution of frequency in the 4-5 Likert scale item categories measured statistically higher than participant’s responses in the 1-2 and 3 categories. Single item analyses, summative mean scores, and response frequency tables were used to visually illustrate the compiled data.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the AWP favorably impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The research questions and their hypotheses
were statistically determined by measuring the frequency in which teachers and students at Mater Dei frequently behaved and favorably agreed in a series of questions within each survey category. Each survey category aims to statistically measure one of the six research questions in this study. A summary of the research findings and their conclusions are illustrated and discussed below (see Table 17 and Table 18).

The first research question statistically measured the extent in which teachers demonstrate the same level of frequency in behaviors when using the AWP for writing instruction. The suggested hypothesis is that there is a statistically strong relationship between the AWP and classroom instruction for academic writing. The findings reveal that the first hypothesis is validated. Teachers of writing demonstrate a favorably agreement in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors when using the AWP for writing instruction. In this category, teachers of AWP writing agreed or strongly agreed that: (a) the AWP clarifies teaching objectives for academic writing, (b) the AWP terms and their definitions help teachers communicate their expectations to their students, (c) he/she uses the AWP resources to teach academic writing, (d) he/she demonstrates effective writing by incorporating concepts from the AWP, (e) he/she uses AWP language and concepts in lesson, and (f) he/she uses AWP terminology when giving students feedback on their writing.

The findings conclude that for teachers of AWP writing, the AWP aligns teachers in classroom instruction and teacher pedagogy for the teaching and learning of academic writing. For this study, it is important to distinguish that these conclusions are specific to only teachers who teach academic writing using the AWP. At Mater Dei, over 60% of teachers responded that they teach writing within their content area, but do not use the
AWP as a resource for instruction. For non-AWP teachers of writing, the research cannot determine as to whether or not these teachers and their individual instructional methods align with other non-AWP teachers and their individual practices, and/or align with fundamental concepts for academic writing defined in the AWP. However, it can be concluded that for teachers of AWP writing, there is consistency in their classroom instruction and teacher pedagogy in academic writing. When teachers of writing align in their instructional practices and teaching pedagogies, teachers begin to create a sense of cohesiveness as to what is expected in the teaching and learning of writing within different classrooms and content areas (Beck, 2006).

Table 17. *Frequency Distributions for Each Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher survey categories</th>
<th>Frequency of a 4-5 rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The AWP and Writing Instruction</td>
<td>83.37% (n = 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP and Teacher-Teacher Alignment</td>
<td>89.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP and Teacher-Student Alignment</td>
<td>92.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP and Program Format and Resources</td>
<td>81.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second research question statistically measured the extent in which the AWP aligns the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of students in the learning of academic writing. This study suggests that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and the learning of academic writing. The findings reveal that the
second hypothesis is validated. Students at Mater Dei overall agreed or strongly agreed that: (a) the AWP format helps them write academic essays, (b) the AWP format helps them write better academic essays, (c) the AWP format helps them set new goals to improve his/her writing, (d) the AWP format helps them identify problems in their own writing; and (e) the AWP helps them build confidence in their writing.

The findings conclude that students at Mater Dei align in their attitudes, perceptions, opinions, and behaviors regarding the AWP and its effectiveness in helping students learn, improve, and build confidence in the learning of academic writing. However, one cannot conclude from this study that these perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors lead to student achievement in writing. Yet, researchers have revealed that when students have appropriate resources to build confidence in their writing and clear expectations on what is expected of them as writers, they become better equipped on how to critically evaluate their own work (Adkinson & Tchudi, 2001; Bizup, 2009). Thus, depending on the motivation of the student, they arguably become more conscientious writers.

The third research question statistically measured the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their colleagues in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The suggested hypothesis is that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-teacher pedagogical alignment in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The frequency of responses in the agree/strongly agree Likert scale item categories validate the third research hypothesis. Teachers of AWP writing favorably agree or strongly agree that: (a) the AWP defines teachers’ expectations for the teaching of academic writing within their department, (b)
the AWP provides consistency between teachers regarding the expectations for effective academic writing, (c) other teachers understand them when they use AWP terminology when discussing academic writing, and (d) they understand other teachers when they use AWP terminology when discussing academic writing.

In secondary schools across the nation, the dichotomies between teachers and their underlying perceptions of effective writing criteria stagnates reform efforts aimed to improve writing in today’s standard’s based classrooms (Craft, 2007; Kynell & Tebeaux, 2009). The findings of this study conclude that teachers of AWP writing align in their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding the AWP in the teaching and learning of academic writing. For these teachers, the AWP is perceived as a philosophical guideline that identifies, explains, and standardizes the characteristics of effective writing with their colleagues. Thus, the AWP facilitates a common vision in the teaching and learning of writing.

The fourth research question statistically measured the extent in the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their students regarding writing expectations for academic compositions. This study suggested that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and teacher-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. The distribution frequency from both teachers and students reveal that the fourth hypothesis is validated. Teachers of AWP writing favorably agreed or strongly agreed that: (a) students understand their teachers expectations for academic writing when using the AWP, (b) students understand their teachers when they use AWP terminology to teach academic writing, (c) students use AWP terminology to ask questions on their own writing, (d) students use AWP terminology with other students to
discuss writing, (e) students use AWP terminology to discuss their grades on writing assignments, (f) students refer to the AWP handouts to evaluate their own writing; and (g) that the AWP has contributed to an overall improvement in student writing.

Student participants also favorably agreed or strongly agreed that: (a) students use AWP terminology to ask their teacher questions about their academic writing, (b) teachers understand them when they use AWP terms to discuss his/her writing, (c) teachers have the same expectations for AWP writing, and (d) the AWP clarifies their teachers’ expectations for the structure of an essay. Students also favorably agreed or strongly agreed that: (a) students understand their teachers’ expectations for AWP writing, (b) teachers use AWP terms to help students with their essays, and (c) teachers use the AWP to communicate student’s grades on their essays.

Research reveals that when teachers align perceptions on writing theory and teaching and learning pedagogy, they have the ability to create an environment that attempts to eliminate the inter-subjectivity on what qualifies as effective writing criteria for their students as well (Hudon, 2010). The research findings of this study conclude that at Mater Dei, the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers’ and their students regarding effective writing criteria for academic compositions. Research suggests that through this alignment, teachers are effectively communicating with their students and students are effectively communicating with their teachers in the teaching, learning, and evaluating of academic writing.
Table 18. *Frequency Distributions for Each Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student survey categories</th>
<th>Frequency of a 4-5 rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The AWP and Classroom Learning</td>
<td>64.16% ((n = 475))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP and Student-Teacher Alignment</td>
<td>67.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP and Student-Student Alignment</td>
<td>63.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AWP and Program Format and Resources</td>
<td>69.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth research question statistically measured the extent in which the AWP diffuses the inter-subjectivity between students’ and their peers regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. The suggested hypothesis was that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP and student-student alignment regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. The distribution frequency revealed that the fifth hypothesis is validated. Teachers of AWP writing favorably agreed or strongly agreed that: (a) students use AWP terms with other students to talk about writing, (b) students use the AWP to help them identify errors in other students’ writing, (c) students use AWP terms to help them communicate writing errors in each other student’s essays, and (d) students understand other students when they use AWP terms to revise their essay.

The findings conclude that students’ perceive the AWP favorably in diffusing the inter-subjectivity between them and their peers regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing. These findings indicate that students at Mater Dei are provided with
opportunities where they engage in different writing and editing tasks. This study reveals that the objective nature of the AWP framework helps students identify and communicate ways in which they themselves or their peers can improve their academic compositions. Previous studies revealed that when teachers provide their students with resources to facilitate their role as an individual and/or peer-editor, such as the AWP revision resources, their peer-feedback, their editing, and their overall performance in writing improved (Thomas, 2010).

The sixth research question statistically measured the extent in which the AWP’s program format and program resources are useful for the teaching and learning of academic writing. This study suggested that there is a statistically favorable relationship between the AWP’s program resources and their usefulness in the teaching and learning of academic writing. The responses from the survey study validate the sixth research hypothesis. Teachers of AWP writing favorably agreed or strongly agreed that: (a) the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior program levels are appropriate to the abilities of students as they progress as writers; (b) the AWP’s writing resources are helpful to students; (c) the AWP’s revision resources are helpful to students; (d) the evaluation criteria in the AWP rubric align with the writing objectives of the AWP; (e) the grades appropriately scale from A to F on the AWP rubric; and (f) the AWP incorporates is a holistic approach to the teaching of academic writing.

Student participants also favorably agreed or strongly agreed that: (a) the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior program series are appropriate to their abilities; (b) the AWP’s writing worksheets are helpful when writing AWP essays; (c) the AWP’s revision worksheets are helpful when revising AWP essays; (d) the expectations on the
grading rubric are clear; (e) the expectations on the grading rubric are appropriate; (f) after grading, they use the AWP rubric to help them understand their assessment grade; and (h) the AWP terms (i.e. general statement) help them understand the internal parts of an essay.

The findings conclude that both teachers and students favorably perceive the AWP’s program format and program resources useful and appropriate for the teaching and learning of academic writing. The findings indicate that the AWP’s essay planning and revision resources are useful, the expectations for the AWP are appropriate, and the AWP format facilitates an understanding between teachers and students regarding effective writing criteria for the internal structure of an academic essay.

**Recommendations**

This research study introduced and examined the AWP as a new approach to the teaching and learning of academic writing within a secondary learning environment. The findings of this study indicate that the AWP is successful in aligning the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing between teachers of writing and their colleagues, teachers of writing and their students, and students and their peers. The results of this study provide insight recommendations for future research and practice.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The AWP was designed to improve the teaching and learning of academic writing within secondary learning environments. Research continues to unveil that one’s experience in the teaching and learning of writing are influenced by a magnitude of
organizational, individual, and historical situational variables (Murphy, 2009). For educational theorists, the alignment of a school-wide vision, teacher preparedness, quality resources, ongoing professional development, and effective leadership all contribute to the soundness and effectiveness of school-wide writing initiatives (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001; Knight, 2007). Other researchers found that the outcome of school reform initiatives also depend on the impact of a teacher’s individual and historical experience in learning how to write themselves, and his/her knowledge and motivation to become an effective teacher of academic writing (Beck, 2006). With this said, understanding the complexities of the teaching and learning of writing as they relate to the AWP warrants additional research. The research can be determined using quantitative or qualitative methods, including case studies, experimental research, action research, and/or mixed methods studies.

Recommendations for future research include:

1. An examination that further explains or explores the AWP and its overall impact on student achievement in writing. This study only determined the extent in which teachers and students perceive the AWP as a tool to improve the teaching and learning of writing. The limitations of this study do not actually identify the extent in which students improve academically in writing at the local level and/or on state and federal performance assessments in writing when compared to traditional methods.

   Research may determine the extent in which the AWP impacts student achievement in writing by conducting a longitudinal examination of archival data that evaluates the pass/fail percentages of student performance
on Mater Dei’s sophomore AWP Competency Exam over the last three to five years. Another example would be to determine ways in which the AWP impacts student achievement on state and federal performance assessments, including student performance on college entrance exams.

2. Professional development on the AWP and its impact on teachers and students. There is no question that there is a strong correlation between professional development and an increase in student achievement in writing (The National Writing Project [NWP], 2002). Research suggests that when teachers collaborated and clarified their content goals prior to instruction, instructional practices in writing improved and student learning in writing significantly increased (Collopy, 2008; Craft, 2007; Hudon, 2010; Ruckoldt, 2007).

Researchers may find Kozlow and Bellamy’s (2004) Experimental Study on the Impact of 6+1Trait Writing Model on Student Achievement in Writing, or Vitella’s (2006) survey study, Promoting Positive Teacher Attitude and Student Achievement in Writing through Effective Professional Development useful in conducting studies that correlate professional development on the AWP with student achievement in writing.

3. Research studies that evaluate the AWP and its impact on Mater Dei’s alumni student achievement in entry-level college courses. National statistics and educational researchers continue to reveal the severe derailment between high school curriculum and college expectations for academic writing (Kania-Gosch, 2009; Shafter, 2005). Students who enter college are highly critical of
their high school writing experiences; these students report that their insufficient academic experience in the learning of academic writing in high school hindered their preparedness for the demands in college. As a result, many students across the nation continue to face academic and financial hardships when they enter into heavy college curriculum frameworks that demand high-quality academic writing within his/her core content studies (Shafer). Thus, further studies are warranted to determine how and to what extent the AWP impacts students’ and their preparedness for the academic writing demands in post-secondary learning institutions.

Research may include survey design research (qualitative or quantitative) that examines and/or explores the experiences of Mater Dei alumni and their writing confidence and writing achievement in entry-level college courses. Research also recommends case study research that explores the in-depth experiences of Mater Dei alumni in college writing courses as a result of their exposure to the AWP in high school.

4. An examination on ways in which the AWP could impact academic writing in college remediation courses designed for students who do not meet entry-level requirements for college writing. The AWP framework is a learning model that was not only designed to help high school students learn how to write academically, but to also prepare students for the demands of college writing. Research suggests that the AWP learning model may positively impact student achievement in writing in college remediation courses that aim to improve academic writing for entry-level college students. Post-secondary
colleges and universities are recognizing and taking responsibility for the stifling percentages of students who perform below average in writing by offering remediation courses that focus on skills for academic writing (Strong, 2003). However, for many teachers, communicating the goals of a good essay can be quite difficult even at the college level. In academic writing, multiple characteristics can define effective writing criteria and each of these characteristic are continuously shifting among different hierarchies of importance (Beck, 2006). Thus, the AWP may provide an objective framework for post-secondary faculty and learners of academic writing.

Research studies may involve case studies, action research and/or experimental research designs that examine cause-effect relationships between the independent variable, the AWP and other dependent variables. Studies may include within-group or between-group designs that administer pretests and posttests. Other studies may be qualitative; these studies may include a close examination of teachers and their behaviors during writing instruction and students and their behaviors in the learning of writing. Researchers may also want to determine academic achievement in writing through observations, interviews, and by examining student writing.

5. Research that explores ways in which the AWP impacts teachers and students in the teaching and learning of writing within public secondary settings. The research in this study specifically measured the AWP and it impact on students and teachers within a parochial 9-12 high school setting. Students at Mater Dei must take a high school placement test prior to
acceptance/admittance into the school. Students who attend Mater Dei must also pay an annual tuition. Students who do not perform academically are subject to academic review and in worst case scenarios, these students are dismissed from the school. The demographic and situational variables between public and private sectors may influence the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students regarding the AWP in the teaching and learning of academic writing. Thus, further studies within public secondary sectors are warranted in order to determine the extent in which the AWP impacts public school environments. Studying the AWP and its impact on teachers and students within public sectors will clarify the value and appropriateness of the writing program in the teaching and learning of academic writing at the secondary level.

Unlike Mater Dei, where the AWP already exists within various curriculum frameworks, for public sectors, the AWP could be studied as an intervention/intervening variable. Research may include qualitative, quantitative, and or mixed methods studies. Researchers may find experimental research designs, case studies, and/or action research designs highly effective. Studies may include within-group or between-group designs that include performance results on pretests and posttests. Other studies may be qualitative; these studies may include a close examination of teachers and their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors during writing instruction and students and their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in the learning of writing. Researchers may also want to determine academic achievement in
writing through observations, interviews, surveys, and by monitoring student performance in writing.

**Recommendation for Practice**

Developing, implementing, and maintaining the AWP as a curriculum reform initiative requires: (a) strong leadership from both administrators and teachers, (b) appropriate and structured professional development opportunities that facilitate collegial support systems both vertically and horizontally within the organization, (c) performance monitoring of both teachers and students, and (d) ongoing feedback and evaluation opportunities. Effective leadership is essential to the process of change; leadership will determine the individual and organizational capacity of a community and its ability function towards a community that learns, leads, and lasts during reform efforts (Martin-Kneip, 2008). Likewise, ideal reform environments embody professional learning communities that provide opportunities for teachers to become teacher-leaders, take ownership, and become facilitators of change within their content area (Wilson, 2009). Together, these ingredients orchestrate the ability for an organization to holistically identify and address ways in which communities can improve, develop, and refine the teaching and learning of academic writing.

Recommendations for practice include:

1. **Strong leadership support systems.** The results of this study suggest that although the AWP impacts the teaching and learning of writing favorably within Mater Dei, the school continues to struggle with the AWP as a writing-across-the-curriculum initiative. Research suggests that in order to increase school-wide accountability, Mater Dei needs stronger administrative initiative
and stronger teacher-leader support. Teachers not only need opportunities to work together, but they also need to be held accountable for their efforts to implement/improve academic writing within their discipline. Likewise, time and resources need to be dedicated solely to the improvement in the teaching and learning of academic writing within all content areas.

Research suggests that the administrative staff formally contract an individual or a few individuals to act as resource teachers, organizers, planners, and developers regarding the AWP and its writing initiative. The AWP coordinators/instructional coaches can lead faculty in individual and school/wide professional growth/planning opportunities regarding AWP pedagogy and instructional approaches, curriculum planning/mapping, and evaluations of student writing.

2. The development and implementation of an AWP Content Area Focus Team (CADT). The CADT should consist of one or two faculty representatives from each core content area, the AWP coordinators/instructional coaches, and an administrative leader. Teachers who represent the CADT act as teacher-leaders that agree to become leaders/mentors for the AWP within their own department area. The CADT teacher-leaders will guide and assist teachers within their own content areas in accordance with the AWP school-wide vision. The CADT member should meet with teachers of AWP writing to learn AWP pedagogy and instructional approaches. The CADT member can then structure meetings within their department that will promote collegial
planning opportunities, collective problem-solving and decision making opportunities, and direct teacher-teacher mentor/support opportunities.

Owens’ and Valesky (2007) state, “when we seek to involve people more fully in making decisions that affect them, attend to their motivational needs more adequately, or increase collegiality through teamwork, we are using people approaches to organizational problems” (p. 101). The CADT’s are collaborative; teachers within their department have opportunities to share ideas, express apprehensions, and develop curriculum strategies that align with the AWP. The content area meetings also allow teachers to provide feedback to the AWP coordinator(s)/instructional coach(s) and administrators regarding the improvement of the AWP as a tool in the teaching and learning of writing within their content area. Collegial development teams provide an opportunity for teacher-leaders to implement vertical communications between and among faculty, allowing all individuals to voice their needs, concerns, and apprehensions regarding reform design, implementation, and evaluation of learning. The collaborative structure facilitates ownership at all levels (Gorton & Alston, 2009).

3. Ongoing improvement and development of AWP resources for the teaching and learning of academic writing. These resources should not only facilitate the teaching and learning of academic writing as they relate to the AWP in English Language Arts, but also in other core content areas. The ongoing improvement and development of AWP resources for the teaching and
learning of academic writing should include refining, improving, and expanding current AWP teaching and learning resources.

For teachers, instructional resources that aim to improve writing instruction may include the development and implementation of computer software programs; these programs should include lesson plans, classroom activities, power-points, and other resources that teachers can use to promote effective instructional practices for academic writing in relation to the AWP learning model. Students will also benefit from additional student resources that aim to facilitate learning. These resources also include the development and implementation of a computer software program with student activities that scaffold to differentiated learning needs of students, including translations of the AWP in additional languages, comprehensive skill-building activities, and self-evaluation resources.

4. Student support and remediation opportunities that aim to promote student achievement for all students, but particularly for students who demonstrate below average performance in academic writing. Remediation opportunities include (a) an AWP writing course offered in the summer and in the fall, and (b) a designated tutor and/or writing center for academic writing and AWP tutoring after school throughout the school year. These remediation opportunities not only help students who struggle with academic writing and the AWP, but they also help newly enrolled students fast-track their skills and exposure to the AWP and its expectations for academic writing.
There are many factors that may contribute to low academic student performance in writing achievement. These include motivation, cognitive and linguistic variances, prior exposure to writing, individual confidence, and the emotional and psychological development domains of each student (Belland, Glazewski, & Richardson, 2008). Thus, educators need to continue to make striving efforts to implement meaning-making strategies that scaffold to the academic and developmental needs of their students in order to potentially succeed in curriculum reform efforts.

5. Ongoing evaluation of school-wide performance in writing on standardized performance assessments, including the Sophomore AWP Competency Exam, the PSAT, and the SAT. In an effort to understand the impact of curriculum reform initiatives, researchers that support data-driven environments recommend keeping statistical records that identify student achievement in a multivariate of demographic categories (age, ethnicity, gender, GPA, language ability, and so forth) within each class. These statistics should include group performance scores and overall class (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors) scores on different standardized performance assessments in writing. These statistics can be compared annually using simple and multiple regression analysis in order to determine whether or not students continue, increase, or decline in their academic writing performance on various performance assessments. The school may also find it beneficial to compare their school’s performance results with the results of neighboring schools with similar demographics.
Performance monitoring is a crucial and essential component when determining the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of any curriculum reform effort (Brimley & Garfield, 2005). For the AWP, compiling and analyzing annual statistics will improve the overall ability for administrators and teachers to make appropriate decisions that align with the targeted needs of their students. Performance monitoring will also help administrators and teachers identify and improve deficiencies in the AWP format and structure, and also in the teaching and learning of academic writing within their school. For this process, it is imperative to have a team of interested stakeholders dedicated to the ongoing planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the AWP academic writing initiative.

6. Promoting teacher/student feedback and evaluation opportunities regarding the AWP, instructional practices, classroom learning, and individual achievement/progress towards visionary goals. Feedback opportunities include opportunities for teachers to collegially engage in the evaluation of (a) the AWP, (b) their instructional practices, and (c) student performance within their classroom and/or content area. Teachers need opportunities to voice their opinions, their concerns, and their needs (Calabrese, 2002). They also need opportunities to reflect on the effectiveness of their own instructional practices when introducing and implementing academic writing within their content area(s) (Wilson, 2006). These opportunities encourage intrinsic motivation, teacher buy-in, and commitment. Like teachers, students should also have ongoing opportunities to evaluate the AWP program, including their
experiences in classroom teaching and learning, and individual achievement in academic writing.

Schools can provide teachers and students with feedback opportunities through surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups (Lauer, 2006). The results from the feedback can help administrators and teachers set realistic and achievable benchmark goals. Administrators may find it necessary and appropriate to delegate more time and/or resources to the teaching and learning of academic writing. Teachers may find it necessary to re-evaluate their curriculum planning frameworks and their classroom practices. When organizations provide teachers and students with opportunities for feedback and reflection, the teaching and learning within that organization prevails (Gorton & Alston, 2009).

**Implications**

With the demands of today’s idiosyncratic cultures combined with nationwide educational reform policies, administrators, teachers, and educational researchers must continue to find ways to establish effective processes that will lead to the ongoing, continuous improvement in teaching and learning of writing. In an attempt to improve prevailing deficiencies in the teaching and learning of academic writing within a secondary school, and to align the perceptions of what qualifies as effective writing criteria for academic writing between teachers’ and their colleagues, teachers’ and their students, and students’ and their peers, teachers at Mater Dei designed and implemented the AWP into their curriculum framework. The results from this study reveal that the
AWP favorably impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

The results of this study imply that objective writing program frameworks, such as the AWP, can diffuse the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their colleagues, between teachers and their students, and between students and their peers as to what qualifies as effective writing criteria in academic writing initiatives. At Mater Dei, teachers have clarified their goals as educators of academic writing by negotiating, identifying, and agreeing on: (a) the same instructional criteria for the internal components of an academic essay; (b) learning objectives for beginning, intermediate, and advanced writers; and (c) evaluation criteria for the assessment of effective/ineffective writing. Thus, as schools across the nation continue to negotiate ways to improve the teaching and learning academic writing within their own organization, they may consider using the AWP and/or creating their own teaching and learning framework for academic writing altogether. Ultimately, the process of standardizing the characteristics of effective academic writing criteria between teachers diffuses the inter-subjectivity regarding effective writing criteria between teachers and their students. Like Mater Dei, this process may also lead to favorably attitudes, opinions, and behaviors in the teaching and learning of academic writing within their own school.

For students, the AWP was developed in response to the difficulty and often, the inability for teachers to effectively convey their perceptions of effective writing criteria for academic writing to their students. Not only were teachers unclear, but teachers and their perceptions often changed as students moved from one teacher to the next. Understanding various teachers expectations and their hierarchies for quality writing,
compounded with new content material for the essay, presents obstacles that can incapacitate the motivation and confidence of any student. This is especially true for beginner writers. The research from this study revealed that students at Mater Dei favorably agreed that the AWP clarified and aligned their teachers’ learning expectations for academic writing. Likewise, students also favorably agreed that the AWP is appropriate to their needs as writers, not to mention, they felt that AWP helps them become better academic writers. The research implies that if secondary learning environments align teacher’ perceptions regarding effective writing criteria, and when these perceptions are documented and supported with scaffolding resources, students perceptions will also begin to align with their teachers. The alignment between teachers and students may improve the attitudes, opinions, behaviors of students in the learning of academic writing within their school.

In conclusion, understanding the AWP and its impact in secondary settings can ultimately lead to an improvement in teaching and learning of academic writing within diverse settings across the nation. Research from this study has determined that the AWP contributes to a new understanding on how an objective pedagogical approaches and objective writing program frameworks can contribute to school-wide advancements in the teaching and learning of academic writing. In essence, the alignment between teachers’ instructional practices and instructional pedagogies facilitates a re-enforced vision that is instilled both vertically and horizontally throughout the school; this vision ultimately transcends onto students’ and their perceptions of academic success. Thus, effective curriculum reform initiatives for the teaching and learning of academic writing begin by
orchestrating appropriate opportunities for teachers to discuss, negotiate, and align their perceptions regarding effective writing criteria for academic writing.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A. TEACHER SURVEY

ACADEMIC WRITING: For the purposes of this survey, academic writing is defined as formal writing that requires students to use persuasive/argumentative prose to defend a topic, concept, or idea. Academic writing can, but does not necessarily include the use of primary and/or secondary sources (quotes, paraphrasing, etc). Unless otherwise stated, academic writing does not mean “AWP”

PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Directions: Please respond to the questions below by selecting the most appropriate response. Mark your response by filling the appropriate corresponding oval on the scantron sheet.

1. What department do you primarily teach in?
   a. English Language Arts
   b. Mathematics
   c. Science
   d. Social Studies
   e. Religion
   f. World Languages
   g. Visual and Performing Arts
   h. Physical Education

2. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

3. How many years have you been teaching (including prior experience)?
   a. 1-4 years
   b. 5-10 years
   c. 11-15 years
   d. 15-25 years
   e. 26 years plus
PART II: SURVEY
Directions: Please use the following A-E scale to rate the frequency of your responses. Mark your response with the appropriate corresponding oval on the scantron sheet.

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<th>A</th>
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<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Writing in General
4. Students in my classroom have the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes.
5. I provide my students with examples that demonstrate effective writing.
6. Students have opportunities to create draft(s) for teacher review.
7. Students have opportunities to revise their writing with their peers.
8. I provide examples for my students on ways to improve their writing.
9. After grading, students have opportunities to reflect on their writing.
10. How often do you assign academic writing (see definition above)?
11. How often do you assign academic writing that requires AWP format?

STOP:
If you do not incorporate the AWP into your curriculum, you are finished with the survey.

PROCEED:
If you assign one or more assignments that require students to use the AWP format, please proceed to the next section of the survey.
PART III: SURVEY

Directions: Please use the following A-E scale to rate the degree to which you AGREE with the statements listed below. Mark your response with the appropriate corresponding oval on the scantron sheet.

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The AWP and Writing Instruction**

12. The AWP clarifies teaching objectives for academic writing.

13. The AWP terms and their definitions help me communicate my expectations to my students.

14. I use the AWP resources to teach academic writing.

15. I demonstrate effective writing by incorporating concepts from the AWP.

16. I use AWP language and concepts in lessons.

17. I use AWP terminology when giving students feedback on their writing.

**The AWP and Teacher-Teacher Alignment**

18. The AWP defines expectations for the teaching of academic writing within my department.

19. The AWP provides consistency between teachers regarding the expectations for effective academic writing.

20. Other teachers understand me when I use AWP terminology when discussing academic writing.

21. I understand other teachers when they use AWP terminology when discussing academic writing.

**The AWP and Teacher-Student Alignment**

22. When I use AWP terminology, I feel that students understand my expectations for their essays.

23. Students understand me when I use AWP terminology to discuss their writing.

24. Students use AWP terminology when they ask me questions on their writing.
25. Students use AWP terminology with other students to talk about their own writing.

26. Students use AWP terminology to discuss their grades on writing assignments.

27. Students refer to the AWP handouts to evaluate their own writing.

28. I believe that the AWP has contributed to an overall improvement in student writing.

**The AWP and Program Format and Program Resources**

29. The freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior program levels are appropriate to the abilities of students as they progress as writers.

30. The AWP’s *writing* resources are helpful to students.

31. The AWP’s *revision* resources are helpful to students.

32. The evaluation criteria in the AWP rubric align with the writing objectives of the AWP.

33. The grades appropriately scale from A to F on the AWP rubric.

34. The AWP incorporates is a holistic approach to the teaching of academic writing.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
Your input is greatly appreciated.
APPENDIX B. STUDENT SURVEY

ACADEMIC WRITING: For the purposes of this survey, academic writing is defined as formal writing that requires students to use persuasive/argumentative prose to defend a topic, concept, or idea. Academic writing can, but does not necessarily include the use of primary and/or secondary sources (quotes, paraphrasing, etc). Unless otherwise stated, academic writing does not mean “AWP”

PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Directions: Please respond to the questions below by selecting the most appropriate response. Mark your response by filling the appropriate corresponding oval on the scantron sheet.

1. What grade are you currently?
   a. 9th Grade   b. 10th Grade   c. 11th Grade   d. 12th Grade, Senior

2. What is your gender?
   a. Male       b. Female

3. How many years have you been attending MDCHS (including this year)?
   a. 1 year    b. 2 years   c. 3 years   d. 4 years   e. 5 years or more

4. Is English your first (native) language?
   a. yes       b. no

5. What is your current Grade Point Average (GPA)?
   a. Below 2.0  b. 2.1 to 2.9  c. 3.0 to 3.4  d. 3.5 to 4.0  e. Above 4.0
PART II: SURVEY
Directions: Please use the following A-E scale to rate the frequency of your responses. Mark your response with the appropriate corresponding oval on the scantron sheet.

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<th>A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing in General
6. In most of my classes, I have the opportunity to write academically.

7. I use the AWP writing handouts to help me write.

8. I am given opportunities to revise my writing before I submit a final draft.

9. I use the AWP revision handouts to help me revise my writing.

PART III: SURVEY
Directions: Please use the following A-E scale to rate the degree to which you AGREE with the statements listed below. Mark your response with the appropriate corresponding oval on the scantron sheet.

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The AWP and Student Learning
10. The AWP format helps me write academic essays.

11. The AWP format helps me write better academic essays.

12. I refer to the AWP format to help me set new goals to improve my writing.

13. I can identify problems in my own writing using the AWP to guide me.

14. I believe that the AWP has helped me build confidence in my writing.

The AWP and Student-Teacher Alignment
15. I use AWP terminology to ask my teacher questions on my writing.

16. My teachers understand me when I use AWP terms to discuss my writing.

17. My teachers have the same expectations for AWP writing.
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<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. The AWP clarifies my teachers’ expectations for the *structure* of an essay.

19. I understand my teachers expectations for AWP writing.

20. My teachers use AWP terms to help me with my essay.

21. Teachers use the AWP to communicate my essay grade.

**The AWP and Student-Student Alignment**

22. I use AWP terms with other students to talk about writing.

23. I use the AWP to help me identify errors in other students’ writing.

24. I use AWP terms to help me communicate writing errors in other students’ essays.

25. When students revise my essay, they use AWP terms to identify writing errors in my essay.

26. I understand other students when they use AWP terms to revise my essay.

**The AWP and Program Format and Program Resources**

27. The freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior program series are appropriate to my abilities.

28. The AWP’s writing worksheets are helpful when writing an AWP essay.

29. The AWP’s revision worksheets are helpful when revising an AWP essay.

30. The expectations on the grading rubric are clear.

31. The expectations on the grading rubric are appropriate.

32. After grading, I use the AWP rubric to help me understand my grade.

33. The AWP terms (i.e. General Statement) help me understand the parts of an essay.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated.