1. Project Description

Abstract.
The literature on teaching writing in American secondary (6-12) classrooms has proliferated over the past few decades, crossing geographical, disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological boundaries. There is consensus that writing, and literacy, is at the core of students’ learning; however, the last review of qualitative studies of the teaching of secondary writing was published in 1985 and, while expansive, it was not empirically based. A synthesis of key findings from the expansive qualitative literature base is needed. This IHR Seed Grant will support a systematic review of qualitative research in the teaching of secondary writing from the past fifty years, which will represent a significant contribution to the field of writing research for scholars and teachers across the globe.

History.
The past thirty years have brought about significant changes in the ways writing is produced, used, and shared. Many of these developments have taken place as part of the onset of advanced technologies, increased access to the Internet, the evolution of digital and multimodal forms of literacy, and the economic and social demands of globalization (Early, 2022; Jeffery, 2009). These changes have also led to new developments in the teaching and research of writing at every level of education.

A review identifying practices for teaching writing at the secondary level is needed for three reasons. First, studies of secondary teachers' practices and student assessment scores have raised serious concerns about the quality of writing instruction received by students in the secondary grades (Graham & Perin, 2007). It is important to identify research-based approaches and practices to teaching of secondary writing that support students, as this provides secondary teachers with instructional that can potentially support their instruction and their students' writing. Second, the field of writing research has expanded significantly over the past 30 years, and without a systematic review of the qualitative research in secondary teaching of writing, it is difficult to understand key findings, contributions, and patterns for instructional and methodological approaches. Third, there is no comprehensive empirical analysis of the teaching of writing conducted just with secondary grade students. Our research will fill a gap in the field of secondary writing studies through a systematic analysis of qualitative research in the teaching of secondary writing from the past fifty years (1973-2023) to understand 1) what research has shown about secondary writing instruction in the past 30 years, 2) key patterns and trends in secondary writing research in terms of methodology and approach, 3) and findings and implications for teachers and researchers.

Theoretical Framework. We draw from sociocultural learning theory as a way of conceptualizing writing and language use. From this perspective, the specific cultural activities
of language learning and literacy are products of social interaction and are embedded in a larger cultural and institutional context (Vygotsky, 1978; Bazerman, 2008; Prior, 2006). This approach diverges from a cognitive or developmental view of literacy in which meaning-making results from encoding and decoding texts, or pre-defined stages of thinking and learning (Hayes & Nash, 1996; MacArthur & Graham, 2016). We view writing as a social practice and are interested in the ways the teaching of writing may be enhanced through social relationships and in connection to social contexts and expectations (Bazerman, 2000; Brandt, 2001; Early, 2010). From this lens, writing is always situated within a context, is tied to specific purposes, and changes over time with practice and guidance (Bazerman & Bonini, 2009). Thus, learning to write is a process of co-action (Prior, 2006), meaning it is a practice embedded in the social and material world. Individuals do not learn to write alone and, even while writing, which is seemingly a solitary act, they call upon prior knowledge grounded in social relationships and contexts (Early, 2010; Early & Saidy, 2018).

**Goals and Activities of the Project.**

The goal of this project is to conduct a systematic review of the literature in secondary writing research from 1973 to 2023 to fill a gap in the field for teachers and researchers. In the fields of writing studies and secondary literacy research, the qualitative synthesis of research serves to assist in understanding the implications of the collective body of research. Many within the English education community regard systematic review as the reference standard for a literature review in professional education, and educators and academics look to systematic reviews to provide conclusions from the literature to inform teaching and research. The first activity will be to establish the scope of the project and create an inclusion criterion for studies. The following research questions will guide this study: 1) What qualitative research has occurred in the teaching of secondary writing in the last 50 years, 2) What are the prevalent themes in current research on secondary writing instruction, and 3). According to the research identified and evaluated in a systematic literature review, what are the specific qualitative research-based strategies for teachers to use in teaching secondary writing?

We will work, as a team, to compile all of the research conducted during the time period we have designated and 1) systematically analyze it using clear inclusion criteria, 2) write a formal review of the literature to present at a national and international conference for writing researchers and education scholars, 3) create an online repository of secondary writing research to share with a national community through the National Writing Project or Arizona State University’s library, and 4) publish our review in a top educational research journal (e.g., RER) and a journal for secondary practitioners (e.g. English Journal).

2. **Methodology**

To identify published research studies for our corpus, we will conduct a systematic search of the ASU Library’s single most comprehensive search tool - our *Library One Search* discovery service (an Ex Libris product). We anticipate that our approved studies will include government documents - specifically from the U.S. Department of Education’s ERIC database - doctoral
dissertations, peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters and books. We, therefore, need a search tool which includes indexing of all the above resource types - and that is why we selected Library One Search. In addition to all the records from the ASU Library Catalog, our Library One Search central discovery index includes commercial and open access content which has been aggregated from an extensive network of providers and enriched with metadata to facilitate fast and reliable discovery. Major content providers for Library One Search include commercial database companies such as ProQuest and EBSCOhost, as well thousands of publishers, organizations, and government agencies.

We will first identify all Library One Search results published between 1973 and 2023 according to the following three-part search strategy: a) ("junior high school" OR "junior high schools" OR "middle school" OR "middle schools" OR "high school" OR "high schools" OR "secondary school" OR "secondary schools") AND b) ("teaching writing" OR "teaching of writing" OR "writing instruction" OR "writing pedagogy") AND c) ("qualitative research" OR "qualitative study" OR "qualitative methods" OR interview*).

All matching results from the above search strategy will be exported into Excel for later analysis. Joe Buenker, Associate Librarian (ASU Library), will format the Excel file, identify duplicate records, and add additional columns for the team to document whether a record (publication) is approved [included] or rejected [excluded] according to specific criteria.

We will develop inclusion screening criteria after consulting with Dr. Steve Graham in MLFTC at ASU who is a leading expert in conducting this kind of systematic analysis. Our criteria will include identifiers such as: 1. written in English; 2. conducted in classroom settings for grades 6-12 (in the U.S) or ages 11-18 in international contexts (grade descriptors vary across the globe); 3. focused on writing instruction; 4. [qualitative methodology]; 5. [conference papers] 6. Studies that investigate English as a foreign language (EFL, e.g., teaching English outside of an English-speaking country) and studies that investigate bilingual education or language immersion for non-ELL students only will be excluded.

To establish interrater agreement of screening, the research team will screen the entire corpus of results identified according to the above search strategy. The first and second authors will discuss and address inclusion (agreements and disagreements) and work with Joe Buenker, ASU Humanities librarian to create a database with full-text documents of all included studies. Once we have designated all the studies that fit our criteria for inclusion for the 50 years of review, we will create a separate file for all of these to then code analytically. We will code thematically to look for patterns across the corpus in terms of methodological approaches, findings, and publishing venue. We will create charts and diagrams to illustrate significant trends or changes - such as the change from most of the early included publications being ERIC documents - especially conference papers - to an increasing number of the included results being doctoral dissertations. Also, to document the increase in the number of included publications per year over time. We will write up our findings using a chronological and thematic approach to the literature review.

3. Impact Statement
The short-term and long-term impacts and significance of the project include: 1) publication in a top-tier research journal as well as the leading practitioner journal (*RER* and *English Journal*) to disseminate this work to scholars and educators, 2) presentations at national and international conferences to disseminate this work (e.g., AERA, NCTE, and EARLY SIG), and 3) creation of an open access repository of secondary writing research. This literature review will serve as a significant contribution to writing research and teacher education that will impact the understanding of research-based practices for teaching writing at the secondary level as well as methodological approaches to examining the teaching of writing. We will also seek external funding to further expand this project to disseminate the work to other scholars and teachers of secondary writing.

4. ASU Resources Statement

We will utilize existing ASU resources and faculty expertise from the Department of English (Jessica Early, Professor of English) and ASU Libraries (Joe Buenker, ASU Humanities Librarian) to conduct the research and we will work closely with an international scholar in the field, Dr. Jill Jeffery, who’s research focuses on secondary writing studies. Jill is located at Leiden University outside of Amsterdam and has collaborated with Dr. Early on other research projects in the past. We will meet over the term of the grant to conduct the literature review, analysis, write up, and dissemination of the work. Our team will consult with Dr. Steve Graham in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at ASU, who is the leading expert on quantitative writing research across grade levels and has conducted multiple meta-analyses of writing research. We want to tap into his expertise to create our systematic approach to collecting and analyzing qualitative data. We will also collaborate to disseminate this work through conferences, publication of a scholarly literature review, and a public access research repository. All these individuals have already been contacted and are on board with the vision and planned execution of this project.

5. Project Timeline and Activities

**Research Activities:**

**June 2023-August 2023:** The research team will meet once a week to collect data via online databases. They will then work to file and code for inclusion criteria. These meetings will take place online via Zoom because of the international nature of the team. Joe Buenker will attend a training for information technology to work on creating an online database for this research. Jessica will travel to Europe to meet Jill to code the data set over a period of a few days.

**August 2023- December 2023:** The research team will continue to meet once a week to analytically code the complete data set. We will apply for AERA 2024 (American Educational Research Association Conference) to disseminate the work and begin writing up our literature review for publication. The research team will either convene to work on coding in person over several consecutive days or meet via conference call over a series of intensive days of coding during this time.

**January 2024 - April 2024:** Write literature review with analysis, findings, and implications. Apply for external funding to extend the scope of this project. Present findings at AERA in Philadelphia, PA April 2024 or at the 2024 EARLY SIG Writing Conference in Europe (location TBA). Work on an online repository of secondary writing research to share widely through NWP.
and ASU. We will apply for a Spencer Foundation Research Grant [$50,000] to expand and disseminate this work (due April 2024).

**May 2024–June 2024:** Send complete literature review article out for publication to *Review of Educational Research.*
References


### Itemized Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. PERSONNEL</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Purpose/Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Wages &amp; Benefits</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total personnel costs</strong></td>
<td>$0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2. RESEARCH-RELATED EXPENSES | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| **a. Travel: ASU project team** | | |
| transportation | $4,500 | ($3000 for the transportation costs for Dr. Early to travel to conferences and meetings with Dr. Jill Jeffery to disseminate and execute this work and $1,500 for Joe Buenker to travel to attend training on creating public access research repositories). |
| lodging | $3,200 | $2,000 for Dr. Early’s lodging at conferences or to stay in a hotel to work with Dr. Jill Jeffery on the research and $1,200 for Joe Buenker’s lodging to attend training in library science. *not to exceed ASU Travel Office rates* |
| meals & incidental expenses | $1,280 | *Meals and incidentals for Jessica and Joe for travel to execute project and disseminate the work. ($780 for Jessica and $500 for Joe). not to exceed ASU Travel Office rates* |

| **b. Public Engagement: public event (conference, symposium, lecture, etc.)** | | |
| visiting scholars: honoraria | $ | |
| visiting scholars: travel reimbursements | $ | *not to exceed ASU Travel Office rates* |
| venue rental fees | $ | *no charge for use of IHR conference room* |
| publicity | $ | |

| **c. Consultants: Visiting Scholars** | | |
| honoraria | $2,000 | *These honoraria will support Dr. Jill Jeffery to serve as a core member of this research term to consult, collaborate, and execute the project.* |
| travel reimbursements | | *not to exceed ASU Travel Office rates* |

| **d. Operations** | | |
| long distance mailing, shipping expenses | $ | |
| materials & supplies | $ | |
| reference materials | $ | |
| photocopying | $ | |
| digital resource development | $ | |

| **f. Course buyout** | $0 | |
Budget Justification
The budget will cover the expenses for Dr. Jessica Early to travel to one or two conferences in spring 2024 (AERA and/or 2024 EARLY SIG Writing), to cover transportation, lodging, meals and incidentals, and registration fees. The budget will also cover the expenses for Joe Buenker to attend an information sciences training on creating a research repository for the secondary writing data set we form through this work. We have budgeted much of the funding for the research team to travel to work together in this collaboration or to receive training to make the dissemination of the work possible. Dr. Jill Jeffery will receive an honorarium for her collaboration on this project. Because she is a scholar at an institution out of the country, we thought this would be the easiest way to support her work and expertise. The honoraria will contribute to her meeting with Dr. Early in person at a conference (AERA or EARLY SIG) to present this work.
EDUCATION

**Ph.D. in Education**, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2007
   Language, Literacy and Composition

**Master of Arts Teaching**, Lewis & Clark College, 1998
   English Education Emphasis
Oregon Single Subject Teaching Credential (certified 1998-present)

**Bachelor of Arts**, Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA, 1994
   English Major

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

**Arizona State University**
   Professor, Department of English, Tempe, Arizona 2019-present
   Associate Professor, Department of English, Tempe, Arizona 2013- present
   Assistant Professor, Department of English, Tempe, Arizona 2007-2013

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

**Current**

**Associate Chair of Personnel, Department of English**, Arizona State University, Tempe, Fall 2022-present.

**Director of the Central Arizona Writing Project**, Arizona State University, Tempe, 2011-present.

**Co-Director of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Humanities Early Start Program**, Arizona State University, Tempe, 2015-present
Early Start is an abbreviated summer bridge program to support incoming students identified for retention in their first year of college.
PUBLICATIONS

Notes: lead author listed first; * indicates collaborators who are graduate students

**Books (Refereed)**


**Books (Edited):**


**Special Issues of Journals Edited:**


**Scholarly Journal Articles (Peer-Reviewed)**


Jill V. Jeffrey

**Faculty Appointments**
- Lecturer, University Center for Language Studies (2014-present)
- University of Minnesota, Department of English Language and Literature
- Assistant Professor of English Education, University of Minnesota (2013-2017)

**Education**
- New York University
  - M.A. English Education (2009)
  - Ph.D. English Education (2014)
- University of Texas at Austin
  - M.A. Educational Psychology (2009)
- Michigan State University
  - B.A. Psychology (1999)

**Peer-Reviewed Publications**
Joseph D. Buenker
Rank: Associate Librarian
Classification: Liaison Librarian
Position: English Studies Research Librarian
Arts and Humanities, Engagement and Learning Services,
ASU Library, Arizona State University
joseph.buenker@asu.edu

ACADEMIC DEGREES

M.S. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Aug. 1996
Program: Library and Information Science

B.A. University of Wisconsin Parkside, Kenosha, WI, May 1994
Major: English Honors: magna cum laude

POSITIONS HELD

2009-present Librarian, Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ)

2000-2009 Librarian, Fletcher Library, Arizona State University
(Glendale, AZ)

1999-2000 Librarian, University of Wisconsin-Parkside
(Kenosha, WI)

1996-1999 Library Manager, Midwestern University
(Glendale, AZ)

1996-1996 Graduate Assistant, Illinois Newspaper Project
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

1995-1996 Graduate Assistant, Undergraduate Library
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

PUBLICATIONS


**AWARDS**


Outstanding Academic Titles 2006, *Choice*, for *Encyclopedia of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*

**RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

1) *Louise Erdrich: A Bibliography of Publications and Criticism*

   This potential book project tracks all English-language publications by and about writer Louise Erdrich, one of America’s most celebrated and prolific post-Vietnam writers. I have identified over 400 anthologies which include Erdrich’s poems and/or short stories and approximately 2,000 dissertations, books, chapters and articles which evaluate her writing. A sample of this work can be found at [http://www.west.asu.edu/jbuenke/erdrich/](http://www.west.asu.edu/jbuenke/erdrich/)

2) *Index of Indigenous North American Literature in English*

   I have identified approximately 230 literary anthologies of fiction by American Indian and Canadian First Nations writers and have completed the indexing of approximately 175 of the titles.

   I am considering making this into a web-based project which would, through open-access WorldCat records, allow users to quickly determine the availability of a book from nearby libraries.
Possible Future Funding Sources for this Work:

CCCC Research Initiative

Call for Proposals: 2023–2024 Research Initiative

CCCC’s Research Initiative speaks to our belief that critical, creative research furthers the organization’s mission to advocate for broad and evolving definitions of literacy, communication, rhetoric, and writing by producing multidisciplinary, digital, and diverse-language practices that emphasize the value of these activities to empower individuals and communities. CCCC promotes intellectual and pedagogical freedom and ethical scholarship and communication. To this end, CCCC sponsors research that produces knowledge about language, literacy, communication, rhetoric, and the teaching, assessment, and technologies of writing. Research has never been more needed for practitioners (and those of us who support them) to inform our students of the value of the knowledge their learning can bring to bear upon public conversations as the public, especially on social media. Our research is designed to be relevant to the work that we do in our classrooms, especially in the service of students who may be skeptical of the value of research.

We call for proposals to investigate key challenges faced by literacy, communication, rhetoric, and writing instructors and administrators in their classrooms and programs. The initiative also seeks additional problems to be addressed by our research. We are interested in all proposals that address the following areas:

- Research that produces knowledge about language, literacy, communication, rhetoric, and the teaching, assessment, and technologies of writing at the postsecondary level and beyond
- Research that addresses significant and emerging challenges in the field, and one that is addressed to a specifically identified public audience.

Particular topics and areas of interest are those that advance the mission and goals of CCCC, which include but are not limited to the following broad areas:

- Research that produces knowledge about language, literacy, communication, rhetoric, and the teaching, assessment, and technologies of writing at the postsecondary level and beyond
- Research that addresses significant and emerging challenges in the field, and one that is addressed to a specifically identified public audience.

RESEARCH GRANTS ON EDUCATION: SMALL

Application Deadlines:

Applications Open: February 3, 2023

Full Proposal Deadline: April 3, 2023 (12:00 noon Central Time)

Program Contact:
Cynthia Soto
smallgrants@spencer.org

The Spencer Foundation Small Grants Program supports education research projects that will contribute to the improvement of education, broadly conceived, with budgets up to $50,000 for projects ranging from one to five years, with a capacity to accept applications three times per year.

This program is "field-initiated." That is, proposals are not in response to a specific request for a particular research topic, discipline, design, method, or location. Our goal for this program is to support rigorous, intellectually ambitious, and technically sound research that is relevant to the most pressing questions and compelling opportunities in education.