Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development While Learning to Teach Writing in an
Elementary Writing Methods Course

by

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Dedication

To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.
   - Anatole France

I dedicate this dissertation to my family: Mom and Dad; Pete, Sue, Peter, Adam, Matthew, baby Tom Tom; Mary, Paul, and baby Andrew. While I had my dream and a plan, it was you who believed it was possible. I know you are holding a Kleenex in hand - tears are just the Kelley way of showing our pride.

Thank you for your love and support.
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Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development While Learning to Teach Writing in an Elementary Writing Methods Course

Karen S. Kelley

Abstract

My study examined the belief development of three preservice teachers as they learned to teach writing in a one-semester elementary writing methods course. I also sought to identify significant episodes that contributed to the preservice teachers’ belief development. Two questions guided my inquiry: How do preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing develop while enrolled in an elementary writing methods course? and What episodes do preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and writing instruction? I collected survey data, conducted a series of in-depth interviews, and completed 12 classroom observations during the data collection phase of my study. From those data sources, I generated descriptive statistics and followed constant comparative methods to analyze my transcripts and fieldnotes.

Using data from two surveys administered on the first day the writing methods course met, I employed stratified purposeful sampling strategy in order to select three case study participants with varied orientations toward writing instruction: Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha. I developed three case study descriptions and conducted cross-
case analysis in order to answer both of my research questions. Based upon data from the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, from classroom observations, and from in-depth interviews, I considered belief development along a continuum from product-orientation to process-orientation for each case study participant at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester.

The belief development of all three case study participants moved toward a process-orientation of writing instruction by the end of the semester, which was the observed orientation of the instructor in the writing methods course. The three preservice teachers identified learning experiences that required the application of information from readings and class meetings as significant in their belief development. Those assignments included shared writing assignment and in-class writing time and creation of an original publishable piece of writing. One case study participant also identified small group activities conducted in class as significant.

The case study participants varied in their application of author’s craft language that matched their emerging process-oriented beliefs. Skylar’s and Natasha’s beliefs about writing instruction evolved from an eclectic orientation at the beginning of the semester to a process-orientation at the end of the semester. They demonstrated a limited ability to apply author’s craft language to match their emerging beliefs. Samantha began the semester holding process-oriented beliefs about writing instruction and grew significantly in her application of author’s craft language that matched her beliefs. These three case study participants experienced varied growth in their ability to talk the talk of a process-oriented writing teacher. The experiences of these three preservice teachers suggest that preservice teachers acquire the ability to recognize teacher behaviors the
match their beliefs about writing instruction before their ability to apply the language to
accompany emerging beliefs develops. The acquisition of professional discourse to talk
about emerging beliefs varied depending on the readiness level of the individual.

Findings from my inquiry indicate that teacher educators should consider
intentionally designing writing methods courses to include assignments and experiences
that involve the application of presented information and developing understandings as a
means to foster belief development. This type of opportunity might include field
experiences directly related to course assignments, as was the case with the shared
writing assignment in my study. Teacher educators might also create situations that
allow preservice teachers to apply author’s craft language so that they grow in their
ability to talk the talk of a writing teacher. The development of professional discourse is
a marker of membership in any community of practice. As preservice teachers work to
gain entry into the teaching profession, it should be expected that their ability to apply
language of that community develop along a continuum.
Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

The important thing about writing is that it is an essential life skill. Teachers work diligently to train young pens to use strategies they themselves were never taught. Learning to teach writing should be a significant activity in the preparation of a teacher. Because the important thing about writing is that it is an essential life skill. (Modeled after The Important Book by Margaret Wise Brown)

INTRODUCTION

I write because I must in my academic life. As a doctoral student, my writing life has been consumed by the search for a research passion - for a topic that is both significant to the field of literacy and compelling to me. Discovering my research passion further ignited my writing passion. That research/writing passion is studying preservice teachers as they learn to teach writing to elementary students. In my academic life, I write to create a permanent record of my thoughts so that they can be shared with other people in other places at other times (Smith, 1994), and I write to leave an indelible mark on the world (Goody, 1968; Smith, 1994).

I write because I must in my personal life. In honor of the recent retirement of an esteemed mentor, I created a letter that communicated my admiration and gratitude for all
she had done for me. I toiled over my word choices and searched for the perfect phrasing that captured my feelings. The gift of writing I created for her helped me make sense of my feelings and communicate them to her. My writing served as a communication tool (Smith, 1994) to better understand this portion of my life (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994).

I write because I must in the nuts and bolts of my daily life. I am a list maker and a stickie note connoisseur. I write grocery lists on cute grocery list note pads; I write phone messages from myself to myself on legal pads; I write reminders to myself and others on any size stickie note I can find; I write directions to friends’ houses; I write recipes for new and adventurous meals. In the nuts and bolts of my daily life, I write out of necessity (Smith, 1994).

I write because I must. I am not alone in my feeling that writing is an important life activity. Goody (1968) discusses the importance of writing when he reports,

The importance of writing lies in its creating a new medium of communication between men. Its essential service is to objectify speech, to provide language with a material correlative, a set of visible signs. In this material form, speech can be transmitted over space and preserved over time; what people say and think can be rescued from the transitoriness of oral communication. (pp. 1-2)

Writing’s importance as a communicative tool has long been recognized in American education where writing holds a place as one of the three basic Rs (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). However, this place of importance has not always translated into significant instructional time being allocated to writing instruction (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986). An evaluation of skills formally assessed in today’s schools reveals that writing is receiving more attention. Most states currently measure student proficiency in
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writing in several grade levels. For example, Florida implemented a formal statewide writing assessment (FCAT Writes!) in 1990, and The Scholastic Aptitude Test, used by many colleges in the admissions process, has been revised to include a writing assessment administered for the first time in March, 2005. The National Commission on Writing adds to this trend of increasing attention to writing with the publication of *The Neglected “R”: The Need For a Writing Revolution* (2003). In The Commission’s view, “writing today is not a frill for the few, but an essential skill for the many.” (The National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 11)

An additional factor to consider against this backdrop of rising attention being paid to students’ writing performance is the fact that many preservice teachers were not afforded daily opportunities to write in elementary school (Napoli, 2001). Colleges of education are now faced with preparing many preservice teachers to teach writing when they themselves have neither had those experiences nor developed an enthusiasm for the subject. Applegate and Applegate (2004) describe a similar phenomenon in the area of reading. They refer to the problem of preservice teachers who are charged with conveying to their students an enthusiasm for reading that they do not have as the “Peter Effect.” The term derived from the biblical story of the Apostle Peter who, when asked for money by a beggar, replied by stating that he could not give what he did not have. I propose that the “Peter Effect” can be extended to the area of writing as well to describe preservice teachers who do not have an enthusiasm for writing due to few prior experiences or negative experiences as they learned to write in school. Preservice teachers who are confident writers with a positive attitude toward writing can “provide students with a passion for writing” (Street, 2003, p. 46) that preservice teachers who are
less confident or possessing a negative attitude are unable or unwilling to do. That is not to say that preservice teachers do not have any prior experiences in the area of writing, rather that the experiences have been structured by the generally accepted nature of writing instruction in place in schools at the time of their attendance. Preservice teachers who lack that passion may subscribe to the theory that their students will do as they say—not as they do—when it comes to instilling a love of writing (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000). In other words, they will tell their students to have an excitement for writing when they do not possess and/or communicate the very enthusiasm and interest they expect.

The preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing deserves attention because of the growing demands to improve student writing performance and the nature of the preservice teachers’ prior experiences in the area of writing. In this study, I proposed to investigate the experiences of a group of elementary preservice teachers as they participate in a course specifically designed to prepare them to teach writing. Preservice teachers’ existing beliefs toward writing and writing instruction including their writing apprehension are factors that I considered in selecting students to follow through the one-semester course. In this chapter I introduce the background and the purpose of the study, detail the questions that guided my research, define terms essential in formulating the research plan, and outline some limitations of the study.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I first came to consider the preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing while serving as a supervisor for preservice teachers during their final internship. While writing does not come easily to me, I can now say that I love to teach writing and inspire
young writers as they find their own writing voice. My enthusiasm for teaching writing developed while working with professors from a local university. Through their mentorship, I read the work of Donald Graves (1994) and Lucy McCormick Calkins (1986). The interns assigned to my care, however, demonstrated little desire to understand the writing process and some even feared accepting responsibility for teaching writing. I speculated that their prior experiences while learning to write and lack of background knowledge about the writing process led to a fear of accepting the teaching responsibilities for writing.

Later, in my role as an elementary assistant principal, my frustrations surfaced once again as I interviewed prospective teacher candidates. During the interviews, I asked candidates to discuss how they planned to teach writing. Their answers centered on generalities such as, “I will have all of the students write in journals, everyday,” and “Yes, writing is very important.”

I became disheartened with their responses that lacked specific details related to their knowledge of writing instruction, especially when compared to their knowledge of other subject areas, such as teaching reading. I wondered what factors in their teacher preparation contributed to this discrepancy. It could be that the teacher candidates had not previously imagined themselves in the classroom in order to formulate and then articulate concrete plans for writing instruction (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000). My experiences as an intern supervisor and as an assistant principal have led me to this point in my career when I can do more than question. I want to better understand the experience of learning to teach writing in a university writing methods course to provide insight into the design of such courses. I do not want future teachers to stumble
into their enthusiasm to teach writing. “After all,” I reason, “these teachers will be responsible for developing the writing attitudes and skills of the next generation of writers.”

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of my study was examine preservice teachers in the process of learning to teach writing in an elementary writing methods course and contribute to the understanding of preparing preservice teachers to teach writing. Specifically, I wanted to find out what was going on while preservice teachers learned to teach writing during their undergraduate preparation.

Preservice teachers bring educational common sense that is embedded in our culture to their teacher education program (Mayher, 1990). Educational common sense is very powerful because “it’s socially sanctioned. Since it’s internalized by all of us, it structures our perceptions and, therefore, our actions.” (Mayher, 1990, p. 3) Educational common sense structures the expectations that parents and preservice teachers have for school. Education distinguishes itself from many other professions in that everyone hoping to enter the field knows exactly how to “do school.” This common sense develops during years as a student in school (Lortie, 2002).

So strong is this educational common sense that preservice teachers have been reported to move toward more traditional beliefs when they are faced with their full time internship or student teaching experience, essentially ‘washing out’ the impact of college (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). While this may lead to an assumption that colleges of education have little hope of making an impact on the professional lives of the preservice teachers they serve, researchers have reported some success in shaping the beliefs of
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Much of the research available in the area of preservice teacher beliefs and attitudes has been conducted in a general sense toward teaching (Nespor, 1987; Richardson, 1996). The documentation of teacher beliefs and change related to science education (for example see Bright & Yore, 2002; Dana, McLoughlin & Freeman, 1998), mathematics education (for example see Benbow, 1993; Hart, L., 2002), and constructivist philosophy (for example see Holt-Reynolds, 2000) are areas that have received much more attention in the research than writing. While research has helped in the understanding of the act of writing, little is known about how to teach the teaching of writing (Kennedy, 1998).

Standards exist for both the performance of students (Florida Department of Education, 1996; NCTE & IRA, 1996) and the performance of preservice teachers (Association for Childhood Education International, 1997; International Reading Association, 1998) related to learning to write and learning to teach writing. The expectation is that preservice teachers will be prepared to teach writing upon entering the classroom. Expanding the existing understanding of existing beliefs in the specific context of learning to teach writing will add to the general body of current literature.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

We do not know enough about structuring preservice programs (Hollingsworth, 1989), and few studies explore how preservice teachers come to understand writing and the teaching of writing (Dahl & Farnan, 1998; Kennedy, 1998; National Center for
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Research on Teacher Education, 1991; Watson & Lacina, 2002). This study adds to the limited body of existing knowledge related to preparing preservice teachers to teach writing.

Differences in test scores or personality profiles do not account for much of the differences in learning within a teacher preparation program; the variations can be accounted for in the prior beliefs that preservice teachers bring with them to a teacher preparation program (Hollingsworth, 1989). Understanding preservice teacher beliefs could help explain the variations in preservice teachers’ receptivity to different kinds of knowledge (National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1991). Therefore, I sought to provide insight into the prior beliefs preservice teachers hold upon entering an elementary writing methods course and, because beliefs tend to be episodic in nature (Nespor, 1987), to uncover the experiences or episodes that fostered changes in preservice teacher beliefs. Understanding the prior beliefs of preservice teachers that are specific to writing and the teaching of writing and understanding students’ experiences while enrolled in a writing methods course will assist university programs in structuring effective preservice programs. Developing an understanding of the affective and evaluative aspects of beliefs that influence the amount of energy teachers will expend to learn a worthwhile activity (Nespor, 1987). Additionally, identifying the experiences or episodes to which preservice teachers attribute both their prior beliefs and their emerging understandings were important considerations in development of future writing methods courses.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I examined the ways in which preservice teacher beliefs about writing and writing instruction developed over the course of a one-semester course designed to prepare preservice teachers to teach writing in an elementary classroom. I considered the influence of the preservice teachers’ existing beliefs and attitudes toward writing and writing instruction and the theoretical and applied experiences of the college classroom as factors in the ongoing development of preservice teachers’ understanding of writing instruction in the elementary school. I examined the philosophy of the course instructor, the prior beliefs and attitudes of the preservice teachers, and the theoretical and applied experiences facilitated through the college course as they related to the ways in which the preservice teachers came to make sense of writing and writing instruction.

The questions that guided my investigation are as follows:

1. How do preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing develop while enrolled in an elementary writing methods course?

2. What episodes do preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and writing instruction?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Several terms are used frequently in the study. These terms were integral to the formation of the research questions and design of the study and have been used in the literature in many differing ways. For these reasons, these terms require concrete definitions. The most important of these terms are the following: belief, attitude,
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knowledge, and apprehension. I provide further elaboration of these terms in my review of literature.

Belief - “A belief is any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase, ‘I believe that…’” (Rokeach, 1968, p. 113)

Attitude - “An attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner.” (Rokeach, 1968, p. 112)

Knowledge - Knowledge is a special type of believing that meets a truth condition and an evidence condition (Green, 1971).

Writing Apprehension – A feeling of apprehension is characterized by negative feelings toward writing or situation that requires writing that often results in fear (Daly & Miller, 1975). The degree of a person’s writing apprehension is concerned with their “dispositional feelings” about composing. “The feelings are conceived to be relatively enduring tendencies to like or dislike, approach or avoid, enjoy or fear writing” (Daly, 1985, p. 44).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The case study methodology employed in this study resulted in localized descriptions (Patton, 2002) specific to the context from which they derive (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The degree to which the findings from the three case study participants in my study can be transferred to other contexts is determined by the degree of similarity between the university classroom context in my study and that of the reader (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I made every attempt to report the findings of the case studies selected for
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careful examination in my study in sufficient descriptive detail so that readers can vicariously experience the happenings as I did and draw conclusions that may differ from those that I made (Stake, 2000). This should not take away from the credibility of my findings, however. I applied rigorous methods and data triangulation in the methodology to strengthen confidence in the findings (Merriam, 1995; Patton, 2002).

I relied heavily on interviews and observations as methodological tools. There are limitations in the use of the interview. The first addresses the nature of human personality in that not all people are equally articulate or perceptive (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This may limit the quality of data from some participants. There are also issues of power in an interview relationship. “The person of lower status defers to the person of higher status” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 98). This can interfere with the interviewee giving their undivided attention to the interviewer and talking freely about the topic. The semi-structured interview guides that I used included some statements to build rapport in order to lessen the likelihood that this phenomenon will occur (Patton, 2002). I also observed in the writing methods course in which the preservice teachers are enrolled. This helped build familiarity between the case study participants and me and potentially avoided or lessened the power issues that might evolve. The very act of observing in a natural setting, in this case the university classroom, influences the setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To the degree possible, I attempted to make minimal impact on the participants and their setting.

To truly understand the development of preservice teachers as teachers of writing and how they put into practice ideas proposed in a writing methods course, a longitudinal study would be appropriate (Kennedy, 1998). Several studies examining the preparation
of preservice teachers to teach writing followed preservice teachers through at least some portion of their teacher education program, through student teaching, and in some cases into the beginning years of teaching (Grossman, Valencia, Evans, Thompson, Martin, & Place, 2000; Kennedy, 1998; Mahurt, 1998; Street, 1999). The longer preservice teachers are followed, the more likely a positive impact on practice has been demonstrated (Grossman et al., 2000). I did not propose to judge the lasting impact of a writing methods course on the future practice of teachers. Instead, I sought to take advantage of the episodic nature of beliefs and document not only the incremental changes in beliefs that occur over the course of one semester, but also to identify those episodes within the writing methods course that impact change in preservice teacher beliefs.

Finally, I conclude this section on limitations of the study by addressing the idea that my own personal philosophical beliefs regarding writing instruction might have influenced my view of the preservice teachers’ experiences throughout my study. I aim to acknowledge my beliefs toward a particular writing orientation at the onset of this study so that readers better understand how the data might have been interpreted (Merriam, 1995). My educational and teaching experiences have led me to understand the writing process and its implementation in the classroom. I understand that this is only one of many philosophical stances that exist regarding writing instruction, and that I may encounter other philosophies while completing this work. I provide details regarding my specific beliefs about writing in Chapter 3 when I discuss my researcher biases and the role they may play in data collection and analysis. While engaged in data collection and analysis, I recorded my own thoughts and feelings regarding what I observed in a researcher’s journal to help trace any bias that may arise in my own perceptions.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this introductory chapter, I established the need to examine the preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing is an important and timely topic. Preservice teachers bring an entire lifetime of prior experiences in school to their teacher education programs (Lortie, 2002). The relatively short amount of time preservice teachers spend in teacher education programs has proven to have a weak influence on the preservice teachers’ established beliefs (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). The first step in structuring a writing methods course that takes advantage of the limited amount of time is to examine preservice teachers in the act of learning to teach writing (Bloom, 1990). Contributing to the body of knowledge about preservice teacher beliefs about writing and writing instruction and identifying episodes that impact those beliefs are important and worthwhile in the lives of preservice teachers and the children they will one day teach.
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge
are terms related by a common thread that often
pretend they are one in the same as they blend; but
understand they must stand as distinct colors in a beautiful tapestry; as they
touch the very heart of the search to discover their role in forming the art.

The history of writing and writing instruction
sees the past evolving:
  from focus on prescriptive rules,
  to focus on the process,
  to looking at the context;
hears cries for change; and
hopes to find a balance.
(Modeled after the “I am” poetry format.)

INTRODUCTION

To situate this study in context with past and present research, I begin this chapter
with an examination of existing research on beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge. It is
important to the current study to narrow the focus of beliefs and attitudes and focus
specifically on preservice teachers’ beliefs by addressing ways in which researchers have
chosen to characterize the beliefs of preservice teachers in the literature. I follow this
background information with a review of literature related to changing the beliefs of
preservice teachers. Next, I present a historical perspective of elementary writing and
writing instruction in order to place the content of an undergraduate course within the
framework of best practice research in the field. This also allows prior experiences of
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preservice teachers to be historically situated in classroom practice. I bring the two
topics of preservice teacher beliefs and writing instruction together by reviewing existing
research on preservice teacher beliefs specifically related to writing instruction. While
this field is relatively limited in scope, some interesting findings do exist.

BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND KNOWLEDGE

The journey to discover distinctions between attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge is
similar to taking off down a hallway with many doors. Each time a door is opened, a new
view is revealed to the traveler. While these singular glimpses are significant, the
cumulative impact of the trip down the hallway is most impressive. Some views weigh
heavily on the lasting impression of the trip; others leave but a thumbprint. And so it is
with the journey to discover a working definition of terms that can be used to describe
teachers’ thought processes: attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge. Each perspective adds to
a clearer understanding of the terms, but at some point, a commitment must be made and
a direction taken.

Distinguishing Among Beliefs, Attitudes, and Knowledge

Many perspectives exist relevant to defining attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge
(Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996) leading to confusion in defining each term. Some of
the confusion derives from the fact that researchers in the field use many different terms
to describe teachers’ ways of thinking, including beliefs, attitudes, conceptions,
perspectives, perceptions, orientations, theories, stances, values, opinions, dispositions,
and knowledge (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). To further confound the issue, many
studies that address beliefs and/or attitudes do not define the terms being referenced
(Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding, & Cuthbert, 1988). In a review of literature on teacher
beliefs, Richardson (1996) formulated the definition of a belief as, “a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding the belief” (p.104). Pajares (1992) distinguished between beliefs and knowledge in this way, “Belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact” (p. 313). For the purposes of this study, a clear understanding of each term is necessary in order to use the terms appropriately. To do so, I turn to the field of cognitive psychology.

Two cognitive psychologists, Fishbein (1967) and Rokeach (1968), apply similar concepts in different ways in an attempt to clarify the distinctions between attitudes and beliefs. Beliefs and attitudes are comprised of three dimensions: affective, cognitive, and behavioral. The affective dimension includes evaluative activities addressing favorableness or unfavorableness, the goodness or badness of an object or concept leading to varying levels of intensity. The cognitive dimension deals with knowledge about the nature of the object and its relation to other objects, held with varying levels of certainty. The behavioral dimension refers to action that should be done with respect to the object when it is suitably activated.

Rokeach (1968) proposes that beliefs are comprised of all three dimensions - affective, cognitive, and behavioral. An attitude is an organization of interrelated beliefs around a common object or situation. All attitudes incorporate beliefs; not all beliefs are necessarily a part of attitudes. Beliefs are predispositions to action; an attitude is a set of interrelated predispositions focused on an object or situation (Rokeach, 1968).

Fishbein (1967) offers a conception of attitudes and beliefs that narrows the focus of each, arguing that the narrow focus of each term increases their utility in the field of research. Beliefs are credited with the cognitive and behavioral dimensions, while
attitudes are credited with the affective dimension. Beliefs are hypotheses regarding the nature of the object and types of actions that should be taken with respect to them. When faced with an object, the attitude toward the object equates to the evaluative meaning of that object – its favorableness or unfavorableness, its goodness or badness. The attitude is a learned predisposition to respond to a stimulus in a favorable or unfavorable way.

While Fishbein feels that separating the constructs strengthens their utility in the research community, I am left confounded by the apparent overlap in his conception of beliefs and attitudes. In Fishbein’s view, both attitudes and beliefs have an element of the behavioral dimension.

For the remainder of this paper, therefore, Rokeach’s (1968) conception of beliefs and attitudes serve as the guiding framework. “A belief is any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase, ‘I believe that…’” (Rokeach, 1968, p. 113) “An attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner.” (Rokeach, 1968, p. 112)

According to Rokeach’s conception of beliefs and attitudes, therefore, the following would be true: I believe that owning a dog makes the house smell awful. I believe that owning a dog is a lot of work. I believe that owning a dog means things will get destroyed. I believe that owning a dog is a large expense. All of these beliefs about owning a dog (the situation) organize themselves into a negative attitude toward owning a dog. This set of beliefs establishes my agenda for action, or in this case non-action, not to buy a dog. Two types of attitudes mediate my behavior: those toward the object (the
dog) and those directed toward the situation (owning a dog). In a different situation regarding the same object, a different predisposition to act might surface.

Rokeach’s (1968) accepted definition of a belief as a phrase that can be preceded by, “I believe that…” leads to the necessity to distinguish between beliefs and knowledge. A statement such as, “I believe the earth is round,” meets the criteria for a belief as stated above. In addition to being a belief, this statement is also true according to currently accepted scientific evidence. The question then arises, “Is this a belief or knowledge?” Knowledge is a special type of believing that meets a truth condition and an evidence condition (Green, 1971). Following this line of thinking, false beliefs can exist; false knowledge cannot. When either the truth condition or the evidence condition is unsatisfied, that which was considered knowledge turns out to be a belief (Green, 1971). For the remainder of this paper, Green’s notion of knowledge as a special type of believing serves as a guiding framework.

Nespor (1987) provides four additional features of beliefs that serve to distinguish beliefs from knowledge. According to Nespor’s (1987) structure, beliefs frequently address the existence or nonexistence of an object or situation; beliefs often deal with representations of alternate worlds or realities; beliefs rely heavily on the affective and evaluative dimension; and “beliefs often derive their subjective power, authority, and legitimacy from particular episodes or events” (Nespor, 1987, p. 320). By suggesting that beliefs and knowledge rely more heavily on one dimension than another, Nespor is not suggesting an either/or scenario and thus does not contradict Rokeach’s (1968) definition of beliefs.
The centerpiece of the conceptual understanding of beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge is beliefs. Figure 1 represents the interrelatedness of the three concepts (see Figure 1). Attitudes are enduring organizations of beliefs, and knowledge is a special type of believing that meets a truth criteria. Because beliefs form the nucleus of my conceptual understanding for my study, the term beliefs is used to refer to beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge. This general understanding of beliefs, attitudes, and
knowledge makes it possible to narrow the focus to the nature of beliefs held by preservice teachers in order to get closer to the topics addressed in my research questions.

**Relationship Between Beliefs and Action**

Teacher educators concern themselves with the study of beliefs because of the relationship between beliefs and action. Beliefs play a central role in guiding behavior. Rokeach (1968) emphasizes this idea by stating that beliefs are comprised of an affective dimension, a cognitive dimension, and a behavioral dimension. When an individual considers an idea for its degree of favorableness and considers it in relation to other ideas, it may become a belief held by an individual and acted upon accordingly. In this respect, a belief acts as a predisposition to act. If I don’t believe an idea, I am less likely to enact the idea. For this reason, attempts to change beliefs could be characterized as attempts to change behavior. The relationship between beliefs and action is interactive (Richardson, 1996). “Beliefs are thought to drive actions; however experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs.” (Richardson, 1996, p. 104).

Teacher educators engaged in work related to belief development and its relation to present or future action come to view preservice teacher beliefs in many ways.

**Characterizations of Preservice Teachers’ Beliefs**

The literature portrays the prior beliefs of preservice teachers in many ways. Weinstein (1989) characterized preservice teachers as having “unrealistic optimism” (p. 57). In practice this would sound a bit like, “Yes, some teachers do have difficulties, but that will never happen to me.” When surveyed, preservice teachers consistently rated themselves as possessing qualities they deem necessary to be a really good teacher.
Students enter preservice programs with a high level of confidence and conviction that they can succeed in the teacher profession.

Calderhead and Robson’s (1991) analysis of preservice teacher talk about teaching and learning revealed the characterization of prior beliefs of preservice teachers as images. Calderhead and Robson (1991) and Weinstein (1989) reported that preservice teachers saw commonalities in their positive images of good teaching and personality attributes they themselves possess. These images suggested inflexibility in the willingness to consider alternate possibilities.

Lortie (2002) suggested that the beliefs of preservice teachers formed during the apprenticeship of observation. The apprenticeship of observation refers to the sixteen years preservice teachers spend sitting in the student desk prior to entering a teacher education program. From their limited view from a student’s seat, however, preservice teachers learn intuitive and imitative notions rather than explicit and analytical ones. Pedagogical principles do not enter the picture until formal teacher education begins, years after their apprenticeship begins. While the apprenticeship of observation forms strong conceptions of what it means to be a teacher, it is unlikely to provide preservice teachers with a sense of the problematics of teaching.

While not specific to preservice teachers or even to schooling, Lave and Wenger (1991) added to the understanding of learning through apprenticeship. In their discussion, learners inevitably participate in communities of practice through legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). Beyond mere participation, LPP describes engagement in social practice that entails learning as an integral constituent. LPP adds to Lortie’s (2002) idea of learning through apprenticeship of observation by emphasizing that
learning is not merely a condition of membership but a constant negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the situation. All learning is situated and understanding is more than receiving a body of factual knowledge. LPP refers to the relationship between newcomers and old-timers within communities of knowledge and practice. Children might be said to be the ultimate legitimate peripheral participants as they prepare for the adult world. Preservice teachers have also experienced a form of legitimate peripheral participation in the education world. They bring their learning, which has been situated in their prior schooling experiences, to their teacher education experience as they work to enter a community of practice.

In all of these characterizations of the nature of preservice teacher beliefs, it is clear that preservice teachers come to teacher education programs equipped with sets of knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning. “Such knowledge and beliefs play powerful roles in shaping what prospective teachers learn through various teacher education programs” (Borko & Putnam, 1996). Understanding the impact of prior beliefs on preservice teachers’ cognition played an important role in my study and warrants examination.

**Impact of Prior Beliefs on Learning to Teach**

The prior beliefs that preservice teachers bring to a teacher education program significantly impact what and how the student learns. Prior beliefs serve as filters for processing experiences and knowledge (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Hollingsworth, 1989). Existing beliefs or filters acting like a sieve allow some new learning to become a part of the cognitive reality of the preservice teacher while making it more difficult for other new
learning to do so. Beliefs form the mesh of the sieve and influence what preservice teachers learn (Hollingsworth, 1989).

Prior beliefs may hinder preservice teachers’ ability to see the relevance of courses addressing pedagogy. They may not attend closely to new information or take full advantage of experiences offered that do not match their prior understanding (Borko & Putnam, 1996). The existing views may be incompatible with the views of learning underlying the instructional approach advocated by the teacher education program (Borko & Putnam, 1996) creating cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957).

Prior beliefs are related to motivation constructs and to students’ academic performances and achievement (Pajares, 2003). They influence the choices preservice teachers make, the effort they expend, and the persistence they exert when dissonant events occur. A strong sense of confidence built on positive prior experiences, for example result in the likelihood that the preservice teacher will expend a higher level of energy to work through the difficulty (Pajares, 2003).

Changing Preservice Teachers’ Beliefs

Changing preservice teachers’ prior beliefs is difficult work often fraught with problems (Bird, Anderson, Sullivan, & Swidler, 1993). “Except for the student-teaching experience, preservice teacher education seems a weak intervention” (Richardson, 1996, p. 113). The research on preservice teacher beliefs related to writing and writing instruction is sprinkled with statements such as, “challenge and enrich the future teachers’ ordinary assumptions about children, text, and writing instruction” (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990, p. 278), “the preservice teachers couldn’t confront themselves as teachers” (Shrofel, 1991, p. 164), and “preservice teachers are encouraged to rethink
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traditional ways of teaching and learning about writing…” (Napoli, 2001, p. 5). Words like challenge, confront, and rethink allude to the intent of creating cognitive dissonance.

Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, and James (2001) suggest that while difficult, changing preservice teacher beliefs is possible, at least in the short term. Using the Witcher-Traves Survey of Educational Beliefs (WTSEB), Minor et al. (2001) reported changes in beliefs. Preservice teachers who held eclectic beliefs about instructional practices changed to hold progressive beliefs at the end of the semester. Similarly, preservice teachers who held a transmission viewpoint regarding instruction changed to hold an eclectic viewpoint at the end of the semester. The instructor of the course held progressive beliefs, thus the preservice teachers’ beliefs moved to be more in line with the instructor indicating that instruction can impact preservice teachers’ beliefs. The purpose of Minor et al.’s (2001) study was not to judge the impact of instruction merely to determine if changes in beliefs could be measured. This study paints an overly simplistic view of the change process in comparison to many others who report that change in preservice teacher beliefs is difficult work and often only temporary.

People strive toward consistency - consistency between what they know or believe and what they do (Festinger, 1957). Cases in which a person is faced with two elements that do not “fit,” the elements are said to be dissonant (Festinger, 1957). Researchers using words such as challenge, confront, and rethink are attempting to intentionally create cognitive dissonance. This type of confrontation questions other knowledge creating cognitive dissonance between existing beliefs and new knowledge (Shrofel, 1991). Three resolutions exist: abandoning the original position and adopting a new one; strengthening of the original position; or integration of the two positions
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(Shrofel, 1991). Teacher education programs attempting to change preservice teachers’ beliefs that differ from those being presented strive to place preservice teachers in positions which cause them to abandon existing beliefs in lieu of program beliefs or integrate program beliefs into their belief structure.

Teacher beliefs should be accessed and acknowledged (Bird et al., 1993; Grossman, 1991; Richardson, 1996) in order for them to be addressed in teacher education programs. The initial step in changing preservice teachers’ beliefs is developing awareness on the part of the preservice teachers that these beliefs exist. In addition to challenges to traditional knowledge through university course work, preservice teachers require support to try new approaches throughout student teaching (National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1991). Support in the form of structured field experiences and tutoring experiences included in language arts methods courses tend to facilitate a break from traditional beliefs (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Shrofel, 1991). The combination of acknowledging the beliefs and providing support while trying out the new approaches seems to be a promising combination in the attempt to change preservice teachers’ prior beliefs.

Beliefs, Attitudes, and Knowledge Summary

This portion of my review of literature provides important foundational information for my study. Most importantly, this review establishes the guiding definitions of beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge. Beliefs are statements comprised of an affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimension. Attitudes are enduring organizations of beliefs. Knowledge is a special type of believing that meets a truth or evidence criteria.
These definitions place beliefs at the center of the organizational framework regarding the terms.

**BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON WRITING AND WRITING INSTRUCTION**

Transformations in writing instruction occurred and continue to occur in classrooms. The shift over time has gone from a focus on the product of the writing event, to focus on the process of the writing event, to concern for the context surrounding the writing event. These shifts are significant to the current study as they provide a frame of reference from which to discuss the prior beliefs of preservice teachers and from which to identify their orientation toward writing instruction. An historical review of writing and writing instruction also places the content of the writing methods course in perspective with past and present research. Though much work occurred in the area of writing early in the twentieth century, little of it dealt with elementary children (Burrows, Parke, Edmund, DeBoer, Horn, Herrick, & Strickland, 1961). Elementary children became a serious focus of research when the examination of students’ writing process gained momentum. Even within the process movement, Emig’s (1971) work centered on the composing processes of twelfth graders. Despite the fact that my study focused on the preparation of elementary preservice teachers, I feel it is necessary to address the evolution of writing in American high schools as many of the early composition studies described writing in this context. I organized this review based upon the following trends in research: focus on product, focus on process, and focus on context.

**Focus on Product**

The content of English curriculum in American high schools has its origins in the academies established by Benjamin Franklin advocating for the study of English rather
than Latin and Greek as was common in Latin schools of the nineteenth century (Stahl, 1965). During this time period, many high schools taught only grammar and rhetoric in the belief that once students mastered these courses they would be able to write (Stahl, 1965). The landmark Hosic report published in 1917 stressed correctness throughout the written product while encouraging writing topics to grow out of the students’ personal experiences (Burrows, 1977). In practice, formal grammar instruction still received more weight (Stahl, 1965).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, college entrance exams firmly established English as a formal school subject and influenced composition practices by requiring students to write about topics from classic literature (Stahl, 1965). By the mid 1960’s, three schools of thought existed regarding English grammar: traditional grammarians who advocated teaching grammar by word analysis using strategies such as correcting verb agreement and eliminating faulty pronoun references; structural linguists who study the spoken word rather than the written word and advocate teaching punctuation by means of voice pitch and juncture; and natural methodologists who supported teaching students to express themselves (Stahl, 1965). Despite the existence of these three philosophies, traditional grammar instruction held the strongest influence in American high schools.

Composition instruction in the first half of the twentieth century tended to consist of topic assignments on topics such as science, current social problems, or personal experiences of the students (Stahl, 1965). High schools offered courses in creative writing, such as News Writing and Journalism, primarily to gifted students. In these
courses, what the writer had to say was of more importance that the mechanics of the language, however these courses reached very few students.

During the 1950’s and 1960’s, referred to as the formalist movement, learning to write meant learning to avoid errors (Nystrand, Greene, & Wiemelt, 1993) in a prescriptive manner (Smith, 2000). This trend in composition closely mirrored the thinking promoted by the philosophy of the New Criticism (Brooks & Warren, 1938) and its accompanying instructional practices commonly adopted in American high school English classes during this time. The New Criticism emphasized a singular universal meaning in each text (Nystrand et al., 1993). Analyzing a text was similar to solving a mathematics problem that had one correct answer. The composition translation of this philosophy equated to a focus on the correctness of the final written product.

Product in the Classroom

Despite these trends in grammar and composition practices in American high schools, the status of writing instruction in high school classrooms at this time is characterized as scarce (Squire & Applebee, 1968). In a study of 116 high schools across the country, Squire and Applebee reported that English teachers spent only 15.7 percent of their class time emphasizing composition. The instruction that did occur tended to take place after the papers had been written through written comments and corrections on the papers. Correcting papers was synonymous with teaching writing and assigning compositions took place instead of ordered classroom instruction.

The five-paragraph essay was commonly accepted as a correct organizational structure (Nystrand et al., 1993) and demonstrated an emphasis on product rather than process (Smith, 2000). Instruction focused on teaching students to avoid common text
errors by focusing on features of model texts (Nystrand et al., 1993). Teachers in American high schools during this time period exhibited a strong belief in the efficacy of formal, systematic and normative grammar instruction, despite research findings to the contrary (Burrows et. al., 1961). Teachers taught student writers to create unambiguous explicit texts by manipulating text elements such as topic, clencher sentences, usage, and syntax (Nystrand et al., 1993). Product focused instruction including formal grammar instruction dominated classroom practice, textbook content, and research throughout the beginning of the twentieth century.

Focus on Process

Formalist composition studies came into question with the publication of several reports published in the early 1960s including Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer’s (1963) *Research in Written Composition* and, in perhaps the first report on elementary children’s composition, Burrows et.al. (1961) *Children’s Writing: Research in Composition and Related Skills*. Findings of the negligible or even harmful effect of formal grammar instruction on writing improvement in secondary and elementary school (Braddock et al., 1963; Burrows et al., 1961; Hillocks, 1984) and of primary children creating longer compositions using more extensive vocabularies when freed from the mechanics of language (Burrows et al., 1961) led to the careful examination of the composing process. Research in writing moved away from texts viewed as products to cognitive processes of reading and writing (Freedman, Dyson, Flower, & Chafe, 1987; Nystrand et al., 1993). During this time period several researchers emphasized the composing process (Britton, 1970; Emig, 1971; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Graves, 1975). In Britton’s (1970) view, language played an important role in representing experience.
He viewed all forms of writing as primarily expressive. Poetic language and transactional language are forms of expressive language that can foster exploration and discovery. Britton criticized school writing because it muted expressive language through exercises that only required student writers to practice and master prescribed forms.

Emig’s (1971) pioneering work, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, also argued that the central concern of writing teachers should be process rather than text. She agreed with Britton’s emphasis on writing as an expressive act; but she chose to use less absolute terms to refer to the modes of writing. Emig’s schema divided expressive language into reflexive and extensive modes, emphasizing the relations between the writing self and the field of discourse. Emig’s final findings focused on the differences in the self-sponsored composing process and the school sponsored composing process, noting that school taught writing experiences failed to align with the practices of both established and student writers. For established and student writers, the composing process is not fixed in an exorable sequence. Rather, they occur and reoccur throughout the process (Emig, 1971).

Graves extended Emig’s work with twelfth graders when he examined the composing process of seven-year olds. While observing seven year old children engaged in the writing process, Graves (1975) identified such factors as a child’s gender, the use of language, and problem solving behaviors, to be involved as a child writes. These characteristics interact to produce two distinctive types of writers: reactive and reflective. Children identified as reactive demonstrated erratic problem solving strategies, proofread at the word level, rarely completed reviewing the products, and an
inability to use reasons beyond the affective domain in evaluating their own writing. Children identified as reflective showed little rehearsal before writing, periodically reread to adjust small units of writing at the word or phrase level, and the ability to give examples to support their reasons for evaluating writing. While reactive writers tended to be boys and reflective writers tended to be girls, the characteristics exist in varying degrees in all children and can emerge under different types of writing conditions.

The collaboration of rhetorician Linda Flower and cognitive psychologist John Hayes also followed up Emig’s work by further developing a cognitive model of writing. Flower and Hayes (1981), like Britton, Emig, and Graves, sought to focus scholarly attention away from the text onto the cognitive processes of the writer. Their cognitive model of writing (Flower and Hayes, 1981) identified three major processes: plan, translate, and review, and a number of sub-processes available to the writer. Writers do not proceed through these processes in a one, two, three sequence; therefore, they are offered as a set of optional actions. Flower and Hayes’ main claims – that composing processes intermingle, that writing can be viewed as a problem solving activity, that goals direct composing, and that experts compose differently from inexperienced writers – all have become commonplace in the process movement. The result of the work that occurred from the late 1960s through the mid 1980s was that, “By the late 1980s writing was commonly thought to be a fundamentally dynamic, meaning-making process.” (Nystrand et al., 1993)

Process in the Classroom

In *The Art of Teaching Writing*, Calkins (1986/1994) invited teachers and students to join in the “writerly” life. While this “writerly” life begins before children enter the schoolhouse doors, in school Calkins (1986/1994) describes the writing workshop as a supportive writing environment. Instruction in the writing workshop occurred by gathering writers together in order to model new techniques or make a suggestion to the whole class. This type of instruction can occur in a mini-lesson or through conferencing with individual students or small groups. Mini-lessons addressed procedural issues and writing strategies. Topics for conferences came from the work of the student and may address content issues, design issues, process issues, evaluative issues, or editorial issues. The teacher is not the only mentor in the room. Students are mentored by being invited inside literature and by being allowed to learn from authors (Calkins, 1986/1994; Graves, 1983). In the writing workshop, process took on a central role. The second edition of Calkins’ (1994) *The Art of Teaching Writing* revealed an evolution of her philosophy regarding curriculum within her writing workshop. In this edition she shared that the curriculum is shaped around the idea of genre study rather than topic. Immersing everyone in the class in a genre could last six or seven weeks.

The workshop approach is not without its critics. Lensmire (1994), for example, initially set out to tell the story of a teacher/researcher “struggling to get a writing workshop running with children who had only exercised their pens to fill in worksheet blanks” (Lensmire, 1994, p. 1). He ended up writing about the underside of his workshop experience. In his conclusions, he recommended several re-visions of writing workshop practices after working as a third grade writing teacher/researcher. The most striking finding dealt with student-to-student interactions in the writing workshop context.
Lensmire relied on the romantic tradition offered by Calkins (1986/1994) and Graves (1975, 1994) to shape his initial expectations of the nature of the social interactions that the children would engage in within the writing workshop. His observations led him to believe that workshop advocates “overestimate the goodwill students have toward one another, especially across lines of social class, gender, and race” (Lensmire, 1994, p. 38). Peer audiences for writing brought with them friendships, trust, and a social energy that can empower children; they also brought with them teasing, risk, and conflict. For this reason, Lensmire cautions, teachers must accompany such practices with explicit talk about the benefits and risks in such practices for the self and the community. They must direct intervention into the patterns of the student associations and dedicate attention to those students whose voices have been silenced (Lensmire, 2000).

Another criticism of the workshop approach to writing and the writing process developed in Australia during the 1980s. A new interest grew to go beyond traditional literacy pedagogies that stressed formal correctness and beyond the process pedagogy that stressed natural learning through “doing writing” (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). The progressivist curriculum in the form of process writing in place at that time did not produce positive results and led to the development of a new pedagogical stance toward writing: the genre approach. In The Powers of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing, Cope and Kalantzis (1993) describe the best thinking in the field of genre theory at the time. Genre literacy pedagogy described the relation of the social purpose of text to language structure. Genres are social processes and textual interventions in society. “Learning new genres gives one the linguistic potential to join new realms of social activity and social power” (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, p. 7). School is typically theoretical,
concentrating knowledge into generalizations and evokes a metalanguage with which to make generalizations about language. Genre theorists argue not to abandon the importance of metalanguage in school and to explain the metalanguage in terms of social purpose. In other words, marginalized groups not brought up with these discourses need explicit instruction in order to gain access into the genres and cultures of power. Genre theorists proposed that grammar instruction holds an important place in the development of writing ability. When theory meets the classroom, genre theory reinstates the teacher as professional, as an expert on language whose status in the learning process is authoritative but not authoritarian. One form that the genre approach has assumed is known as the curriculum cycle or wheel that derived from the work of Martin and Rothery (Callaghan, Knapp, & Noble, 1993). It included a modeling phase in which the social purpose, the text structure, and language features of the genre are investigated. This is followed by the joint negotiation of a text that places the teacher as a scribe for the class and helps translate student ideas into approximation of the genre. This results in the independent construction of a text by students that is only possible due to the explicit guidance of the teacher earlier in the cycle. Despite the fact that complete agreement even among genre theorists does not exist in terms of this model, “all theorists would agree that genre literacy should open students’ educational and social options by giving them access to discourse of educational significance and social power” (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, p. 15).

Focus on Context

The work of Cope and Kalantzis (1993) and Lensmire (1994) typify an emphasis on an additional strand of understanding in writing research that began in the late 1980s:
“the context – with approaches that look carefully at homes, classrooms, and workplaces as critical social contexts in which people learn to write in interaction with their peers and teachers” (Freedman et al., 1987, p.1). Social interpretations of language use dominated the 1980s (Nystrand et al., 1993), which led to the emergence of a social-cognitive theory of writing (Freedman et al., 1987). Two studies exemplify the type of investigation that began to examine the role that language plays in enabling individuals to position themselves with respect to specific social situations. Heath’s (1983) *Ways With Words* and Dyson’s (2003) *The Brothers and Sisters Learn to Write* both showed ways in which some students use literacy at home and in the world around them and how that literacy matched poorly with the literacy expectations of the school.

Heath (1983) studied the language of children in two culturally different communities by immersing herself in the communities. Her study of the complexities of language variations began in the community and followed the students into school. Because the communication patterns between adults and children in the two communities of Roadville and Trackton differed from those of the townspeople where the teachers came from, children in these two communities had to learn to code switch between the language of their home context and the language in the school context. The teachers and students worked to articulate the ways their own home communities used language and in doing so blurred the boundary between the two contexts.

In contrast, Dyson’s (2003) study began by investigating children’s actions within the school world and contrasting them to home practices. The words and themes in children’s early attempts at the written messages came from others. “Children gain access to new experiences through appropriating, stretching, and reworking the familiar”
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(Dyson, 2003, p. 193). The school progress of the children in Dyson’s study was marked by the borrowing of textual material from outside as well as inside the school doors. The importance of context is emphasized not only in the design of Dyson’s work, but also in the ways that the children in the small group of “brothers and sisters” in this study brought cultural capital from their home context into their school context to create meaning.

Historical Summary

This summary of historical trends in writing and writing instruction reveals three threads of research and practice: focus on product, focus on process, and focus on context. During the formalist stage of writing instruction, the text was viewed as an object or product that transmitted meaning. Formal grammar instruction gave way to a focus on the individual act of writing or construction of a text as a process. This led to an emphasis on the social aspects of writing. It is possible that highly structured genre studies described by Cope and Kalantzis (1993) or less structured genre studies described by Devitt (2004) offer that balance between product, process, and context.

PRESERVICE TEACHERS’ BELIEFS ABOUT WRITING AND WRITING INSTRUCTION

The preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing brings together two fields most relevant to my study: preservice teacher beliefs and writing instruction. My earlier examination of changing preservice teachers’ prior beliefs suggested that the task of affecting cognitive change in deep-seated beliefs is difficult (Richardson & Placier, 2001). Preservice teachers often enter teacher education programs trapped in their own relationship with a subject area (Kennedy, 1998) formed through years of an

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apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 2002). The few studies that do tie preservice teacher education and writing instruction together paint a different picture. I begin by answering the question, “What are the beliefs that preservice teachers hold regarding writing and writing instruction?” Preservice teachers enter colleges of education having served an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 2002) and formed beliefs about writing and writing instruction that impact their participation in language arts methods courses (Street, 1999). The three areas of preservice teacher beliefs that are relevant to my study are beliefs about writing, beliefs about the teaching of writing, and beliefs about personal writing ability. The nature of preservice teacher beliefs upon entering a teacher education program plays a significant role in the current study. Next, I describe several programs intentionally developed to challenge the traditional beliefs that many preservice teachers bring to a teacher education program. While it is not the intent of this study to intentionally design the writing methods course, an examination of other attempts to impact preservice teacher beliefs may shed light on the experiences described in this study. I conclude with a review of literature relevant to the overall impact teacher education programs have been found to have on preservice teachers’ ways of thinking about writing and writing instruction. This portion of the literature review had direct implications on the design of this study and serve to lay the groundwork for the work to follow. Consequently, portions of this section of my literature review include more detail than may ordinarily be found in a review of literature.

Beliefs About Writing

The best source of information on preservice teacher beliefs about writing comes from Teacher Education and Learning to Teach (TELT), a study conducted by Schmidt
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and Kennedy (1990) at the National Center for Research on Teacher Education. Nine
different sites and 12-28 preservice teachers, beginning teachers, or inservice teachers at
each site participated in this study. Participants representing 10 different teacher
education programs completed nine survey questions about being good at writing,
indicating agreement or disagreement on a seven-point scale for each item. Preservice
teachers held a wide range of beliefs about writing. In general, teachers and preservice
teachers believed that being good at writing requires everything from factual knowledge
about the parts of speech to the use of an iterative writing process. As teachers and
preservice teachers gained more teacher education and more experience teaching, their
beliefs became more refined, yet no evidence of a homogenous view of writing existed,
even among experienced teachers. There was no evidence of a homogenous view of
writing for any of the groups of teachers surveyed. Schmidt and Kennedy reported the
results as patterns of beliefs rather than individual percentages for each statement
alluding to the fact that beliefs do not exist in isolation rather in conjunction with other
beliefs. The most prevalent pattern of beliefs held by 25% (total n=476) of the preservice
teachers surveyed showed that respondents believe that in order to be good at writing one
needs to read widely; consider the particular audience for whom you are writing; be able
to write in a variety of forms; produce polished prose with ease; write more than one
draft; discuss ideas with others while work is in progress and seek feedback; know the
parts of speech and the terms people use to describe writing conventions; and pay
attention to the quality and appearance of the final product. 19% (total n=476) of the
preservice teachers surveyed responded similarly with the exception that they did not
believe that to be good at writing you needed to be able to produce a polished piece of
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prose with ease. These respondents believed it was possible to be good at writing, even if it does not come easy. Overall, respondents believed that most of the statements were characteristic of what is means to be good at writing; little discrimination occurred in responses given in this survey.

Beliefs About Teaching Writing

Kennedy’s (1998) follow-up work sheds light on preservice teachers’ beliefs about teaching writing. Kennedy’s results are separated by program orientation: traditional orientation or reform orientation. Traditionally oriented programs gave attention to issues such as organizing lessons, keeping students occupied, and managing classroom activities. The traditional grammar school content of traditionally oriented programs encouraged teachers to think of prescriptions as the most important aspect of writing. This relates to the semantic movement during the first half of the twentieth century when writing instruction primarily consisted of formal grammar instruction (Burrows et al., 1961; Nystrand et al., 1993; Stahl, 1965). Reform oriented programs focused on helping preservice teachers understand how to help children learn to develop their own purposes and strategies for writing (Kennedy, 1998). These programs represented writing as a strategic process that included generating and revising texts. Rationale for this characterization is found in the process movement (Emig, 1971; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Graves, 1975). In structured interviews conducted before participation in the teacher education program and after, she presented preservice teachers with situational activities. The first activity presented preservice teachers with a short story written by an elementary student. They were asked what they thought of the story and how they would respond to the student. Seventy-seven percent of the preservice teachers
at the traditionally oriented program and 45% of the students in the reform-oriented program responded to the mechanics and other rules before participation in the program. After participation, these numbers changed to 86% and 55% respectively. In contrast, only 31% before and 29% after of the students in the traditionally oriented program responded to the content of the story. In the reform oriented programs, 64% before and 44% after of the students responded to the content of the story. This shows that students in both types of programs responded primarily to the prescriptive rule oriented elements of the writing before or instead of responding to the content. These concerns of the preservice teachers have their roots in the prevalent instructional practices in place in schools. Formal grammar instruction (Burrows et al., 1961; Stahl, 1965) and prescriptive rule oriented composition instruction (Nystrand et al., 1993) have played a part in American schools for over a century despite the fact that evidence has not show either to be constructive in improving student writing performance (Braddock et al., 1963; Burrows et al., 1961; Hillocks, 1984).

Another situational activity asked of the preservice teachers involved a student asking whether to use “is” or “are” in the sentence, “None of the books ____ in the library” (Kennedy, 1998, p. 138). The most common response in both program orientations, both before and after participation in a teacher education program, reflected an interest in promoting compliance with prescriptions by offering a rule. Preservice teachers in both types of programs also offered strategies such as “look it up” or “use your ear,” but at a lower rate than the prescriptive response. Kennedy notes that if a medical student were approached with a situation for which they do not have an answer, s/he would ask an attending physician for help. Yet, in these cases, preservice teachers
gave a response even when it was evident that they did not know. The primary concern of the preservice teachers again was with prescriptive writing rules. The National Center for Research on Teacher Education (1991) produced a final report on their multi-site, multi-year study and reported the following findings related to beliefs about writing instruction: in the late 1980s, college juniors entering teacher education programs believed they should emphasize the formal conventions of writing more than the purposes of writing; and regardless of the program orientation, teachers moved toward a process orientation toward writing, however, most changes in views were only marginal.

Beliefs About Personal Writing Abilities

Typically, preservice teachers entering a language arts methods course do not consider themselves writers (Brinkley, 1993; Buley-Meissner, 1989; Watson & Lacina, 2002). This could be partially due to the fact that preservice teachers do not consider lists, letters, e-mail messages, personal notes, or thank you notes to be a part of their writing habits; their conception of writing genres is limited (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000). In a survey of 61 elementary preservice teachers, Watson & Lacina (2002) found that 57% of the preservice teachers surveyed tended to express negative attitudes toward their own writing, make statements indicating insecurity or lack of confidence in their writing ability, and indicating dissatisfaction with their ability to the content or conventions of their writing. Negative attitudes toward writing are often associated with negative perceptions of the self as a writer. Negative perceptions are often formed through contact with critical teachers during the schooling experience (Street, 1999). Street also reported that negative attitudes are associated with memories of boring worksheets and grammar and to reactions of teacher to their writing.
In summary, preservice teachers enter teacher education programs with a wide range of beliefs about writing. In general, teachers and preservice teachers believed that being good at writing requires everything from factual knowledge about the parts of speech to the use of an iterative writing process. Despite the type of program preservice teachers are enrolled in, they tend to be focused on prescriptions of writing over content and process. Preservice teachers moved toward a process orientation of writing; however, most changes in views were only marginal. They also tend to have a negative view of themselves as writers. This portrait of a preservice teacher includes negativity toward writing, prescriptive tendencies toward the teaching of writing, and poor images of the self as a writer. Can writing methods courses make a difference?

Intentional Course Design

Recognizing the important role that prior beliefs play in a preservice teachers’ participation in language arts methods courses, several researchers have designed courses to intentionally challenge their prior beliefs. In effect, they are intentionally attempting to create cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) in hopes that preservice teachers will either integrate the ideas presented into their existing framework or abandon their old ways of thinking for the new. By presenting these attempts chronologically, I attempt to note patterns and connections between and among the studies. It is also important to note here that it is not the intent of this study to evaluate the success or failure of an intentional course design. This review acts to provide insight into the possible components of the course that I drew participants from and to provided comparative data at a later time.

Florio-Ruane & Lensmire’s (1990) course “attempted to challenge and enrich the future teachers’ ordinary assumptions about children, text, and writing instruction” (p. 42).
The university classroom experiences were accompanied by field experiences in which students would come to understand even children’s earliest attempts at writing meaningfully. The knowledge structure for the course drew from developmental psychology to provide information about the writing of young children, rhetoric to provide alternate ways to categorize forms and functions of children’s writing, and from research on the organization of classroom lessons, the negotiated nature of knowledge, and the importance of shared authority. Six juniors agreed to be studied in-depth. Analysis of interviews, field notes, work samples, and course evaluation allowed Florio-Ruane and Lensmire to conclude that the field experience allowed preservice teachers to break from their ordinary assumptions about development of written language systems. They were not as successful in challenging beliefs related to their sense of teacher as showing, telling, and explaining. Preservice teachers did not come to understand the functional view of writing versus a formal one and did not break from their traditional view of classroom organization.

Similarly, Shrofel (1991) found that the addition of a field experience, in this case a writing tutoring experience, significantly impacted preservice teachers’ understanding of teaching writing. She detailed three attempts to impact the preexisting ideas about writing that the secondary preservice teachers come with to her methods course. Over the course of three semesters, Shrofel tinkered with the structure of her writing methods course. The first unsuccessful attempt involved presenting current information supplemented with a creative writing component. The second unsuccessful attempt involved modeling the writing process in writing workshops and conferences. In each of these first two attempts, Shrofel did not see preservice teachers exhibiting good writing
teaching during their field experiences. The third approach involved having preservice teachers tutor university-level students who were having difficulty writing in addition to a weekly seminar to discuss tutees’ progress, what was learned about writing, teaching writing, and the tutor as a writer. In this case, the opportunity to confront oneself as a writer, a learner, a teacher, and person was enough for preservice teachers’ ideas about writing to change. Shrofel experienced more success than Florio-Ruane and Lensmire.

While Shrofel (1991) found that merely modeling in the university classroom did not have a significant impact on learning, Mahurt (1998) reported that the addition of modeling of a writing workshop over the course of a 5 week period did have a positive impact on preservice teachers’ conceptual understanding of writing and writing instruction as reported at the end of the language arts methods course. The first 5 weeks of the language arts course were conducted as a writing workshop including mini-lessons, modeling of instructor writing, students writing, conferencing, editing and publishing.

The study began with 24 students enrolled in a course entitled Teaching the Language Arts, and followed 6 of them throughout their student teaching. One participant was followed through her first year of teaching. The intent of this research was to investigate the application of writing workshop and process writing with linguistically diverse students Mahurt taught at the University of Virgin Islands. The greatest influence on the preservice teachers’ teaching of writing was the cooperating teacher. In the one case study followed through into the first year of teaching, Mahurt found that the beginning teacher had a personal commitment to using writing workshop and had developed a sound conceptual understanding of the importance of writing in her classroom; however, her frustrations with the lack of support and reluctant writers interfered with full
implementation of the ideas presented in the methods course. The context in which the beginning teacher found herself teaching had a greater influence on her practice than her conceptual understanding that resulted from the course.

Street (1999) reported similar findings when he followed 6 preservice teachers enrolled in a language arts methods course from university classroom to field experience. The university classroom experience utilized Atwell’s (1998) *In the Middle* as the primary text for the language arts course. By following the 6 preservice teachers into their year-long field experience, Street discovered that the preservice teachers learned about and observed an approach to teaching writing that was radically different from their own experiences in school. Preservice teachers who entered the language arts methods course with negative attitudes toward writing found the supportive mood in the methods course aided their perceptions of writing and writing instruction. At the end of the language arts methods course, all six of the preservice teachers indicated that they hoped to implement the ideas described in Atwell’s book in their teaching. The degree to which the preservice teachers implemented the writing workshop philosophy during their field experience correlated to the relationship the student teacher had with the mentor teacher. Relationships judged to be poor or even good resulted in little to no implementation of the workshop ideas. Relationships judged to be excellent resulted in implementation of the workshop ideas. The impact of the relationship between preservice teacher and mentor teacher and the context of the field experience classroom created by the students and the mentor teacher proved a powerful determinant in the level of implementation of writing workshop.
Napoli (2001) focused on the experiences of three juniors enrolled in a 9-hour language and literacy methods block. She investigated preservice teachers’ reflections about the impact of “invitations” or assignments on their learning to teach writing. Throughout a nine-hour block, preservice teachers participated in opportunities to rethink traditional ways of teaching and learning about writing. This occurred through reflection and completion of five invitations: completion of a literacy autobiography, double entry journal, analysis of student writing, composing a parent letter, and a field experiences/College Writing Buddies. This study involved collection of the five invitations and follow-up interviews with three of the original participants during their student teaching. Napoli paints an overly optimistic picture of her data. For example, one follow-up interview revealed that the preservice teacher was working in a classroom with the desks in rows and was unable to facilitate any group work or peer conferences, something that had been emphasized during the methods course. Street (1999) would say that the contextual confines of the classroom prohibited this preservice teacher from fully implementing ideas proposed during the methods course. Napoli (2001) focused instead on the conceptual understanding that this preservice teacher had in order to recognize that writing is a social process. None of the 3 preservice teachers fully implemented practices proposed in the methods course.

Watson and Lacina (2002) developed a new course that centered on three beliefs of the professional development model used by the National Writing Project (NWP). Their research focused solely on the experiences within the methods course itself. Elements of the course were designed to correspond to three major assumptions of the National Writing Project: teachers make the best teachers of other teachers; effective
teachers of writing write regularly; and teachers benefit from studying and conducting research. They employed a spiral action research cycle that lasted 5 semesters to discover the impact of the course design on the beliefs of preservice teachers. All of the course elements were viewed positively by at least half of the students, however it was the feedback from peers and instructors that was reported more often as most influential in changing attitudes toward writing. Modeling by the professor was reported as a factor that contributed to positive change. The assignment of writing regularly in a writer’s notebook was the only task viewed by half of the students as negatively impacting their attitude about writing. This study did not follow the students into the classroom, consequently there is no way to know the impact this course had on the practices of the preservice teachers.

The impact of specific course design elements on the understanding of preservice teachers reported here is mixed, leaving room for further study. Field experiences (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990) and tutoring experiences (Shrofel, 1991) tied directly to methods courses create spaces in which preservice teachers apply conceptual knowledge from methods courses. This type of experience positively impacts preservice teachers break from some traditional understandings of teaching writing indicating that these practices do provide a structure that impacts preservice teachers’ prior beliefs about writing and writing instruction.

The impact of modeling within the context of the writing or language arts methods course on the preservice teachers’ understanding about writing was varied. Watson & Lacina (2002) and Mahurt (1998) reported positive results from the inclusion of modeling in the methods course, while Shrofel (1991) did not. This is surprising
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considering what is known about the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Modeling the writing process in all of its intricacies would seem to have a positive impact on beliefs about writing and writing instruction. That has not been confirmed in this review.

Providing a supportive atmosphere during the language arts methods course allowed preservice teachers with negative and positive attitudes toward writing to grow as writers (Street, 1999; Watson & Lacina, 2002). Overwhelmingly, preservice teachers reported that support from instructors and peers in the methods course aided their growth as a writer. Since teachers who are “themselves fearful and reluctant writers influence some students to share that apprehension about writing” (Frager, 1994, p.277), anything within the structure of a language arts methods course that helps preservice teachers overcome their negative attitudes about their own writing abilities were considered a positive practice.

The overall impression left by this review is that specific course designs were effective in impacting the beliefs of preservice teachers by the end of the writing methods course. However, Shrofel (1991) and Street (1999) both leave room to doubt the lasting impact such course designs will ultimately have on preservice teachers’ future instructional practice. The context in which the student teaching experience occurs tends to shape the degree to which they implement knowledge from a language arts methods course (Shrofel, 1991; Street, 1999). The question left to be answered is, “Do teacher education programs make a difference in preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and writing instruction?”
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The Impact of Teacher Education Programs

Before discussing the impact that teacher education programs might have on preservice teachers’ understanding of writing and writing instruction, it is important to note that not all programs have changing traditional understandings as their goal. Some programs work to confirm traditional orientations to writing instruction; while reform oriented programs have a larger task in changing prior beliefs (Kennedy, 1998). Traditional programs tend to reinforce teachers’ prescriptive ideas, while reform-oriented programs tend to decrease references to those responses and increase references to ideas about concepts and process. The differences found were virtually always in the direction of the program orientations. (Kennedy, 1998, 1999). “No program produced radical changes in the ideas teachers drew on, even though many produced some changes” (Kennedy, 1999, p. 81). This is true in a general sense as well. When measuring preservice teacher beliefs about the nature of teaching, beliefs tend to change toward the beliefs of the instructor (Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2001). For example, on a scale from transmissive to eclectic to progressive, preservice teachers holding transmissive views of teaching changed to an eclectic orientation after a semester with an instructor holding progressive views while preservice teachers holding an eclectic viewpoint changed to exhibiting a progressive orientation with the same instructor.

In a multi-site investigation of 4 preservice programs, 3 induction programs, and 2 inservice programs, Kennedy (1998) linked the substantive orientations (traditional or reform) of preservice programs to enrollment influences and learning influences of the programs. The overall findings suggest that
university-based teacher education programs may serve an important role in helping teachers change their ideas about subject matter and about teaching subject matter. This is not to say that these programs demonstrated remarkable success at changing teachers’ ideas, but only that they had more success than any other type of program [induction or inservice]. (Kennedy, 1998, p. 184)

She also pointed out that teacher education programs have such differing orientations that it does not make sense to make a general statement about the impact that they have on teacher learning. Instead, she reported her findings in relation to the institutions orientation: traditional or reform. Every program group had some impact on teacher learning, regardless of the group’s orientation, and those changes were overwhelmingly consistent with the program’s orientation. However, in all areas measured, the impact on teacher learning was weak. The aim of traditional programs is not to change preservice teachers’ visions, rather to help improve practice. The aim of reform oriented programs face a more difficult challenge in attempting to change preservice teachers’ ideas. Kennedy’s also reported findings in five themes that cut across the differing orientations of the institutions. The preservice teachers’ responses indicated that they see themselves as caring professionals. When asked to respond to a bored student, this ideal disappeared as they rarely tried to understand the student’s point of views, and some even punished the students. Preservice teachers also submitted to the pressures of prescription as they moved closer and closer to the action of teaching. Interestingly, the widespread concern about prescription did not appear to come from extensive knowledge of them. The preservice teachers tended to overlook students’ points of view, again this is despite the ideal of a caring professional they projected in some answers. Preservice teachers
demonstrated that the right response for the situation they were presented with should be self-evident by exhibiting an unwillingness to admit they did not know how to respond to a situation.

When the structure of the university program forces preservice teachers to confront their ideas about writing and writing instruction, change in teacher practice can occur (Shrofel, 1991). A confrontation questions and challenges other knowledge and awareness, creating a space for new ways of thinking.

Grossman et al. (2000) conducted an extensive multi-year study of preservice education. 15 preservice teachers were followed through their last semester of teacher education, and 10 of those into their student teaching experience and for the first 3 years of their teaching career. By conducting at least 11 individual interviews, conducting a minimum of 5 observations, and interviewing cooperative teachers and other supervisors over the first three years of the study, Grossman and her colleagues described the transformations that occur in the implementation of concepts initially introduced in the language arts methods courses. The first year of full-time teaching revealed the power of curriculum materials. Some of the curriculum materials included many of the concepts that the student teachers learned in teacher education thus causing less cognitive dissonance between what they had learned and the curriculum materials. The use of curriculum materials created a tension between student ownership, which was emphasized during their teacher preparation, and structure. The Calkins (1994) and Atwell (1987) texts used in the teacher education program were well received during the course; however, they eventually saw them as not very useful in their own classrooms. By the second year of teaching, there is some evidence that teachers began to critique and
repair the curriculum materials. What is most striking in this study is the ability of the
teachers to hold on to important concepts from their teacher education programs, even
when they were trying out practices that were antithetical to their initial understandings.
They used the concepts from their teacher education program to critique practices they
adopted during their first year of teaching.

Teacher education provided a vision of ideal practice, an image of how teachers
thought their classrooms should ultimately run…Teachers talked of holding
themselves to higher standards in their second year of teaching, as they tried to
get close to their vision of teaching language arts. (Grossman et al., 2000, p. 657)

Teacher education programs have been characterized as having a low impact on
the beliefs of preservice teachers (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). They pointed to
several British and American studies to confirm that the impact of college is “washed
out” by prior school experience. Preservice teachers to some degree adopt the liberal and
progressive beliefs presented during their college experience. “Wash out” refers to the
tendency of preservice teachers to regress toward more traditional viewpoints either
during student teaching or during the first year. Kennedy’s (1998) work supports
Lortie’s (2002) supposition that this occurs due to the low impact of teacher education.
Grossman et al. (2000) showed while preservice teachers initially regress toward their
more traditional beliefs, over time they hold onto the concepts addressed in teacher
education. Preservice teachers use these beliefs to lessen the dissonance between their
teaching practices and their vision of teaching language arts.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

I began this chapter with an examination of beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. Then I provided a brief history of writing instruction. I connected the two fields in the last area of research reviewed on preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and writing instruction. These issues form the groundwork for the investigation that follows. Studies that investigate preservice teachers as they develop as writing teachers are few; therefore, this study furthers our understanding and provides useful information for teacher educators.

My first research question sought to answer the question about beliefs developing over time. The groundwork for this question can be found throughout this review of literature. Several characteristics of beliefs are particularly pertinent to my study. Beliefs derive their power from episodes or events. This was of particular importance to my study as I attempted to identify those episodes or events within the writing methods course that are perceived by the preservice teacher to impact their cognition positively or negatively. The successive interviews conducted with each case study participant assisted in identifying prior beliefs about writing and writing instruction, as these beliefs are predispositions to act. If a preservice teacher holds beliefs that are contrary to those of the university instructor, cognitive dissonance may result. The same interviews attempted to reveal instances in which this occurs and to uncover events occurring in the writing methods course that contribute to the cognitive dissonance and to the resolution of the dissonance. At the onset of my study, I determined if the university instructor’s aims for the preservice teacher was to abandon the original position and adopt a new one or to integrate the two positions. It is possible that the preservice teacher’s original
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position will strengthen. In the results portion of the document, I determined which of these three possible outcomes result from participation in the writing methods course.

The behavioral dimension of beliefs means that beliefs are predispositions to act. This fact underscores the importance of preservice teachers adopting or integrating the new position throughout the writing methods course.

Examining preservice teachers’ beliefs is an important topic for study because they are predispositions to act (Rokeach, 1968). I see this applicable in two ways to my study. The first place for action for preservice teachers was in the writing methods course. Negative beliefs about writing and writing instruction may predispose preservice teachers not to take action on the new learning in the writing methods course. The converse could also be true, making prior beliefs about writing and writing instruction pivotal to my study. The second place for action will eventually be the application of their knowledge in the classroom, both during field experience and eventually a teaching job. Preservice teachers leaving the writing methods course with positive beliefs about writing and writing instruction will be more predisposed to take action on those beliefs than preservice teachers leaving the writing methods course with negative beliefs. Thus, evaluation of preservice teacher beliefs at the conclusion of their writing methods course also warranted attention.

I view the idea of cognitive dissonance as significant in my study. Participation in a writing methods course may cause some preservice teachers to experience cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). If the aim of a preservice teacher education program is to prepare students to act, these beliefs or predispositions must be surfaced in the learning process even if it is difficult. During my study, when beliefs are confronted in this
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manner, I expect one of three resolutions to occur: abandoning the original position and adopting a new one; strengthening of the original position; or integration of the two positions (Shrofel, 1991). Additionally, it was possible that none of these alternatives would occur and the preservice teacher would simply ignore the new information thus lessening the dissonance experienced.

My review of literature has also revealed the importance of the episodic nature of beliefs described by Nespor (1987). My second research question derived from questions surrounding this idea. What episodes do preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and writing instruction as they work to become full members of a community of practice?

My review of literature on the historical trends in writing research detailed three trends: focus on product, focus on process, and focus on context. The historical trends helped situate the prior beliefs of preservice teachers and support the content of an undergraduate writing methods course. Preservice teachers’ attendance in schools placed them in classrooms in which any of these theoretical philosophies were practiced. Consequently, preservice teachers’ prior beliefs about writing and writing instruction have been shaped by these experiences (Lortie, 2002). The prior beliefs about writing and writing instruction fell somewhere on the continuum from focus on product to focus on process. While interviewing my case study participants, I expected to be able to draw upon these trends in past writing research in order to categorize both their past experiences and their emerging beliefs about writing and writing instruction. The ideas from Kennedy (1998) on the distinctions between traditional and reform oriented
Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development

programs also impacted my analysis of these interviews. Her dichotomy provides a frame of reference that allows analysis of preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction.

Preservice teachers’ beliefs and historical trends in writing instruction came together in my review of literature on preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and writing instruction. My review of literature paints a portrait of a preservice teacher that includes negativity toward writing, prescriptive tendencies toward the teaching of writing, and poor images of the self as a writer. The results chapter of my dissertation describes confirming and contradictory trends regarding the writing apprehension of preservice teachers. The fact that preservice teachers enter teacher education programs with a wide range of beliefs about writing is telling for any instructor attempting to prepare preservice teachers to teach writing and a fact that I took advantage of in my case study selection. How do these initial understandings of writing and writing instruction and images of self as writer impact a preservice teachers’ participation in a writing methods course? Both of these facts contributed to the beliefs the preservice teacher holds, they impacted the emerging beliefs of preservice teachers.

Finally, my review of literature has provided mixed information regarding the content and impact of undergraduate writing methods courses. Writing methods courses have, through intentional course designs, been effective in causing preservice teachers to break with traditional views (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Mahurt, 1998; Shrofel, 1991; Watson & Lacina, 2002). I have also found evidence to support the notion of ‘wash out’ of undergraduate teacher preparation (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981) in the work of Napoli (2001) and Street (1999). It is possible that despite the immediate impact
that a writing methods course has on the understanding of preservice teachers, the context in which the student teaching experience (Street, 1999) or the first year of teaching (Napoli, 2001) will contribute to a ‘wash out’ effect. Grossman’s et al. longitudinal study, however, provides evidence that in the long term, preservice teachers hold onto important concepts in their teacher education programs (2000). Thus, despite initial setbacks, examining the experience of preservice teachers in a writing methods course has long-term implications for practice and is worthy of investigation.
Chapter Three

Method

Research methods smell like the aroma of a warm homemade breakfast, Leading everyone to the kitchen for a taste.

Research methods taste like Rice Krispie Treats, The perfect mix of crunch and goo.

Research methods look like the metal frame of a sky scraper, Supporting the giant through all kinds of treachery.

Research methods feel like double stick tape on a birthday package, Invisible to the eye but essential to keeping the surprise.

Research methods sound like a favorite melody hanging in the air, Singing in your mind long after the song is done.

(Modeled after a 5 senses poem format.)

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I explain the rationale that guided my decisions for the design of my study and provide the theoretical framework undergirding my study. Tenets of naturalistic inquiry and social constructivism are the cornerstones of my theoretical framework. Each of these orientations seeks to bring understanding to a lived experience under consideration and compliment each other to provided support for the design of my study. In this case the lived experience was preservice teachers’ participation in a writing methods course.
My initial research plan identified phenomenology as a key component in my theoretical framework. As my study evolved, it became clear that my research questions did not truly lead to a phenomenological approach. I initially viewed the my attempt to capture the lived experiences of the preservice teachers as their beliefs about writing and writing instruction developed as phenomenological. As I collected data and focused on the issue of developing beliefs, the nature of my research questions no longer led me to capturing the essence of their lived experience but instead focused on developing beliefs and significant events in that development. This revelation also led to the re-evaluation of the methods I utilized to analyze the data I collected. My initial plan identified Hycner’s (1985) guidelines for phenomenological analysis as the primary data analysis technique. Abandoning the phenomenological framework meant modifying the application of the guidelines as well.

I begin this chapter by restating the purpose of my study and the research questions that guided the design of the study. This is followed by the theoretical research traditions that supported my methodological decisions. The design of the study and the data analyses methods described next reflect the theoretical orientation of the study and the nature of the research questions.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of my study was to contribute knowledge to help professionals understand the nature of the complexities of preparing preservice teachers to teach writing, making this an example of applied research (Patton, 2002). In order to develop this understanding, I examined the ways in which preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and writing instruction developed over the term of a one-semester course
designed to prepare elementary preservice teachers to teach writing. Additionally, I sought to take advantage of the episodic nature of beliefs (Nespor, 1987) by identifying experiences throughout the semester that contributed positively or negatively to the preservice teachers’ developing beliefs about writing and writing instruction. Through extensive fieldwork and interviews, I became familiar with the intricate nature of the preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing within the context of one university classroom setting.

Two questions guided my research:

1. How do preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing develop while enrolled in an elementary writing methods course?

2. What episodes do preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and writing instruction?

I relied on qualitative data gathering techniques in order to build my understanding of preservice teachers’ experiences while enrolled in an undergraduate writing methods course. In several instances, my study does include descriptive statistics. Specifically, descriptive statistics applied to analysis of the Writing Apprehension Test and the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, and when examining the quizzes and final exams given in the writing methods course.

THEORETICAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

I followed the guidelines of qualitative inquiry. Data gathered from such inquiries are rich in describing people, places, and conversations (Bogdan & Biklen,
2003). This characteristic makes qualitative inquiry appropriate to answer the research questions that framed my study.

My study followed qualitative research traditions in that its design complied with several themes of qualitative inquiry suggested by Patton (2002). My study is an example of naturalistic inquiry as I spent extensive time in a real-world setting, the university classroom in which the writing methods course took place. The context of the university classroom I observed was of particular importance as I sought to identify those episodes or experiences preservice teachers viewed as significant in the development of their beliefs about writing and writing instruction. The design of my study was structured by decisions I made prior to the beginning of the study with the understanding that adaptations to the design might be necessary as the inquiry progressed. I employed a purposeful sampling strategy in order to select information rich sources. I used several qualitative data collection strategies, including extensive field observations and interviews that allowed me to become familiar with the situation and served to provide data to construct the case studies. My first commitment was to understand each case because I wanted to focus on the unique features the particular case. In this respect, my study focused on intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995). After I came to know each case in detail, I returned to the issues addressed in my research questions and analyzed across the cases to understand the issues guiding my study. In this respect, my study focused on instrumental case study (Stake, 1995). This inductive process lead to research decision-making along the way. For these reasons, qualitative inquiry was an appropriate methodological framework for my study. Naturalistic inquiry and social constructivism gave further description of the theoretical framework for this study.
Naturalistic Inquiry

Naturalistic inquiry informed my decisions regarding the design of my study. Naturalistic inquiry is described as a discovery-oriented approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described five methodological implications to the selection of the naturalistic paradigm. First, naturalistic inquiry assumes that multiple realities exist that can be constructed holistically. “Social reality is a construction based upon the actor’s frame of reference within the setting” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 80). Each participant in the context is recognized for her/his contribution to the creation of a reality. This was especially relevant to my study as each preservice teacher constructed his/her own understanding of the realities that occur in the university classroom.

Next, rather than deny that any researcher bias could possibly exist within the confines of a qualitative study, naturalistic inquiry assumes that the inquirer and the object of inquiry influence each other, making them inseparable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The mere knowledge that a participant is involved in a study is sufficient to alter the reaction to the investigator. The act of observing not only disturbs the observed, it shapes it. By acknowledging this interaction, objectivity is rendered unattainable. By conducting twelve 3-hour observations in the university classroom and three in-depth interviews with the case-study participants, I inevitably shaped the setting and the case study participants to some degree. I maintained a researcher journal in which I reflected upon my interaction and tracked any bias that arose.

A third implication of the selection of the naturalistic paradigm deals with the issue of causality that typifies many experimental studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The
mutual simultaneous shaping of reality makes it impossible to distinguish causes from effects. Studies guided by naturalistic inquiry do not seek to determine which came first. I conducted peer debriefings, employed data triangulation, and utilized a reflective researcher journal in order to provide a system of checks and balances in an attempt to keep my researcher bias from interfering with my ability to see emerging themes in the data.

Naturalistic inquiry also seeks to develop a concrete and individual body of knowledge in the form of a working hypothesis that describes the individual cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each study is bound by time and context specific to that study making generalizations inappropriate. Instead, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose the idea of transferability of researcher findings. The degree to which the findings from a naturalistic study such as this can be transferred to another context is determined by the degree of similarity between the two contexts or the fittingness. In order for other researchers to be able to determine the degree of fittingness, a researcher must provide sufficient description of the context. Explained another way, the extent to which findings from a naturalistic inquiry can be applied to other situations is determined by the people in those situations (Merriam, 1995). The findings from my study are specific to the context from which they derived and cannot be generalized to other or all situations. Instead, it is up to the consumer of the final data to determine the degree of “fittingness” with his/her own situation and consequently the degree to which the findings from this study transfer to that setting.

Finally, the naturalistic paradigm asserts that inquiry is value-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is influenced by the values of the inquirer, the assumptions underlying
both the substantive theory and the methodological paradigm that undergird the inquiry, and by the values that characterize the context in which the inquiry is carried out.

Following a naturalistic paradigm led to many implications for my study. I observed the preservice teachers in their university classroom, the natural setting for the writing methods course. In my study, the preservice teachers’ past experiences in school learning to write framed their point of reference and impacted the reality constructed by that preservice teacher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I utilized stratified purposeful sampling to select case study participants in an attempt select case study participants that portrayed the multiple realities that existed within the sample (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I was present during the real-world change to document the preservice teachers before, during, and after their participation in the writing methods course (Patton, 2002). Using such methods of data collection, I sought to gather rich data from which themes did emerge. Finally, the transferability of the findings in this study is left to the reader or user.

Social Constructivism

Premises of social constructivism provided the second strand in the theoretical framework supporting the methodology of my study. Social constructivists posit that objective fact has no meaning except within some value framework (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This matches the view of natural inquiry in that data gathered are specific to the time and place it is gathered. Within that time and space, social constructivists would expect participants to have different perceptions of the same experience (Patton, 2002). Social constructivism also suggests that not only is it important to capture these varying perceptions, but it is also essential to place no value judgments regarding which is more
true or more right. Following this premise, I made no determination as to the degree of truth in the beliefs held by the preservice teachers; I did not determine which beliefs fit the definition of knowledge by meeting a truth or evidence condition. Beliefs held by the preservice teachers exist.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) described five assumptions of constructivism: truth is a matter of consensus among informed constructors; facts have no meaning except within some value framework; causes and effects do not exist except by unjust accusation; phenomena can only be understood within the context in which they are studied; and data derived from constructivist inquiry provide another construction to be taken into account in the move toward consensus. The idea of the socially constructed nature of reality runs throughout these statements. The ontological question about the nature of reality from a social constructivist perspective is that “there exist multiple, socially constructed realities ungoverned by natural laws, causal or otherwise” (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 86). This view was particularly pertinent in my study as preservice teachers attempted to make sense of their experience within the writing methods course. The definition of knowledge as a special kind of believing, when either a truth or evidence condition is met (Green, 1971), opens the door to the possibility that false beliefs can exist, but false knowledge cannot. From an ontological perspective, false beliefs may be the source of varying perceptions of reality and justify adopting a social constructivist perspective toward the methodology of my study. The decision to purposefully select case study participants derived from the possibility that preservice teachers with differing writing apprehension levels and varied beliefs about writing and writing instruction would perceive the experience of the writing methods course differently. Therefore I not only accepted the
subjective relativist ontology (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), I embraced the different perceptions that existed. Lave and Wenger’s (1991) proposition that the situated nature of learning involves the agent, the activity, and the world mutually constituting each other supports this ontological perspective as well.

These assumptions have close links to this study. First, the phenomena of learning to teach writing can only be examined within the context in which the preservice teachers experience the event. For this reason, I conducted 12 three-hour classroom observations in an effort to capture the experience of the preservice teachers. An understanding that multiple realities existed within the context of the university classroom was the basis for purposeful selection of case study participants. Through the selection of preservice teachers with varying levels of writing apprehension and differing belief orientations about writing instruction, I attempted to capture some of the varying realities that were present.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A review of research studies similar in nature to the study being described here revealed that several qualitative data gathering techniques have been commonly employed: interview data and observational data. Interviews provide the researcher with insight into the prior beliefs of preservice teachers, access to perceptions of preservice teachers while participating in a writing methods course, and access to preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and writing instruction at the conclusion of the writing methods course (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Grossman et al., 2000; Street, 1999, 2003). Collection of observational data has proven to provide an important source of data in studies that involved a third party collecting data (Grossman et al., 2000; Street,
The development of case studies within the research design has also been utilized to organize the themes that emerge from the rich data gathered (Grossman et al., 2000; Mahurt, 1998; Street, 1999, 2003). Based upon this information, I selected interviews and observations as my primary data gathering techniques, and I used the data gathered to compose intrinsic case descriptions (Stake, 1995). This data triangulation provided a test for consistency across the data sources (Patton, 2002).

Case Study Design

Case study design reflects a choice in what to study, which in this instance was preservice teachers in the process of learning to teach writing (Patton, 2002). This methodology matched the intent of the two research questions guiding my study in that case studies allowed in-depth investigation of a limited number of participants. According to Yin (2003), “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Yin’s (2003) definition of case study also points out that case study relies on multiple sources of evidence to address the situation. Case studies can be used for a variety of purposes including to explore causal links in real-life interventions, to describe the real-life context in which an intervention has occurred, to illustrate an intervention, or to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). In my study, I utilized case studies to explore situations in which the intervention being evaluated does not have a clear set of outcomes. The phenomenon that all of the cases in this study had in common was participation in the same writing methods course. I allowed the professor to reveal the intended course outcomes during
the initial interview; however, this study explored the intervention from the preservice teachers’ perspective with no anticipated outcome. Case study is also characterized by boundedness and behavior patterns specific to the study (Stake, 2000). The multiple sources of data that I relied upon in this study to construct the case reports included observations, interviews, and documents (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

My research questions focused on a preservice teacher’s development of beliefs about writing and writing instruction. Consequently, the primary unit of analysis for my inquiry was the individual preservice teacher, making the description of each preservice teachers belief development an example of a single bounded case study (Yin, 2003). I also gathered data on the entire group of preservice teachers at the beginning and end of the semester. In this respect, the phenomenon of the writing methods course served as the unit of analysis, making this portion of the study a holistic single-case design (Yin, 2003). The result of this analysis provided rich data that I used to create a detailed description of the context within which all of the case study participants enrolled. Data collected from the holistic single-case design also provided data on the entire group of preservice teachers enrolled in one writing methods course and provided comparative data for analysis of individual case study participants.

I collected data for my study between August 23, 2004 – December 3, 2005, making the specific time boundary for my research study one college semester. Yin (2003) suggested that study propositions should also be developed during the development phase of case study in order to determine what exactly to study. This goes against the naturalistic and social constructivist nature of my study. However, I believe the following propositional statement satisfies the case study design of my study without
Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development

infringing upon the tenants of naturalistic inquiry or social construction: Preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and writing instruction develop over the course of a one semester writing methods course because of episodes encountered throughout the semester. This proposition illustrates the primary unit of analysis as the individual preservice teacher and time boundary of one semester.

Finally, my study focused on the preservice teachers as primary unit of focus that led to the construction three unique case study descriptions (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). After constructing these single bounded case studies, I conducted cross case analysis in order to deepen my understanding of the complexities involved in preparing preservice teachers to teach writing (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Participants and Site

This study took place in a university classroom at a large “Research Doctoral/Research University – Extensive” located in the southeastern United States. Universities receiving the research doctoral/research university – extensive designation by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching offer a full range of baccalaureate programs, are committed to graduate education through the doctorate, give high priority to research, and award 50 or more doctoral degrees each year across at least 15 disciplines (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2000). One section of the undergraduate writing methods course entitled Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 served as the context for my study. I selected the section of the writing methods course instructed by Dr. Sheridan for three reasons: she has successful college teaching experience including experience developing and teaching the writing
methods course; her research interests are in the field of writing; and she has a strong philosophical understanding of children’s writing and writing instruction.

The writing methods course consisted of 24 preservice teachers, 16 of whom agreed to participate in my study. I utilized two procedures that provided information that assisted me in purposively selecting three preservice teachers for case study purposes: The Writing Apprehension Survey (Daly & Miller, 1975) (see Appendix D) and The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey (see Appendix B). Sixteen of the preservice teachers completed the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey at the beginning and end of the semester in order to access preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction. Those same 16 preservice teachers completed a Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) at the beginning and end of the semester. A detailed description of these two survey methods follows in the data collection portion of the methods section of this dissertation.

After analyzing both instruments, the resulting apprehension score and writing instruction orientation allowed the 16 preservice teachers to be placed in a 3 x 3 matrix. Table 1 details the distribution of the preservice teachers based up information from both selection processes (all names are pseudonyms). I considered both writing apprehension of preservice teachers and writing instruction orientation in the selection of case study participants because of the link between apprehension and action regarding the object of the apprehension. Daly and Miller (1975) and Miller (1985) reported that the manifestation of writing apprehension is often fear and avoidance. Highly apprehensive writers tend to report low expectation of success in courses requiring writing (Miller, 1985). By purposefully selecting case study participants with various combinations of
Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development

beliefs toward writing and writing apprehension levels, I sought data rich cases representing a variety of combinations of these two facets of preservice teachers.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Apprehension Level</th>
<th>Beliefs about Writing Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing Instruction Orientations of Preservice Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (74-100)a</td>
<td>Angel 18, Oceans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate (50-73)</td>
<td>Natashab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (20-49)</td>
<td>Fairy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Lower apprehension scores indicate higher apprehension levels. a Possible writing apprehension scores range from 20-100. b Preservice teachers selected as case study participants.

Stratified purposeful sampling assured variation in the sampling (Patton, 2002). I initially planned to employ stratified purposeful sampling in order to select case study participants that captured variations in apprehension and writing instruction orientation within the group of preservice teachers (Patton, 2002). After reviewing the data from the initial Writing Apprehension Test and the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, I selected three preservice teachers to serve as in-depth case study participants. The
preservice teachers selected represented a variation in writing instruction orientations; however, they all held moderately apprehensive feelings about their own writing. I based my decision to forego variation in writing apprehension levels as a case study selection criteria upon the fact that 12 out of 16 participants held moderately apprehensive feeling about their own writing. My selection of three case study participants with similar apprehension scores meant my selections were representative of group of preservice teachers participating in my study. Forgoing variance in writing apprehension as a case study participant selection criteria did mean that preservice teachers with apprehension levels outside the more common apprehension range are not represented in the findings from this inquiry. Selecting three cases that represented a large percentage of the student population in the study sample does mean that I am not learning from the less typical combinations of apprehension and instructional orientations such as Amelia or Fairy. While information from cases falling outside my selection categories could have provided important information, I felt that this initial inquiry into the experiences of preservice teachers belief development would be best served by selecting cases that represented most of the group of preservice teachers. I do believe that the experiences of preservice teachers who have apprehension levels outside the typical range in any group of preservice teachers does warrant investigation in future inquiries.

Based upon the stratified purposeful selection strategy utilized, Natasha, Skylar, and Samantha were selected as in-depth case study participants. These three preservice teachers all held moderately apprehensive feelings about their own writing and represented each of the possible orientations toward writing instruction accounting for 75% of the preservice teachers who agreed to participate in my study.
The case study participants selected a unique pseudonym that was used to identify the data collected from them throughout the study. This built a level of confidentiality into the design of the study. Case study participants must feel that their responses will not impact their professor’s opinion of their work. The use of pseudonyms helped maintain a cooperative relationship between me and the case study participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

The Role of the Researcher

One characteristic of naturalistic inquiry is the acknowledgement that humans will serve as the primary data-gathering instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). I was the sole data-gathering instrument in my study. As a human instrument, I could have inevitably missed opportunities in the data collection process and allowed biases to impact data recording and analysis (Merriam, 1998). My interaction with the natural setting and the participants was unavoidable. My very presence, asking questions, or providing feedback could have been an intervention that reduced the natural unfolding of events (Patton, 2002). My aim as the researcher was to be unobtrusive to avoid my presence becoming an intervention in the natural setting (Patton, 2002). Study related activities comprised only 4% of the total class time, approximately 35 minutes at the beginning of the semester and 35 minutes at the end of the semester.

On the participant/observer continuum described by Bodgan and Biklen (2003), my role in this study fell somewhere between the extremes of complete objective observation and total involvement in the delivery. During classroom observations, my role fell closer to the objective observer. During the first class meeting, the professor
introduced me and allowed me to gain access to the preservice teachers through the administration of two survey methods. At that point, I was directly involved in the administration of the two instruments. For the remainder of the observations, my foray into involvement in the natural setting was limited to direct observation. During formal case study interviews with the participants at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester, my role fell closer to total involvement.

As the data collection sole instrument involved in data collection in my study, the issue of subjectivity arises. I owe my subjectivity to my prior experience as a classroom teacher, my college teaching experience, and study in the field of writing and writing instruction. I included the use of a researcher’s journal to track my methodological thinking throughout my study not to eliminate the of my bias but to track the decisions I made and to allow my methodological decisions to be able to withstand scrutiny in the event that bias became an issue. My bias impacted the observations I made and the events I chose to ignore; my bias impacted the questions I asked and the questions I didn’t ask. For those reasons, I will make my beliefs about writing and writing instruction transparent for the reader to bring some level of understanding to my the interpretations I include in Chapter 4 and 5 of this Dissertation.

My teaching experience and study in the field of writing research have led me to understand that the writing process involves processes and sub-processes that many writers engage in as they compose (Emig, 1971; Graves, 1975; Flower & Hayes, 1981). They have been labeled in a variety of ways, but generally these processes include planning, writing, and reviewing. Writers develop their own style while composing; consequently there is not one correct writing process (Emig, 1971; Flower & Hayes,
Despite the fact that many teachers present the writing process in a linear fashion, I understand the writing process to be non-linear. I believe that writing workshop can be an empowering environment in which children can learn to write (Calkins, 1986/1994; Graves, 1983). I believe that there must be an anticipated set of curricular outcomes expected from students’ participation in writing workshop and that this can be accomplished by establishing a plan and balancing that with the needs of the students (Calkins, 1994). My definition of the writing process is an idiosyncratic set of actions in which a writer engages while composing a text.

I have also come to understand the importance of scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) students of all ages as they gain proficiency in writing. Scaffolding may come from the teacher in the form of shared or interactive writing, through small group instruction or individual conferences. Scaffolding may also derive from peers within the writing workshop in the form of peer conferences and general conversation during the composing process. I understand the peer conferences have not consistently been proven to be effective and can have a negative impact on student willingness to write. But I also understand that children speak before they write and that many benefits can be derived from the facilitation of communication between peers in a writing workshop. I believe that writing is a developmental process and that writing skills and strategies can be taught (Tompkins, 2004). I have come to believe quite strongly the utilization of children’s literature as a model for effective writing skills is an effective practice.

I do not believe that all teachers must be excellent writers, but they do need to be personally familiar with the writing process and want to inspire an enthusiasm for writing in their writers. Spelling and grammar are both writing tools that are necessary to
communicate effectively. I do not believe that spelling and grammar instruction should occur for the sake of spelling and grammar assessment, rather that grammar and spelling are only important as they pertain to improving a student’s writing skills. Therefore, I see spelling and grammar playing a supporting role in the writing curriculum. They should be taught within the context of the writing process.

Finally, I believe that one of the most important tasks of a writing teacher is to instill in children a desire to write, an enthusiasm for the craft. By creating authentic audiences, celebrating success, and building a supportive writing environment within the writing classroom, I believe this can happen. I am certain that other beliefs about writing instruction exist; I have read them. At this point in my research work, these are the practices I believe to be most effective. I encountered beliefs that differed from my own during my observations and interviews. By recording reflections about my observations in my researcher’s journal and in a separate column in my field notes, I was able to track the emergence of any bias that arose during the data gathering and analysis phase of my research. Being able to acknowledge those bias allowed me to address them in later data collection and analysis work.

Procedure and Data Collection

My initial step in initiating this research was to gain entry into one section of the writing methods course, Teaching Writing in the Elementary School K-6, which was taught by Dr. Sheridan. The second phase of my study was to identify case study participants using the stratified purposeful sampling strategy. Preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s section of the writing methods course completed two processes: The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey and The Writing Apprehension Survey (Daly & Miller, 76
Based on the results of the surveys, I selected Natasha, Skylar, and Samantha because they met the stratified purposeful sampling selection strategy I selected for use in my study.

I utilized a variety of data collection techniques in order to test for consistency in the data (Patton, 2002). Table 2 and Table 3 outline the plan I followed for data collection and analysis. A flow chart for the data collection process is included in Appendix A.

Table 2
Research Question #1 and Study Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Time (Week of…)</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing develop while enrolled in an elementary writing methods course?</td>
<td>Initial Interview with Instructor, Mid-semester Instructor Interview, and Final Instructor Interview</td>
<td>August 16, 2004</td>
<td>Constant comparative analysis (Patton, 2002), interview analysis (Hycner, 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial Semi-structured Interviews with case study participants</td>
<td>September 6, 2004, September 20, 2004</td>
<td>Constant comparative analysis (Patton, 2002), interview analysis (Hycner, 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-semester Semi-structured case study participants</td>
<td>October 18, 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Semi-structured Interview with case study participants</td>
<td>December 13, 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Work Samples</td>
<td>Collected Throughout the Semester</td>
<td>Content analysis (Patton, 2002)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3
Research Question #2 and Study Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Initial Interview with Instructor, Mid-semester Instructor Interview, and Final Instructor Interview</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. What episodes do preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and writing instruction?</td>
<td>August 16, 2004</td>
<td>Constant comparative analysis (Patton, 2002), interview analysis (Hycner, 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 18, 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 17, 2005</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Semi-structured Interviews with case study participants</td>
<td>September 6, 2004, September 20, 2004</td>
<td>Constant comparative analysis (Patton, 2002), interview analysis (Hycner, 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-semester Semi-structured case study participants</td>
<td>October 18, 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Semi-structured Interview with case study participants</td>
<td>December 13, 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student work samples</td>
<td>Collected Throughout the Semester</td>
<td>Content analysis (Patton, 2002)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

I developed the Writing Instruction Orientation in order to gather data regarding the writing instruction orientation of the preservice teachers enrolled in the selected writing methods course so that I could purposefully select case study participants with varied initial orientations toward writing instruction. For the purposes of this study, I
defined an orientation as the tendency to identify teacher behaviors most characteristic of
set of beliefs about the way to teach writing in an elementary classroom. Based upon the
analysis of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, the writing instruction orientation
of a preservice teachers in my study could be characterized as falling along a continuum
between process orientation and product orientation.

The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey includes two teacher descriptions that
each include some product-oriented teacher behaviors and some process-oriented teacher
behaviors. The teacher behaviors included in the survey derived from my review of
research on historical perspectives of writing instruction found in Chapter 2 of this
Dissertation. An example of a process oriented statement included in the Writing
Instruction Orientation Survey is, “Each day she begins her writing time with a 10-15
minute mini-lesson on topics that address the genre being studied and the needs of the
students” (Calkins, 1986/1994). An example of a product-oriented teacher behavior
included on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey is “Every piece of writing
completed by the students is turned in, graded for correctness by Ms. Joel, returned to the
student, and taken home” (Nystrand et al., 1993). Each teacher description contained
some process-oriented teacher behaviors and some product-oriented teacher behaviors to
encourage students to focus on and react to individual instructional practices rather than
judging the teacher as a whole. In general, a product-focused teacher conducts lessons
focused on spelling and grammatical accuracy and communicates the importance of
correctness in all work. A product-focused teacher teaches prescriptive formulas, such as
the five-paragraph essay, to students. Writing is assigned, collected, and evaluated in
product-focused classrooms. In general, a process-focused teacher engages student in the
writing process and teaches students strategies and skills to improve their writing.

Spelling and grammar instruction occur within the context of the student’s writing. The social nature of language development and the link to writing is valued. An eclectic-focused teacher engages in some product-focused and some process-focused behaviors.

A description of product and process orientations is included in Table 4.

Table 4
Characteristics of Product and Process Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on product of the writing event</td>
<td>Focus on process and context of the writing events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing viewed as a generative process</td>
<td>Writing viewed as a cognitive meaning making process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescriptive approach to teaching writing</td>
<td>Strategic process of generating and revising both ideas and texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical forms emphasized so that students can avoid errors</td>
<td>Writing tools such as spelling and grammar are taught in context of the writing process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before utilizing this survey in my study, I asked a group of 10 experienced elementary teachers participating in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project’s Invitational Summer Institute to complete the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey. I expected this group of teachers to underline practices that fell on the process side of the product–process continuum. After reviewing their surveys, I interviewed teachers whose responses varied from my expectations and revised the statements to more clearly reflect product orientation or process orientation. The revisions to the survey based upon feedback from this group were changes in word choice so that the statements clearly
expressed a product or process orientation. The response box was also moved from the side of the statement to below the statement, giving more room to record a justification.

Next, I sent the revised Writing Instruction Orientation Survey electronically through Blackboard, the electronic web portal available to all university students, to two sections of the writing methods course that would not be a part of my study. Based upon the responses from this group of preservice teachers, further revisions were made to the survey. Specific revisions to the survey include adding a statement about conferencing to teacher description #1, combining two statements in teacher #1 that both addressed spelling, removing part of statement 11 describing a shared experience so that the statement was clearly product focused, and combining statement 8 and 9 because everyone who indicated that 8 was effective also indicated that 9 was effective and visa versa. These revisions brought the total number of process statements to 7, and the total number of product statements to 8.

Initially, I administered the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey to all 24 preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course as information for Dr. Sheridan. Later, eight preservice teachers opted out of my study. Data from these eight preservice teachers were discarded and not included in any phase of the data analysis for my study. Completing the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey involved reading descriptions of two teachers with different classroom practices relevant to writing instruction. After reading the description of the teacher practice, each respondent identified it as effective or ineffective and provided a justification or clarification for the response. The directions for completing the final revision of the survey read as follows: Read the entire description. After you have finished reading, indicate in the space below
each part of the description 1. Those practices you believe to be effective by circling effective or not effective. 2. After you make that decision, explain your reasons in the space provided underneath each statement. If you need more space to write, continue on the back of the paper.

The responses from the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey allowed me to identify where the preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction fell on the process-product continuum. Based upon the conception of product and process oriented teacher behaviors described in the development of the survey, it is possible to sketch a picture of a preservice teacher who holds beliefs that represent tend to be either product-oriented, process-oriented, or somewhere along the continuum between the two eclectic-oriented referred to as an eclectic orientation. Preservice teachers who fall on the product-oriented side of this continuum identify statements that value writing for the product it creates. These preservice teachers believe that emphasis should be on assigning writing and evaluating it. They will tend to identify statements about writing prompts and following the rules for writing including grammatical forms. Prescriptive procedures such as the five-paragraph essay or grammatical rules will be mentioned. Grammar, neatness, and the correctness of the product will be emphasized in the explanations of product-focused beliefs. The audience for the students’ writing is the teacher; writing is completed for the sake of evaluation.

Preservice teachers whose beliefs are characteristic of process orientation tend to agree with statements that describe writing as a process. Words such as editing, revising, drafts, and publishing may be mentioned in their explanations. Projects that use writing to learn as a problem solving activity will be included in their statements. Writing
instruction may be organized around units of genre study, such as non-fiction, poetry, or fantasy. Grammar and spelling instruction may be mentioned within the context of the students’ writing and viewed as important to improve students’ writing rather than an end in and of itself.

Throughout most of my study, I labeled a preservice teacher who held beliefs about writing instruction that showed no clear tendency toward one orientation or the other as eclectic. Initially, I believed that an eclectic orientation would be a preservice teacher who identified some process-oriented statements and some product-oriented statements, but had no clear pattern of responses. What I came to understand about my view of an eclectic orientation to writing instruction by the end of my study is found in Chapter 5 of this Dissertation.

In order to classify each Writing Instruction Orientation Survey as having a product orientation, a process orientation, or an eclectic orientation, I recruited two graduate students to participate in the analysis activities of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey. At the time of the initial analysis, both raters completed at least 2/3 of their advanced graduate course work in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in reading, successfully completed the advanced graduate course entitled Survey in Writing Research, completed at least three years as a classroom teacher, and expressed an interest in writing instruction. Before we scored the surveys from Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course, both scorers and I rated a practice set of five surveys, stopping to build consensus on each item. Completing the analysis steps with the practice set of surveys allowed the scorers to build a common understanding of the responses prior to scoring the actual surveys involved in my study. During the analysis of each survey, the raters
completed a Writing Instruction Orientation Survey Analysis Form (see Appendix C). The surveys required this level analysis because each question on the survey asked for an explanation of the effective/not effective selection. A preservice teacher could mark an item as effective and give a response that indicates that the teacher behavior is actually not effective. For this reason, the raters recorded the initial response and reviewed the explanation in order to determine if it confirmed or contradicted the selection.

When we began analyzing the surveys from Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course, I stopped the raters and reviewed the judgments after every survey to determine a consensus classification for the preservice teacher. Cases in which agreement did not exist were discussed and consensus reached. This process of analyzing a survey and building consensus continued until the raters consistently categorize the surveys in the same orientation which occurred after the completion of the fourth survey. The raters then analyzed the rest of the surveys without stopping to build consensus until the entire set was completed.

Scoring of each item required two steps: recording the response of the preservice teacher as effective or ineffective and reviewing the justification to determine if the explanation confirmed or contradicted the choice circled. Raters completed a Scoring Guide (see Appendix C) for each survey analyzed. In cases when a written justification contradicted what was circled, the rater changed the effective/ineffective categorization. After all fifteen items were reviewed, the rater totaled the number of product and process statements marked as effective and calculated the percentage it represented. The rater considered the ratio of process to product oriented statements identified as effective and
the explanations provided by the preservice teacher to complete the analysis by circling an orientation that represented the tendency of the preservice teacher’s beliefs.

While analyzing the practice set of responses, the raters could not reach consensus on the product/process designation of the final two teacher behaviors:

Each student in Ms. Stevens’ class has an individual spelling list comprised of 5 misspelled words from his/her own writing. Students’ work with spelling partners throughout the week participating in hands-on spelling centers designed to help the students focus on the unique features of each word. At the end of the week, spelling partners give each other their individual spelling test, which Ms. Stevens grades. (Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, see Appendix B)

The statements were intended to represent a process approach of teaching spelling within the context of a student’s own writing. When both of the outside raters strongly argued that these two statements represented product focus due to the fact that the words were removed from their original context, practiced and tested for correctness, I changed the two statements designation to product-orientation before analyzing the surveys from the preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course. These two adjustments meant that the total number of product focused statements totaled 10, while the total number of process focused statements totaled 5. Results of the analysis from the beginning and end of the semester administration of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey are found in Appendix D.

Preservice teachers who identified more product-oriented statements effective and included explanations that reflected a product orientation received a product-orientation designation. For example, Natasha identified 50% of the product-oriented statements
effective and 40% of the process-oriented statements effective and included explanations that supported a product-orientation toward writing instruction. The raters considered the ratio of process to product-oriented statements identified as effective and the explanations recorded on the survey when they identified Natasha as having a product orientation toward writing instruction. Preservice teachers who identified more process-oriented statements effective and included explanations that reflected a process-orientation toward writing instruction received a process-orientation designation. For example, Samantha identified 30% of the product-oriented statements effective and 100% of the process-oriented statements effective. All raters categorized Samantha as having a process orientation toward writing instruction. Preservice teachers whose choices revealed no clear tendency received an eclectic designation. For example, Skylar identified 90% of the product-focused statements as effective and 100% of the process-oriented focused statements as effective. All raters categorized Skylar as having an eclectic orientation toward writing instruction. MGB was also categorized as having an eclectic orientation toward writing instruction by identifying 70% of the product-oriented statements effective and 80% of the process-oriented statements effective.

The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey was completed twice by the study participants and analyzed by the raters. This provided descriptive data for the entire group as well as for the specific case study participants. The results from both administrations of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey are discussed in Chapter 4 of this Dissertation.
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Writing Apprehension Test

The 16 study participants in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course completed a Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) at the beginning and end of the semester (see Appendix E). This survey has been utilized in studies (Brinkley, 1993; Buley-Meissner, 1989; Richardson, 1992) similar in nature to the present study to access preservice teachers’ beliefs about their own writing ability. The reliability, or likelihood that the same result would be obtained if the measure were administered again (Aron & Aron, 1997), for the Writing Apprehension Test using split half technique was .940 (Daly & Miller, 1975). Test-retest reliability of the instrument over a week was reported as .923 (Daly & Miller, 1975). The closer the reliability statistic is to one, the more reliable the instrument. Although no information was reported regarding the (p) or probability of getting sample mean as high or higher than the one obtained if the instrument were not reliable (Aron & Aron, 1997), the split half and test retest reliability statistics demonstrate that the instrument is reliable (Daly, 1985).

Directions for scoring the Writing Apprehension Test are included in Appendix E. Possible scores range from a low of 20 to a high of 100. The lower the apprehension score, the higher the level of writing apprehension. The writing apprehension levels of the preservice teachers served as selection criteria in my study. The initial writing apprehension levels between 51 and 69 were separated by no more than 3 points revealing a cluster of apprehension levels. For the purposes of my study, I found it useful to identify this group of teachers as having moderately apprehensive feelings about their own writing ability. Previous studies administering the Writing Apprehension Test have not made use this designation and the stratification of scores would likely be different in
a different group of preservice teachers. The moderately apprehensive designation I refer to throughout my study is specific to this case only. Likewise, the designation of low writing apprehension (74-100) and the designation of high writing apprehension (0-49) are specific to this case only.

I originally planned to utilize the numerical rating derived from the Writing Apprehension Test to allow me to identify and select case study participants with varied writing apprehension levels. However, because most of the preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course expressed apprehension levels in the moderate range, I selected case study participants with similar writing apprehension scores (see Table 1). The results from both administrations of the Writing Apprehension Test are reported in Appendix F.

Interviews

At the root of the case study interviews I conducted was my interest in understanding the preservice teachers’ experience while learning to teach writing (Seidman, 1998). The structure of an interview can vary (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In this case, I selected the semi-structured or focused interview format (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The development and use of interview guides increased the likelihood that I would obtain comparable data across the interviews while allowing the participants to tell their story (Patton, 2002). Utilizing the semi-structured format, I risked controlling the content too rigidly and introducing issues of power into the interview session (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). I sought to build rapport early in the interview sequences and treat each interview as a conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).
Based upon the type of information shared during the case study interviews, my efforts to put Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha at ease during the interviews was effective.

Following the emergent design of this study, a semi-structured approach allowed for adjusting the course of the interview as it proceeded. My interviewing cycle began by interviewing Dr. Sheridan before the semester began. During this interview I accessed her philosophical beliefs about writing and writing instruction and about the organization of the course. We discussed the course assignments and the intent for each. The interview guide for the initial professor interview is found in Appendix G. Two additional interviews were conducted with Dr. Sheridan, one the week after I completed the mid-semester case study interviews and one after the semester is finished. The content of these follow up interviews derived from the responses of the case study participants.

I conducted three semi-structured interviews with Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha: one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end of the writing methods course. I intended to access their ways of thinking about writing and teaching writing as they negotiated between the prior beliefs and the content of the course. Interview guides are found in Appendix H, K, and L. These interviews occurred in a location that was agreeable to the case study participants. The initial case study interviews and the mid-semester case study interviews took place in the College of Education, usually before or after the writing methods course met. The final case study interviews occurred the week after the final exam and were conducted at Borders bookstore near the homes of Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha in order to make it easier to schedule.
All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for purposes of analysis. I completed transcribing the tapes and read each transcript twice for a sense of completeness before the next interview cycle began. This allowed me to identify follow-up questions for the subsequent interviews. I also maintained field notes during the interviews that included non-verbal cues exhibited by the interviewee.

I originally planned to conduct several informal interviews with the case study participants and with other preservice teachers participating in my study during class. Due to the nature of the course routines and assignments, I did not conduct any informal interviews. At times when a short informal interview might have been conducted, the preservice teachers were actively engaged in planning for an activity making an interview inappropriate or the work being done created a quiet environment making an informal interview too obtrusive into the natural setting.

**Student Work Samples and Course Documents**

I collected student work samples for each case study participant. These consisted of the children’s book and writing folder, all materials from the in-class shared writing and the out-of-class shared writing experience, documents produced in class, quizzes, and the final exam. I utilized the work samples as a source of conversation during interviews and as a data source to triangulate my findings.

**Observations**

I attended 12 out of 13 three-hour class meetings throughout the semester. I did not conduct an observation on September 27, 2004. Dr. Sheridan experienced a family emergency the prior weekend. The following excerpt from my researchers journal explains the reasons for this decision:
The thought of observing in Dr. Sheridan’s class today felt more obtrusive than normal. My invasion into her personal space today might have impacted Dr. Sheridan’s ability to present herself in a professional manner in front of her students. I felt as though I would have been invading [Dr. Sheridan’s] teaching space at a very difficult time. There was no way my research needs would outweigh her need to be able to present herself in a professional manner in front of her students and the expectation that she maintains a positive learning environment. (researcher journal, 9/27/2004)

While conducting the observations, I attempted to be as unobtrusive into the natural setting as is possible. I sat at the back of the room each week. When group activities occurred, I circulated to Skylar, Natasha, or Samantha’s groups. While I had planned to ask informal questions during in-class group activities, I found it too intrusive into the natural setting. Instead I moved around the room in order to collect data on all three case study participants. I reserved my questioning for the case study interviews. The specific exception to this occurred on August 22, 2004, when I gained entry into the classroom and was introduced by Dr. Sheridan. Following her introduction, I asked the preservice teachers to complete the two survey methods, Writing Apprehension Test and The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey. I followed the same process at the end of the semester on November 29, 2004. These study related activities occupied 4% of the class time observed for my study.

During each observation, I recorded fieldnotes in order to capture the activities and discussions occurring within the writing methods course. My fieldnotes are a written account of what I saw, heard, experienced, and thought during the data collection and
reflection on the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). I followed Bogdan and Biklen’s (2003) suggestion that participant observer’s fieldnotes should encompass portraits of the subjects, reconstruction of dialogue, description of the physical setting, accounts of specific events and activities, and the observer’s behavior. My fieldnotes included a column to record descriptions of the events occurring in the writing methods course and the time frames Dr. Sheridan allotted to each event. Fieldnotes must also be comprised of a reflective element, immediate impressions of the observed event (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In the right-hand column, I recorded questions that arose during the observation and reflections on my observations. In this way I was able to separate my detailed observations from my immediate impressions. I referred to the right-hand column each time I wrote in my researcher’s journal. I recorded my fieldnotes in a two-column note fashion to incorporate the descriptive and reflective elements into my fieldnotes.

Trustworthiness of the Data

I strengthened the findings of my study by the infusing the following strategies to increase the trustworthiness of the findings (Merriam, 1995): employing data triangulation, conducting peer debriefing sessions, maintaining a reflective researcher journal, and including member checks both during interview sessions and through review of transcripts.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation refers to the use of a variety of data sources in a single study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Merriam, 1995; Patton, 2002). Data triangulation is evident in the use of several data collection techniques to answer each research question. For example, I considered data from three case study interviews, transcripts from 12
classroom observations, and a review of work samples to answer the research questions. Details regarding data triangulation are found in Table 3 and Table 4.

**Peer Debriefing**

Peer debriefing includes asking peers to examine the data and to comment on the plausibility of the emerging findings (Merriam, 1995). Peer debriefing occurred during the analysis of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey. Consensus was determined after the analysis of each survey until consistency was established. After all raters completed the analysis of each survey, the responses were compared and consensus reached regarding the orientation of each preservice teacher completing a survey.

I also employed peer debriefing as the initial case study description evolved. I asked a graduate assistant, who previously peer reviewed the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, to review the first case study summary and provide feedback related to the categorization of the case study participant comments. This feedback was incorporated in the final case study and composition of the remaining case study descriptions.

**Researcher Journal**

In order to trace any bias that may arise in my perception of events throughout the study, I recorded my thoughts in a researcher journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this journal, I recorded my philosophical reasoning and the rationale behind decisions made during the study and feelings regarding the events occurring inside the writing methods course and outside the methods course. The contents of this journal were reflective in nature and were not analyzed for themes. My researcher journal served as an important reference tool throughout the data analysis activities. My researcher journal became in
important space for me to process the uncontrollable events that occurred throughout the semester.

**Member Checks**

Member checks occur as data is collected from study participants and tentative interpretations are reported back to the people from whom they came (Merriam, 1995). I originally proposed to provide copies of the interview transcripts to case study participants immediately following the interview and transcriptions. After reviewing the three-interview sequence, I decided that providing the transcripts to the case study participants prior to the end of the semester might impact future response by the case study participants. Therefore, I provided a copy of the interview transcripts to Skylar, Natasha, Samantha, or Dr. Sheridan after I completed the final interview.

My specific concern regarding ongoing member checks arose from the use of student writing samples at the beginning and end of the semester. Because the case study participants would see the student sample twice, I felt that the examination of the transcripts from the first interview might have impacted the responses of the case study participants during the final interview. Similarly, questions from the mid-semester interview would resurface during the final interview; therefore, reviewing previous responses before giving new ones might impact the type of responses provided during the in-depth case study interviews.

In order to build in some level of member checking, I began each case study interview by asking if there was anything from the previous interview that wanted to be clarified or expounded upon. I also began the second and third case study interview with follow-up questions and by asking for confirmation of some of my emerging impressions.
I provided a copy of the interview transcripts to each case study participant and Dr. Sheridan at the conclusion of my study. I asked Skylar, Natasha, Samantha, and Dr. Sheridan to review their transcripts and notify me of any information of concern. I did not receive feedback from any of the case study participants regarding their interview transcripts.

Data Analysis

The analyses of these sources involved several types of qualitative techniques as well as descriptive analysis strategies. I utilized interview analysis and content analysis strategies to analyze data from the case study interviews. The data from the classroom observations were analyzed following content analysis strategies. Descriptive statistics were calculated on data from the Writing Apprehension Test and results from quizzes and final exam. Table 2 and Table 3 show the types of analyses applied to each type of data.

Descriptive Analysis Strategies

Data from this study involved in descriptive analysis came primarily from administration of Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975). I analyzed data from this survey using several descriptive analysis strategies to describe the group of people involved in this study (Aron & Aron, 1997). Determination of the mean, median, mode, and range (Aron & Aron, 1997) of the writing apprehension scores created a descriptive picture of the apprehensive level of the entire class before and after participation in the writing methods class. I utilized these same descriptive analysis strategies to describe the work of the preservice teachers on the weekly quizzes and final exam.
Qualitative Analysis Strategies

I followed the constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) to guide the overall analyses of data throughout the data collection phase of this study. Following the intent of constant comparative design, data analyses occurred in a pulsating fashion: first an interview, then the analysis, another interview, more analysis, an observation, more analysis, and theory development. This fostered an emergent theory to begin to develop early in the data collection and allowed me to prepare for the subsequent interviews.

Within the constant comparative framework, I utilized two qualitative data analysis strategies in order to make sense of the multiple data sources involved in this study: a modified interview analysis (Hycner, 1985), and content analysis (Patton, 2002).

Interview Analysis

I analyzed the content of the interview transcripts applying a modified version of Hycner’s (1985) guidelines for phonological analysis of interview data. My initial inclination that my study would be phenomenological in nature led me to identify Hycner’s guidelines as an analysis model. As I realized that phenomenology did not accurately describe the nature of my study, I felt that Hycner’s guidelines only marginally fit the work I was undertaking. Nonetheless, I did roughly follow the guidelines set out by Hycner. Specifically, Hycner recommends the emergence of themes from the data after listening to tapes and transcription of tapes. However, in my case, the themes developed around the types of questions asked during each interview rather than from the responses of the case study participants. For example, during my initial case study interviews, I asked several questions intended to illicit the case study participants’
experiences while learning to write. I viewed this information as important to my study because of the link between prior experiences and existing beliefs reported by Lortie (2002). In the final case study reports, one theme that I reported on derived from responses to those questions, and I labeled the theme Learning to Write. The theme did not emerge from the responses so much as it came to life through the responses. This example illustrates that the essence of my research questions and the subsequent interview questions I utilized did not focus on capturing the lived experiences of my case study participants as it would in a phenomenological inquiry. I did find the remainder of Hycner’s guidelines applicable while analyzing the interview data I collected.

I structured each case study interview to illicite information clustered around several big ideas. The initial interviews provided background information about the personal histories and orientations of the case study participants, the views about the nature of writing, and responses to student writing and questions. The mid-semester interviews provided additional information about personal histories and orientations, the views about the nature of writing, and impressions of experiences encountered in the writing methods course. The final interview provided additional information about personal histories and orientations, views about the nature of writing, responses to student writing and questions, and impressions of experiences encountered in the writing methods course. Each subsequent interview spent less and less time on personal histories and orientations, allowing for larger portions of interview time to be spent on responding to students writing and questions and impressions of experiences in the writing methods course.
Immediately following each interview, I listened to the tape to get a sense of case study participant’s story. While listening, I made every effort to bracket or suspend as much as possible any preconceived notions I might have regarding the data and potential findings. I also listened for any missed opportunities to ask important follow-up questions and comments that spurred more questions. I opened each subsequent interview with follow-up questions from the previous interview and confirmation of some of my impressions of their comments. This became an important form of member checking because I did not provide case study participants with transcripts of their interviews until after the semester finished.

Next, I transcribed each tape. The cycle of listening for a sense of the whole and transcription of tapes allowed the organization of the case studies to evolve. The first iteration of the case study organization included family background, educational history, personal feelings about writing, learning to writing, writing apprehension, writing process, development of beliefs, and significant episodes. Each case study is organized in the same manner: family background, educational history, learning to write, writing apprehension, writing process, development of beliefs, and significant episodes in belief development. These categories derived from the structure of the interviews and from the nature of the information provided by the case study participants. With all three interviews transcribed and the organizational categories established, I began within case analysis. I read each interview transcript from a single case and electronically sorted data into the identified categories. To do this, I color coded each data set in order to maintain the date identification of the data source. Next, I sorted data from all three interviews from a single case study participant. This strategy allowed me to incorporate data from
latter interviews when I asked clarifying questions and to examine issues of change related to my two interview questions.

After I sorted the data under the larger organizational categories, I reviewed the resulting data within each category and again looked for patterns in the responses, delineated comments relevant to the research questions eliminating redundancies, and organized data into meaningful sequences. During this phase I captured one statement from each category that captured the essence of the comments made in that category. Finally, I summarized the remaining comments into case study summaries, maintaining language from the case study participants whenever possible. In doing so, I attempted to provide the reader with a sense of the reality constructed during the writing methods course according to each case study participant.

After I completed my first case study summary, I provided a copy to an independent reviewer. In this review stage, I gave the reviewer directions to examine the summary and provide feedback related to the categorization of the case study participant comments. After this review, I collapsed two of the categories, personal feelings about writing ability and writing apprehension and writing orientation. The two categories did not provide uniquely distinct information, thus the case study summaries did not loose any descriptive data in the process. As a result of this process, two iterations of the organizational structure of the case study reports developed. The first iteration of the case study organization included family background, educational history, personal feelings about writing, learning to writing, writing apprehension, writing process, development of beliefs, and significant episodes. The final iteration of the organizational structure of the case study reports includes the following structures: family background,
Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development

educational history, learning to write, writing apprehension, writing process, development of beliefs, and significant episodes in belief development. I repeated this process applying the same categories to the remaining two sets of case study data. The resulting case study summaries are provided in Chapter 4 of this Dissertation.

Content Analysis

I analyzed the content of the field notes taken during classroom observations and student work samples using content analysis (Patton, 2002). Content analysis refers to qualitative data reduction and sense making activity (Patton, 2002). The purpose of this analysis was to identify patterns and themes that emerged through the reading and re-reading of the documents. This inductive process began by discovering patterns inductively allowing the findings to emerge out of the data rather than deductive analysis in which data is examined according to an existing framework. Later in the analysis, as the patterns developed into a working hypothesis, the analysis became more deductive in nature allowing for the possible categories to be tested against later data. Content analysis also allowed me to confirm emerging themes identified through interview analysis.

One of the results of the content analysis of my fieldnotes allowed me to identify categories of behavior exhibited by Dr. Sheridan and to describe how much time she spent proportionately on each activity.

Qualitative Analysis Contributions

Each of these analysis strategies yielded important data and assisted in answering my two research questions. I used the interview transcripts to conduct interview analysis.
I analyzed the remaining data sources, fieldnotes from classroom observations and student work samples, using content analysis (Patton, 2002). While the resulting information contributed uniquely to the analysis of the classroom observations and student work samples, the findings from these analyses activities combined with the analysis of the interview transcripts to answer my two research questions. Analysis of participant selection data did conflict with data from initial case study interviews. This occurred in two instances in my study. In Natasha’s case study, her responses on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey indicated that she held a product orientation toward writing instruction. Her responses during her initial case study made it clear that she held an eclectic view of writing instruction rather than the product focused orientation determined from the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey. Natasha’s initial writing orientation was adjusted to an eclectic orientation based upon this information. In Skylar’s case study, her responses to the Writing Apprehension Test indicated that she held moderately apprehensive feelings about her own writing. In her initial case study interview, she revealed that she lacked confidence in her own writing to the point that she rarely reviewed her own writing. Based upon her responses during her initial interview, her initial writing apprehension level was adjusted from moderately apprehensive to highly apprehensive to reflect the strong feelings she expressed.

Taken in combination, each analysis activity I employed served to enrich the findings from the other data analysis activities.
Chapter Four

Results

*wonder gives way to*

*patterns emerging from words*

*in front of your eyes*

INTRODUCTION

This study examined the belief development of preservice teachers as they learned to teach writing and sought to identify significant episodes in that belief development. This chapter presents the results from the analyses of data. It begins with a description of the context within which the three case study participants engaged in learning activities. The context includes data on the professor of the writing methods course, the group of preservice teachers enrolled in the writing methods course, and the content of the writing methods course. Next, I present three individual case studies constructed by analyzing data on each participant’s relevant history and by answering both research questions: 1) How do preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing develop while enrolled in an elementary writing methods course? 2) What episodes do preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and writing instruction? I conclude the chapter with cross case analyses.
THE CONTEXT

Three interrelated aspects create the context within which observations occurred to document the belief development of the case study participants in this study: the professor, the preservice teachers, and the writing methods course.

The Professor

This study occurred in one undergraduate writing methods course instructed by Dr. Sheridan at a Research Doctoral/Research University – Extensive located in the southeastern United States. I considered her background, including her family background, her educational history, her experiences learning to write, and her writing process, significant to this study because they contributed to an understanding of her philosophy of writing and writing instruction that framed the context of my study.

*Family Background: “They’re both teachers.”*

Dr. Sheridan comes from a family of teachers. Her mother and father attended college and enjoyed long careers in the field of education. Her father taught high school for 38 years at private and public schools. Dr. Sheridan commented on her father’s education and career,

He is the only one in his family to go to college besides my cousin who is a priest…. None of my cousins have gone to college on my dad’s side…. He wanted to be an architect, but he ended up getting a degree in teaching, so he taught history. (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

Dr. Sheridan’s mother is also an educator. Her mother graduated with a degree in elementary education from the same university as her father. “She taught 4th and 5th
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grade pretty much. She taught at three different schools.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) Dr. Sheridan grew up surrounded by educators.

*Educational and Employment History*

Dr. Sheridan received all of her elementary, middle, high school, undergraduate, and Masters education in a mixture of public and private schools in the same southeastern city in which this study occurred. She received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and her Masters of Education from the university where she currently teaches. “Then I went to Ohio State for my Ph.D. in Literacy.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) Prior to her career in higher education, Dr. Sheridan taught first grade, second grade, and computers grades 1-5 in public schools in the city where the university in this study is located. She is an associate professor and has taught in her current position for 8 years.

*Personal Feelings about Writing Ability: “When you really write about something, it makes you think.”*

Dr. Sheridan is a writer. She writes for a variety of personal and professional purposes, but prefers the creative aspects that her personal writing allows.

I write children’s books. I have…a ton of them on my computer. I haven’t done anything with them. I just like the creativity. It’s like playing. You get to imagine and play and do what you want to with the characters. I like the rhyme and imagery of it. It is interesting and challenging. I think I prefer creative writing. But I enjoy the professional writing too. The professional writing makes you think….When you really write about something, it makes you think through some things. (transcripts, 8/19/2004)
She also writes for and about her own children. In the first years of her daughters’ lives, she kept track of milestone events on a first year calendar. That writing transformed into a journal format where she records events in their language development and other important milestones. “I also keep track like right now if I did it I’d write Monica, 22 months. I love how you teach your sister. I just write all these things I love about them….I do that on the computer so I can save it.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) Writing plays an important part in Dr. Sheridan’s personal and professional life.

**Learning to Write:** “*I always did well on writing, but I don’t remember being trained in high school.*”

It is difficult to find the beginnings of Dr. Sheridan’s passion for writing in her history of learning to write. Writing is something that has come naturally for her despite the nature of the writing instruction she recalls.

I remember writing [in elementary school]. I specifically remember being taught how to form letters. Handwriting instruction. That was very specific. One clear time in 3rd grade and I remember the teacher and everything. She told us to write a story. I had to spell where and I couldn’t. It was one of those things you just forget how to spell it. I spelled it wrong in the whole paper. I knew it was wrong, but I couldn’t remember the right way. I remember doing writing things like that. (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

She wrote for the school newspaper in junior high school, but did not recall any specific writing instruction during that time. Dr. Sheridan could not recall any writing instruction during her first two years of high school at a private school. When she
transferred to a public school for her last two years of high school, she felt unprepared for the writing assignments expected of her.

    We didn’t do any writing [in private school] and when I got to public school as a junior, the first day of class she said, “Write a 5-paragraph essay.” I was just looking at my paper like I have no idea. I went up to her and said, “I don’t know what this is.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

Dr. Sheridan participated in weekly writing tests during her junior and senior year of high school. “When I was in public school my junior and senior year, every Friday we would have a writing test….It was a graded thing. I remember doing well on it, but never being taught to write.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) Dr. Sheridan’s overall experiences of learning to write included memories of prescribed formats for writing and writing tests, a long way from her current writing philosophy.

    Dr. Sheridan’s Writing Process: “It’s all in my precious notebook.”

Dr. Sheridan’s writing process varies with the purpose of her writing. When she writes for personal reasons, she usually begins with paper and pencil then transfers her writing to computer later. Her academic writing primarily occurs on the computer.

    My children’s books I write are all paper. I have them in notebooks, and then I’ll put them on the computer just to save them. I do most of that on paper. I have these little spiral notebooks. I’ll start a story and then I’ll get another idea for another story and then I’ll flip back a few pages and start there. Then at the back, the very back, I have ideas for titles for other stories. Things like that. It’s all in my precious notebook. When we evacuated for the hurricane, that is one of the things I took. So, academic writing, I mostly do on the computer. There are
sometimes when I’ll write notes to myself. Like if I’m in a meeting and I think of something or if I’m on the couch….While I’m writing, I print it out. I have to print it out to proof it. When I’m proofing it, I write things in the margins and then go back and type it. (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

Dr. Sheridan enjoys the creative aspect of writing. “Sometimes I’ll just get a line in my head and from that line, stuff will just flow out. Academic writing isn’t like that.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

Dr. Sheridan identified several people in her life whom she considers good writers and people who have helped her improve her writing. Most of these influences have been on her academic writing. While completing her doctorate, her major professor influenced her writing. Since coming to work in her present position, two colleagues have impacted her writing through writing groups and collaborative research projects. She also identified a friend who works in the news business as a good writer. “Just working with her I got writing tips. When I did a video for Young Authors, she helped me write the script. I wrote the script all out and she read it. Oh, man. She made it more like TV. She is a good writer.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) She helped her make that specific writing “more catchy.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) These influences have impacted not only what Dr. Sheridan has to say, but how she says it; however, her writing process remains differentiated depending upon the purpose of the writing.

The Preservice Teachers

The 24 preservice teachers enrolled in the writing methods course are an interrelated aspect of the context that contributed to the belief development of the case study participants. The entire class consisted of 22 females and 2 males; the gender
composition of the preservice teachers who agreed to participate in my study consisted of 15 females and 1 male. The information gathered from the administration of the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) and the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey allowed me to purposefully select three female preservice teachers as case study participants. Their writing apprehension levels and writing orientation represented 75% of the preservice teachers in the class making them typical cases (Patton, 2002). The initial and final writing apprehension scores and writing instruction orientation of the class are described in Appendix D and Appendix F.

At the beginning of the semester, the writing apprehension scores for the 16 preservice teachers ranged between 46 and 94; the mean writing apprehension score was 63.75, and the median score was 61 indicating that overall, the class was moderately apprehensive about their own writing at the beginning of the semester. The case study participants’ initial writing apprehension scores of 52, 59, and 59 also fell in the moderately apprehensive range.

At the end of the semester, the mean writing apprehension score of the group of preservice teachers participating in my study increased to 66.06. While the slightly higher score indicates slightly less apprehension, the preservice teachers enrolled in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course remained moderately apprehensive about their own writing. The scores at the end of the semester ranged from 48-87, and the median score was 64. This range of apprehension scores represents a narrower range of scores when compared to the range from the beginning of the semester. Two preservice teachers recorded a higher apprehension level at the end of the semester; five preservice teachers
indicated a lower apprehension level at the end of the semester; and nine preservice
teachers’ writing apprehension levels remained constant.

Two of the case study participants, Natasha and Samantha, exhibited a writing
apprehension pattern similar to that of the overall study participants. Their slightly
higher writing apprehension scores indicated lower writing apprehension; however, they
remained in the moderately apprehensive level. The writing apprehension score of one
case study participant, Skylar, went against the class trend and moved lower indicating
that she was slightly more apprehensive about her own writing abilities at the end of the
semester. While more apprehensive, her final writing apprehension score remained in the
moderate level.

At the beginning of the semester, 6 preservice teachers responded to the Writing
Instruction Orientation Survey in a manner suggesting an eclectic-orientation to writing
instruction (see Appendix D for class data). Ten preservice teachers responses indicated
a process-orientation to writing instruction. One preservice teacher held product-oriented
views of writing instruction at the beginning of the semester. One case study
participant’s initial scores revealed a process orientation toward writing instruction; one
case study participant’s initial scores revealed an eclectic orientation toward writing
instruction; and one case study participant’s initial scores revealed a product-orientation
toward writing instruction (see Table 7 for data on case study participants).

At the end of the semester, the number of students exhibiting an eclectic-
orientation to writing instruction decreased from 7 to 4, indicating a general shift toward
the orientation of the professor. By the end of the semester, 12 preservice teachers’
responses to the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey indicated that they held process-
oriented views of writing instruction. This shift is misleading. While 6 preservice teachers shifted their beliefs toward a process-oriented approach to writing instruction, 3 preservice teachers shifted from a process-orientation to eclectic-orientation of writing instruction. Two of the case study participants began the semester with an eclectic-orientation and one with a process-orientation. At the end of the semester, all three case study participants’ responses revealed a process-orientation to writing instruction, reflecting the general trend of the class to shift toward a process-orientation to writing instruction (see Appendix D).

Written explanations given on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, interview data, and observational data provided additional information to consider when determining belief development for the case study participants. That in-depth information was not available for all 16 preservice teachers participating in my study; therefore, trends from the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey should be taken as an initial indicator of belief development. To determine if belief development occurred for all of the preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course, interview and observational data would be needed on each preservice teacher. I did make determinations regarding the belief development of the three case study participants based upon data from the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, interview data, and observational data. I present these findings later in this chapter.

The Writing Methods Course

The course content is also an important interrelated aspect of the context that contributed to understanding the belief development of the case study participants. The course met on Mondays from 12:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. The semester began on August 23,
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*Unexpected Events*

Before analyzing the planned data for this portion of the results section, I feel it is necessary to report on several unplanned events that occurred during data collection that impacted the professor, the students, and the content of the course. By definition, unexpected events can occur at any time. In this case, the unexpected events came in the form of 4 hurricanes and a significant family emergency. Between August 13, 2004, and September 25, 2004, four hurricanes hit the southeastern United States: Hurricane Charley, Hurricane Frances, Hurricane Ivan, and Hurricane Jeanne. The university did not officially cancel any Monday classes; however, Dr. Sheridan did cancel class on September 13, 2004, when meteorologists predicted that Hurricane Ivan would directly hit the area in which the university was located. She wanted her students to feel free to evacuate the area without worrying about missing class. While there is no way to officially know if the storms impacted the events under consideration in my study, the events are noteworthy. Dr. Sheridan herself observed, “The hurricanes were disruptive. There was one class that half the students were there. I think that was bad. Just to me things seemed so cut up.” (transcripts, 1/20/2004) Dr. Sheridan revised the course syllabus to reflect the cancelled class (see Appendix M and Appendix N). The four hurricanes also made it difficult to schedule initial interviews with the case study participants. The first case study interviews that were scheduled to occur August 30, 2004-September 6, 2004, did not occur until September 8, 2004, and September 20, 2004.
Samantha’s comments reflect the feelings of many regarding the hurricanes’ impact on life inside and outside of the classroom during that time.

Well, when the hurricanes were coming around, it was like gall dang it, do I have to do this all over again? Because I live at my house all by myself. So, bring in the chairs from the lawn, bring in the dogs….And by missing these hurricane days and not having them added at the end, I feel like it is kind of rushed. (transcripts, 10/19/2004)

In addition to the frequent hurricanes, Dr. Sheridan faced a serious family emergency during the first half of the semester. Dr. Sheridan did make her students aware of her family crisis on September 20, 2004. I did not conduct a classroom observation on September 27, 2004, to allow Dr. Sheridan time with her students without my watchful eyes. During her final interview, Dr. Sheridan discussed the possibility that her family emergency may have impacted her performance in the course; however, none of the case study participants addressed her family emergency in any of their interviews or end of semester evaluations.

History of the Course

The title of the writing methods course is “Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, Grades K-6.” Dr. Sheridan shared the history of the writing methods course (personal communication, March 20, 2005). The original title of the course was “Language Arts Methods.” In 1999, when the state required a reduction in the total number of program hours that colleges of education required, the course became Literature and Writing. Two years later, when the state required universities to include 12 hours of literacy preparation in all teacher education programs, “Teaching Writing in
the Elementary School, K-6” took its current format. “It used to be just language arts, which was more of showing thematic units and that kind of thing.” (transcripts, 9/18/2004) This required change gave Dr. Sheridan an opportunity to redesign the course to place more emphasis on learning to teach writing to match the increasing attention writing was receiving in schools.

I really try to put in a focus on narrative and expository as well as spelling. In the beginning I try to give them an overview of what kids are as writers. That is basically how it is laid out. Kids as writers, but also writing instructional strategies, and modeled writing and shared writing. (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

Dr. Sheridan’s Philosophy of Writing and Writing Instruction

The philosophy of writing and writing instruction that Dr. Sheridan revealed to the preservice teachers in her writing methods course differed from her self-stated philosophy. The description of her philosophy is complex, each source of data revealing a different piece to the puzzle. I describe Dr. Sheridan’s overall philosophy of writing and writing instruction interpreted from personal communication, in-depth interviews, and observational data as eclectic. I characterize the philosophy that she revealed to the preservice teachers in the writing methods course as interpreted through observational data as primarily process-oriented. However, she does not describe herself in that way. During interviews and through personal communication, Dr. Sheridan revealed an orientation toward writing and writing instruction that was quite different.

During the first class meeting, Dr. Sheridan shared information regarding the writing process with her students and allotted time for them to begin their composing
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process. She shared the following information about the origins of writing instruction in elementary schools,

In the 1970s writing really came to the elementary schools with the work of Donald Graves. Before this time, it was thought that kids had to read before they write. Others took his findings and made 5-step lock-step process. In the 1980s, writing workshop became popular with the work of Calkins. Writing workshop includes a mini-lesson, writing time, and sharing. In the 1990s, cultural influence began to dominate the field of writing. How pop culture impacts writing, but in real life, it’s high stakes testing in the classroom. (field notes, 8/23/2004)

From the first class meeting, Dr. Sheridan incorporated elements of the writing process into her course routines. After she introduced ideas about the origins of elementary writing instruction, Dr. Sheridan allowed two minutes for her students to write a list of ideas for a children’s book. She interrupted their work and asked several students to share some of their ideas for children’s books. They returned to their individual work and finished the series of steps by sharing their complete list with the person sitting next to them. (field notes, 8/23/2004)

Dr. Sheridan elaborated on her ideas related to the writing process the following class meeting by stating, “Many people present the writing process in a lock-step manner. Personally I feel that everybody has his or her own style. You should teach concepts rather than rigidity and steps.” (field notes, 8/30/2004) She followed this introduction by sharing information regarding the five stages or steps in the writing process that lasted 14 minutes. Dr. Sheridan finished this information sharing session by stating, “You do teach kids the behaviors, but also teach them to use it when they need it. It is the teacher’s job
to know each child as a writer.” (field notes, 8/30/2004) In a manner of speaking, Dr. Sheridan is sharing conditions of her notion of process writing.

Dr. Sheridan’s course routines further emphasized the importance of the writing process. She allotted 16% of her course time to activities related to the writing process. She scheduled in-class writing time 9 out of the 10 class meetings prior to the children’s book due date and allotted an entire class meeting to sharing and celebrating the completion of the children’s books. During in-class writing time, Dr. Sheridan encouraged the preservice teachers to brainstorm topics, write independently, share with a partner, explore different writing genres, explore various art media for use in publishing writing, edit and revise writing prior to publication, and publish a piece of original writing. She also conducted mini-lessons and celebrated student accomplishments during the in-class writing time. Dr. Sheridan did not mandate a topic to any preservice teacher. While she did encourage some writing behaviors at the beginning of several of the in-class writing sessions, she did not circulate to enforce the suggestions. Dr. Sheridan’s in-class behaviors and the content of information she shared regarding the writing process are consistent with Emig (1971) and Flower and Hayes (1981), considered pioneers in the field of process writing.

During my interviews with Dr. Sheridan and through personal communication, she elaborated on her philosophy of writing and writing instruction. Her description of her philosophy contrasts in some ways with her in-class behaviors.

I would say writing is connected with other symbol systems. Writing is connected with drawing and talking and playing. That would be very much guiding my writing curriculum. I believe that children develop at their own
levels. We need to meet them where they are and take them, of course, always improving. That goes for that little struggling kid that can’t even form a letter to that kid who can already write. You start where they are. (transcripts, 1/20/2005)

In an earlier interview, Dr. Sheridan explained her views on how she believed teachers should teach writing,

I think that children need to have experiences from which to write. They also need to be shown with a lot of modeling how to do it and not just one way, but different ways to do it. I don’t think there is one process, I think it’s more complex than planning, drafting, revising, editing. (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

This comment leads to one of Dr. Sheridan’s justifications for not falling on the process-oriented end of the product-process continuum. She explains her philosophy this way,

I would have to say that I am a little of both but lately I'm leaning more towards product with the whole genre-studies/ new-literacies/ access-to-power research that is being done…I've never been a process writing person in the traditional sense of process writing. I'm against revision as Calkins pushes. I'm against children having to dwell on the same thing over and over again. I'm against kids having to rewrite the same thing. I think it's cognitively inappropriate for primary students and many intermediate. I'm against peer editing, peer revising, peer conferencing at any level. The only thing I'll tolerate is peer sharing but no comments allowed from peers except praise. I'm a process person in the sense that I believe children need to talk, draw, and play while they write. I think children utilize their own idiosyncratic processes (plural) for making text and
their don't look like process writing. What I believe is teachers should show kids many ways to make text and then kids will do it in their way. I don't think we should prescribe a process no matter how recursive people claim it to be, no matter how flexible. I share the writing process and writing workshop with students because they should know what they are. They should have them as a resource to share with students. But I definitely don't push process writing.

(personal communication, 5/5/2005)

Dr. Sheridan argues that her beliefs about writing and writing instruction are not consistent with a process-orientation toward writing instruction. I argue that her philosophical beliefs do match those of Emig (1971) and Flower and Hayes (1981), and therefore do fall more on the process-oriented end of the continuum. Emig and Flower and Hayes both present findings that depict writing as a recursive process that varies from person to person. Dr. Sheridan’s problems with the process writing movement appear to derive from the implementation of those ideas in classrooms, which, she argues, is very lock-step and unrealistic.

Dr. Sheridan’s philosophy about writing instruction includes “teachers modeling how to write many different types of genres for many different purposes—for yourself, for the school newspaper, for all that.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) She believes teachers should be aware of the standards.

I would be aware of them, but I would also use my knowledge of what makes good writing. And I would sure not be limited to the FCAT. I would teach them how to read a prompt and how to write to it, but that would be a minor part of it. I would teach them how to write a good narrative and how to write good
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expository. Writing would be imbedded across my curriculum…We would do research projects in science where they would be writing up a storm…. Giving them time to write on topics of their choice. I would do some form of writing workshop and sharing. I would do what I needed to do for test preparation which is teaching them how to read prompts and stay on topic….It’s unethical not prepare them.” (transcripts, 1/20/2005)

In order to help preservice teachers gain an understanding of how to teach writing to children, Dr. Sheridan believes the writing methods course should model as much as possible life in an elementary classroom. “As far as my teaching teachers, I do those same things. I try to model for them. Show them.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

I believe that the view of writing and writing instruction that Dr. Sheridan reveals to the students in her Masters level writing methods course more closely matches her complex views of writing and writing instruction. “In my Masters classes I push the work of Wollman-Bonilla, Kamberelis, and others who believe that teaching kids how to do science writing will give them access to power. That's why I would say more product oriented.” (personal communication, 5/5/2005) With that said, I judged the philosophy of writing and writing instruction revealed to the undergraduate preservice teachers in this writing methods course to be primarily process-oriented.

Dr. Sheridan’s Goals For the Writing Methods Course

Dr. Sheridan’s background in developing the course syllabus for the writing methods course gave her a unique perspective on her goals for the preservice teachers enrolled in the course. She identified several overarching ideas she hoped all preservice teachers understood when they completed her writing methods course:
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- “Read to kids every day. Read a variety of genre.” (transcripts, 1/20/2005)
  “That teaches the children how to write.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004)
- “Model for them, all the time.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) “Use modeled, shared, interactive writing.” (transcripts, 1/20/2005)
- “That they should teach them how to write in various genres and write for different audiences and different purposes.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004)
- “Give them time to write on topics of their choice.” (transcripts, 1/20/2005)

Dr. Sheridan’s instructional focus is on “how to teach (modeling, shared writing, interactive writing, etc) as well as what to teach (strategies, narrative, expository, poetry, biographies, letters, spelling).” (personal communication, 5/5/2005) Her instructional goals and focus translated into the development of the course syllabus, selection of course assignments, and establishment of routines. She read to her preservice teachers every class; she increased the amount of modeling she incorporated into the class over previous semesters; she introduced different genres and assigned group projects based upon narrative and expository genres; she allowed her preservice teachers to write on topics of their choice; and she facilitated multi-faceted shared writing experiences.

Course Assignments and Routines

Dr. Sheridan designed course assignments and established weekly routines to achieve the goals she set for the course. Her philosophy of writing and writing instruction are evident in course assignments found in the course syllabus (see Appendix M), and the revised course syllabus (see Appendix N), and the class routines she established. The text selected for use in the course, Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product by Gail E. Tompkins (2004), also emphasized the process-oriented approach.
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to writing instruction. While Dr. Sheridan admits “there aren’t many assignments,”
(transcripts, 8/19/2004) those that are in the syllabus are purposefully tied to her goals for
the course. The course assignments listed in the syllabus included shared writing, writing
time and children’s book, classroom observation, quizzes and final, and weekly
assignments. The class routines included weekly read alouds and modeling.

Shared Writing

Dr. Sheridan included a description of the shared writing assignment in her
syllabus (see Figure 2). She allotted a significant amount of class time to preparing her
preservice teachers for this assignment because she wanted them to be prepared to teach
writing, not just assign it. “My purpose for shared writing was for them to try out and to
learn an instructional strategy--to actually try to teach using it. I want…them to learn the
strategy, but I also want them to try to teach something to kids, something concrete.”
(transcripts, 1/20/2005)

![Figure 2. Description of shared writing assignment from Dr. Sheridan’s course syllabus.](image)

In her initial interview, Dr. Sheridan indicated that while she places significant
emphasis on the shared writing assignment, she felt that she places more hope in the
assignment than it actually produces.

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I don’t think they really get it. I think it takes time for them to develop. But it is making them try to teach writing in class, and they watch other people try to teach writing and with kids. They see how hard it is. They learn lessons from that.

(transcripts, 8/19/2004)

This frustration causes Dr. Sheridan to adjust the assignment each semester. The semester in which my observations occurred, for example, she doubled the amount of modeling of shared writing lessons.

They do one in-class practice. Before that, I’ll do many of them. See shared writing demo, shared writing demo, shared writing demo. So, I’ll do three of them before they do their first one. They are in groups of four. They do it for their group. They go all over the place. I used to do it four weeks, but this time I’m combining. This week two will go, and then the next week two will go so it just takes two weeks.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

The increase in the amount of modeling of shared writing lessons was the most significant change Dr. Sheridan made prior to the beginning of the semester. She felt that this change would allow the preservice teachers more observations before they delivered their own shared writing lesson.

Dr. Sheridan modeled shared writing lessons on three occasions (field notes, 9/20/2004, 9/27/2004, 10/4/2004), each time modeling a different writing strategy. Her first shared writing demonstrated how to brainstorm using a five senses web and how to use the gathered information to collaboratively compose a paragraph. (field notes, 9/20/2004) The second modeled shared writing occurred the day after many students evacuated the area due to the threat of a hurricane. Therefore, attendance on that day
suffered. Dr. Sheridan drew upon the events surrounding the day and composed a letter to the administration of the university, an authentic audience, regarding the campus closure policies when a hurricane threatens the area (field notes, 9/27/2004). Her final shared writing lesson modeled how to teach retelling as a writing strategy. She began by reading *The 3 Billy Goats Gruff* (Asbjornse, & Moe, 1957) with animated expression. Her questions, such as “How should we begin to retell this story?” (field notes, 10/4/2004), guided the students through the retelling of the story while she recorded the retelling on the overhead. Dr. Sheridan modeled frequent rereading of the writing she did, stopping every other sentence to reread the composition.

I observed a low level of participation on behalf of the preservice teachers during Dr. Sheridan’s modeling of shared writing lessons. When asked to describe the purpose of the modeling of shared writing conducted by Dr. Sheridan, Natasha replied, “I think she likes standing up there feeling like a fool cause we never give her answers. I feel bad because it’s like I don’t have anything to say.” (transcripts, 10/18/2005) Natasha captured the mood in the room during Dr. Sheridan’s modeling of shared writing. I noted in my field notes, “Even though they have a piece of candy in their mouth, they (the preservice teachers) are not contributing to the creation of the five senses web.” (fieldnotes, 9/20/2005) I observed a similar level of participation during Dr. Sheridan’s third and final modeled shared writing lesson to teach the strategy of retelling.

Dr. Sheridan: (after reading *The 3 Billy Goats Gruff* (Asbjornse, & Moe, 1957)

How should we begin?

Students: no response
Dr. Sheridan: How about, “Once upon a time…”? (Dr. Sheridan recorded this opening sentence on the overhead)

Student: (only one hand up)…there were three goats. (fieldnotes, 10/4/2004)

In addition to the modeling, each preservice teacher conducted a shared writing lesson in class with fellow preservice teachers as “students.” The shared writing assignment also required the preservice teachers to conduct a shared writing lesson with a group of students outside of class. Dr. Sheridan hoped that the progression from instructor modeling, to in-class shared writing, to out of class shared writing would provide support for the preservice teachers as they learned to teach writing. The final products resulting from Samantha’s shared writing experience are found in Appendix O.

**Writing Time and Children’s Book**

Dr. Sheridan included a description of the writing time and children’s book assignment in her syllabus (see Figure 3). She consistently included in-class writing time in her weekly plan, allowing in-class writing time 9 out of 10 class meetings that occurred before the children’s books were due.

![2. Writing Time](image1)

*Figure 3. Description of writing time and children’s book assignment from Dr. Sheridan’s course syllabus.*
The major purpose [of the in-class writing time] was to model for them that they need to give kids time to write. And so if I feel it is important enough to give them time to write, then maybe they’ll remember that…The second reason was to give them time to work on the project that I know they’ll procrastinate on and not write about until the end. At least to give them a little time. (transcripts, 1/20/2005)

The general procedure for in-class writing time observed during observations mirrored Dr. Sheridan’s description,

[At the beginning of the semester] they’ll start just with a list of ideas. Pick one and write and they can choose the same one to write on or they can pick something different. Then sometime, I have the children’s book idea due. I make them pick one idea or the other. You have all this time to explore. Some of them just pick the one idea and stick with it. [The writing folder] is where they keep track….There is a writing log and they write every day what they write about, reflections. (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

The importance Dr. Sheridan placed on this assignment is reflected in her consistent implementation of the in-class writing time and the related class procedures established to facilitate the work of the preservice teachers during that time. On October 4, 2004, the in-class writing time resembled a typical in-class writing session: At 2:12 p.m., Dr. Sheridan announced that it was writing time. The preservice teachers took out their writing folders and began to write. Dr. Sheridan sat at a table situated in the front of the classroom for the first 7 minutes. She then got up to see Samantha who had a
question earlier regarding her children’s book. Most of the preservice teachers wrote in their writing folders quietly. After 10 minutes of writing time, Dr. Sheridan gave directions to share writing with a partner. Naturally, the noise level in the room elevated as Dr. Sheridan circulated around the room to listen to the works in progress. (field notes, 10/4/2004)

While preservice teachers were allowed to write on topics of their choice during writing time, the expectation remained that each one would produce a children’s book by the end of the semester.

[The children’s book] is like a simulation of what I want them to do in their classes. They have a product they can share with kids. They can feel like a writer. They know what it feels like to write and share their ideas, to have to read it in front of the class. All of those things we want kids to do, I want them to go through so that they can relate to them. Most of them are proud of their books. They hate it all along and then they are happy when they are done. Some of them are real happy all along. They just don’t want to read it out loud in front of the group. (transcripts, 1/20/2005)

Equally important to understand is that the creation of the children’s book is not intended to specifically improve the writing skills of the preservice teachers. “Mostly I think it’ll impact their instruction. I don’t know if it will improve their writing. There’s not that much systematic writing instruction they receive. I never felt that this class was me teaching them how to be a better writer.” (transcripts, 1/20/2005) The culmination of the writing time and the children’s book occurred on November 15, 2004, when each preservice teacher shared their children’s book with the class (field notes, 11/15/2004) –
another statement of these assignments’ importance in Dr. Sheridan’s instructional plan.

Skylar’s children’s book is found in Appendix P.

*Classroom Observation*

Dr. Sheridan included a description of the classroom observation in her syllabus (see Figure 4). Her initial plan included holding one class meeting at a local elementary school so that her preservice teachers could observe writing teachers at work.

I’m adding something new: a classroom observation…I haven’t done this for a while…I wanted to maybe go to [a local elementary school] and find 3-4 writing teachers, whether they are teaching spelling or teaching writing. Split the group into 3 groups and have them rotate between teachers. Then they’ll have to write a reflection paper on that. (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

When Dr. Sheridan cancelled one class due to potential hurricane evacuations, she eliminated this assignment from the course syllabus.

3. **Classroom Observation (5%)**

Towards the end of the semester, I will arrange for the class to conduct focused observations of writing teachers. After each observation, you will complete a written reflection of what you have learned.

Figure 4. Description of classroom observation assignment from Dr. Sheridan’s course syllabus.

*Quizzes and Final Exam*

Dr. Sheridan’s description of the quizzes and final exam in her syllabus is shown in Figure 5. Dr. Sheridan drew upon her past experience when deciding to administer weekly quizzes in place of reflections on the readings. “I give quizzes on the readings
every week and a final. I used to have reflection logs. Then I found they were really superficial and they weren’t reading them anyway. So I just give quizzes.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

Figure 5. Description of quizzes and final exam from Dr. Sheridan’s course syllabus.

Dr. Sheridan administered six quizzes over the course of the semester. They occurred on September 20, 2004, September 27, 2004, October 4, 2004, October 11, 2004, November 1, 2004, and November 22, 2004. When a quiz was given, it occurred immediately after Dr. Sheridan took attendance. She returned the previous week’s quiz while the preservice teachers took the current quiz. The quizzes averaged nine questions in length and questions were either short answer, multiple choice, or true/false. Dr. Sheridan decided to allow preservice teachers to drop one quiz when a large percentage of the students were absent on September 27, 2004, due to the threat of Hurricane Jeanne. The results from the administration of the quizzes and the final exam are shown in Table 5.

The preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course took the 72-point final exam on December 7, 2004. They answered multiple choice questions, true-false questions, and one short answer question.
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Weekly Assignments

Dr. Sheridan described the weekly assignments in her syllabus (see Figure 6). She elaborated on her course syllabus description and expanded weekly assignments to include some short notice assignments designed to enhance learning. “They’ll have little things along the way. I’ll tell them next week we’ll do…” (transcripts, 8/19/2004) Two cooperative group projects fit this description: one on the elements of narrative writing and the other on expository text structures.

Dr. Sheridan included these two assignments into the semester to vary the delivery method that the preservice teachers experienced over the course of the semester.

Instead of it all coming from me, I like for them to share some of the responsibility…. [The purpose of the assignment is] to reinforce those elements and text structures. Also to have them get up and do the teaching, because if you teach something you remember it, so it is kind of just different than me always up there presenting.” (transcripts, 1/20/2005)

The narrative group activity occurred on October 4, 2004. Dr. Sheridan organized the preservice teachers into groups the previous week and allowed some time in class for
Table 5
Results from Administration of Quizzes and Final Exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quizzes</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>9.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
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<td>Mean</td>
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<td>9.6</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
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<td>9.0</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha⁴</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Quiz 2 occurred on the Monday after the threat of a hurricane caused many area residents to evacuate the area. Overall attendance on this day was low. Natasha missed Quiz 3 due to a prescheduled family trip. Skylar gave no reason for her absence on the day Quiz 3 was administered. ⁴Preservice teachers selected as case study participants.
groups to plan their presentations on their assigned element of narrative writing: plot, setting, characters, theme, or point of view (Tompkins, 2004). The group presentations averaged 11 minutes in length with the longest lasting 16 minutes and the shortest lasting only 5 minutes. An example of a group presentation follows:

Group 1: Plot

Person 1: Explained that plot includes a beginning, middle, and end.

Person 2: Read Elbert’s Bad Word by Audrey Wood.

Person 3: Passed out strips with events from story printed on them.

Person 4: Facilitated an activity – preservice teachers, one at a time, came to the front of the room and categorized the event from the story into beginning, middle, or end.

Dr. Sheridan observed from the side of the room as the activity proceeded and remained an observer until a debate began about whether or not a story can have more than one climax. When no one in the presenting group could answer the question, they looked to Dr. Sheridan for support, which she gave. (field notes, 10/4/2004)

The remaining groups proceeded in a similar fashion with every group member contributing to the presentation.

The expository group presentations occurred on October 18, 2004. Again, Dr. Sheridan organized the preservice teachers into groups the week prior to the presentations and allowed some planning time. She assigned each group a different expository text structure: description, sequence, comparison, cause and effect, or problem and solution (Tompkins, 2004). The expository group presentations averaged 11 minutes in length.
and ranged from 6 minutes up to 13 minutes. An example of a group presentation follows:

Group 3: Cause and Effect

Person 1: Read a short expository book about rainbows.

Person 2: Elicited key words from book and wrote them on board in a cause and effect graphic organizer (sunlight, water, oil, glass, rainbow).

Person 3: Prepared to record the piece of expository cause and effect writing.

Person 4: Facilitated the negotiation of the shared writing.

Resulting writing: Have you ever seen a rainbow and wondered how it was formed? Rainbows are formed as a result of the combination of sunlight and water. The light reflects off the water displaying a spectrum of colors. Therefore, rainbows can be seen in patches of oil, sprinkles, and fish tanks. (field notes, 11/18/2004)

While these assignments were not completed for an individual grade, preservice teachers had to be in class on the day of the activity to benefit from their completion and receive credit.

Use of Class Time for Class Routines and Assignments

In addition to course assignments, Dr. Sheridan established class routines to help create a writing environment that contributed to belief development of the preservice teachers. Dr. Sheridan is organized. “I’m usually overly prepared. I have everything there.” (transcripts, 1/20/2005) The class routines were an extension of her organized nature. She began each class by taking attendance, an activity that after the first weeks
Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development

gradually took only one minute. When a quiz was given, it occurred immediately after attendance. Following the quiz, Dr. Sheridan typically shared information with her students by either lecturing or facilitating small group activities. This portion of class also incorporated modeling of a shared writing or a writing strategy. Class typically concluded with in-class writing time and a read aloud. Dr. Sheridan described the routine of the class in this way, “So the class is set up [like this]: it starts off with I’ll lecture or involve them in activities. Then the end is the writing time.” (transcripts, 8/19/2004)

Dr. Sheridan is not a lecture person because “it is better to have things come from them.” (transcripts, 1/20/2005) An analysis of the use of class time (see Table 6) revealed that she utilized 31% of class time for lecture purposes and 20% of class time for group activities. She made a conscious effort at the beginning of the semester to increase the amount of modeling she did for the preservice teachers. Dr. Sheridan modeled for the preservice teachers on seven different days for 6% of class time. On three different days, She modeled a shared writing for her preservice students. The other four instances of modeling included Dr. Sheridan showing her planning for a children’s book, showing examples of expository books, sharing the children’s book she wrote in college, and revisiting a previous shared writing in published form.

Dr. Sheridan also placed great emphasis on establishing a routine of reading aloud each class meeting. She read aloud to the preservice teachers at least once and sometimes twice in 11 of the 12 class meetings observed. The only class that did not include read alouds read by Dr. Sheridan occurred on November 15, 2004, when all preservice teachers read their children’s book for the class. When Dr. Sheridan read aloud at the end
Table 6.

Use of class time in the writing methods course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example of Type of Activity</th>
<th>Number of Minutes</th>
<th>Percentage Of Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Related Activities</td>
<td>Writing Apprehension Test</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing Orientation Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Alouds</td>
<td><em>Sick</em> by Shel Silverstein</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Gas We Pass</em> by Shinta Cho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks</td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>Shared Writing</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Book Sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Time</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<td>Explanation of Assignments</td>
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<td>Group Activities</td>
<td>Narrative Group Presentations</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Expository Group Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shared Writing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Writing Process</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. Number of minutes based upon observations made during 12 out of 13 class meetings.
of class, her selections tended to be poetry. When she read aloud at other times during class the book selections introduced the topic identified in the course syllabi or served as an example of the genre she introduced that class. For example, on August 30, 2004, Dr. Sheridan read *Leo the Late Bloomer* (Kraus, 1971) to introduce her lecture on children’s writing development, and on September 20, 2004, she read *Many Luscious Lollipops: A Book About Adjective* (Heller, 1989) before she modeled a shared writing experience to compose a descriptive paragraph. Read alouds occurred consistently throughout the semester, but occupied only 5% of class time.

**THE CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

The primary purpose of this study was to create unique case studies based upon the experiences of preservice teachers learning to teach writing. I selected three preservice teachers as case study participants based upon their initial writing apprehension level and their initial writing orientation: Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha.

**Skylar**

The first day of class, Skylar sat at a table right next to the door. She dressed in tight blue jeans, a little pink top, matching pink flip-flops, and a sparkle studded pink belt. Her nails and toes were polished to match. Skylar was a 21-year-old African American female in her junior year in the College of Education.

I selected Skylar as a case study participant because selection instruments indicated that she possessed moderately apprehensive feelings about her own writing and held an eclectic-orientation toward writing instruction. While her responses on the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) indicated that she possessed moderately apprehensive feelings about her own writing, she revealed highly...
apprehensive feelings toward her own writing during the initial case study interview. Therefore, during the analyses of data, I viewed Skylar as an apprehensive writer. The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey indicated that she held eclectic-orientation toward writing instruction at the onset of this study, a tendency confirmed in her initial case study interview.

*Family Background: “My mother’s side is very strong in education.”*

Skylar’s decision to become a teacher was heavily influenced by her mother’s beliefs about teaching and the strong family history of careers in education on her mother’s side of the family. “I mean, we really honestly didn’t have a choice. My mom was like you are always guaranteed a job. They have had me around kids forever. My first job was at a daycare when I was eleven. So she pushed me into it.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) While she felt pushed into education, she also felt fortunate that she does like teaching and loves children, “I actually like it (both laugh). I love children. When my sister used to teach, I would sit in her classes. It is something that I do want to do.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

Skylar’s family ties to the educational field run deep. “My mother’s side is very strong in education.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) Her mother, her sister, her maternal grandmother, and her maternal grandfather hold advanced graduate degrees in education and have had long careers in the field of education.

*Educational History: “I bumped schools a lot.”*

Skylar described her own educational history as “bumpy.” She attended three different elementary schools, three different middle schools, one high school, and is currently attending her second college. These “bumps” resulted primarily from school
boundary changes and the school district’s racial desegregation plan, not from family moves.

*Learning to Write: “Making the a’s right, making the b’s right.”*

In elementary school, learning to write for Skylar meant handwriting, book making, and assigned writing experiences. “In elementary, it just focused on just writing. Making the a’s right, making the b’s right. It was never like doing complete sentences or making sense of what you are saying. They just focused on handwriting. A lot of handwriting.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) While opportunities to create books of her own did exist during her elementary school experience, these memories were an aside in her discussion rather than the focus of her talk about learning to write in elementary school.

At Ryco Elementary School, we had to create our own books. I have four of my own children’s books that I made back at home…I did so much when I was younger because our schools in the library you could make your own book and put the cloth cover over it, stuff like that, do your own illustrations. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Skylar also recalled “a lot of assigned writing.” (transcripts 12/16/2004) She brought up the topic of assigned writing versus being able to self-select writing topics in all three of her interviews.

When specifically asked if she had ever been taught to organize her writing, she recalled an elementary teacher named Mrs. Michael who taught her to organize her writing. She admitted that she still uses the organizational strategy of writing a purpose statement, supporting details, and then the conclusion when she writes papers today.
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(transcripts, 12/16/2004) She recalled the focus of her high school English classes as primarily reading.

Really, honestly, it [high school writing instruction] didn’t entail a lot. I think that is why I lacked a lot of writing skills by the time I did get to college. I don’t remember the teachers being that good or anything. We didn’t do a lot of writing. We did a lot of Shakespeare and a lot of reading. We did do a lot of movies. That was the high school teachers’ escape. Oh, we are reading Othello, let’s read half of the book and watch the movie, then take the test. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

Skylar also pointed to her high level of involvement in extracurricular activities as a source of interference in her English education.

I was really involved. So the times I was in class, you know I wasn’t interested. I was a varsity cheerleader, SGA [Student Government Association], I did everything in high school. There was always somewhere I had to go or something I had to do during school time. So I wasn’t really there in the classroom. Then my father died when I was a junior, so I really fell back in school. I didn’t even think I was going to graduate on time.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

She did graduate from high school on time and went on to college.

Writing Apprehension: “Writing’s just never been an interest of mine.”

Skylar did not reveal confidence in her own writing abilities. At the beginning of the semester, Skylar’s score of 59 on a scale of 20-100 on the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) placed her in the moderately apprehensive category. However, her interviews revealed a much higher level of writing apprehension. Skylar’s lack of
confidence in her writing abilities, the infrequency with which she wrote, and her general attitude toward writing indicated that she was a highly apprehensive writer.

Writing’s just never been an interest of mine. Like I think people who write outside of home have a hard time expressing their feelings on a daily basis. I think that people who write all the time have that problem. Whereas for me, I don’t. I express them verbally. I’m not the type to sit at home and write to myself, for what? (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

As a result of her writing apprehension, Skylar did not report writing often unless required to do so. “I really don’t do any outside writing because I am taking so many credit hours, everything is pertaining to school. Nothing is for me. I don’t even make out a grocery list. It is all like up here.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

When asked about maintaining a calendar or lists of any sort, she commented, I write something down on a sheet of paper, I’m not going to remember where I put it or I’ll lose it. My work schedule, I have to memorize it ‘cause I’m not going to know. Sometimes I have to call my job and ask, ‘Do I have to come and work today?’ I can’t remember.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

Skylar did carry a Blackberry communication device that combined a cell phone and a personal digital assistant (PDA) that allowed her to text message anytime she wanted. (field notes, 12/16/2004)

Sklyar told several stories about her lack of confidence in her own writing abilities. For example, during high school, she enrolled in a dual enrollment English course at the community college, but dropped the course when she realized how much
writing was required. In college, she enrolled in a pre-English course to help her get on the college level with her writing skills before enrolling in freshman English.

I took a pre-English class because I didn’t think I was ready for freshman English. And that really prepared me a lot. I don’t think I was ready to get on that level for college yet. You know they got back to the grammar. Things that I wasn’t familiar with. We didn’t do the pronouns and nouns and verbs. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

She laughed when she shared that her mother also had poor writing skills. “My mom…is a terrible writer. I can’t get her to really go through my papers because we make the same mistakes. I am a terrible speller and when we are typing and we are just terrible at writing period.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004). By the end of the semester, Skylar’s score of 51 on the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) indicated that she was slightly more apprehensive about her own writing but remained at the moderately apprehensive level established for this study. Just as had happened at the beginning of the semester, Skylar’s score on the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) did not match the level of apprehension she revealed in her in-depth interviews. Skylar’s increase in writing apprehension contrasted with the overall class results that showed 12 of 16 preservice teachers with slightly less apprehension about their own writing by the end of the semester.

*Skylar’s Writing Process: “I just type, type, type.”*

Skylar’s writing process includes composing on the computer and editing as she goes along. She does not like to re-read her work when she is finished with a piece of writing.
My writing strategy is basically, really the same. I’ve gotten extremely lazy when I’m on the computer. Because I just type, type, type, and I always just think that the computer is going to check my errors. I have to remember that it’s just doing the spell check. It’s not actually checking if it’s a fragment or a run-on or if I’m missing a or missing an here or there. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

She prefers to give her written work to a co-worker, a fellow student assistant in the Measurement Department at the University and someone she identified as a talented writer, to edit and revise her work. Skylar identified her grandfather as the only person she knew to be a good writer. “He was very critical. He wanted every sentence to be perfect.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

Skylar enjoys writing when she can choose her own topic. [I like] when I can write about what I want to write about. Like when we were, whenever we were last in class, she [Dr. Sheridan] said start writing the story you want to write. I like that. I like when I don’t have a topic because then I have to sit up there and think about what I want to write. It becomes to where I just start writing about a kid wanting a swimming pool. I had a whole story going about this little boy who wanted to be popular in his neighborhood. He begged his parents. He had to think of different ways to convince his parents that he wanted a swimming pool. I didn’t have to write on anybody else’s terms but mine. Being told what to write about is like writing on somebody else’s terms. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)
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Answering the Research Questions

Any development of Skylar’s beliefs about writing and writing instruction, explicitly stated or inferred through interviews, occurred within the framework of her prior experiences. The preceding information on Skylar builds a description within which to understand Skylar in relation to the two research questions guiding this study: How do preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing develop while enrolled in an elementary writing methods course? and What episodes do preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and writing instruction?

Development of Skylar’s Beliefs About Writing and Writing Instruction

Completing the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey (see Appendix B), responding to 3 student writing samples at the beginning and end of the semester, and answering questions included during the in-depth interviews allowed the development of Skylar’s beliefs about writing and writing instruction to emerge.

At the beginning of the semester, Skylar showed little ability to discriminate among the writing teachers’ behaviors. She identified 13 of the 15 teacher behaviors on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey as effective, making her orientation eclectic (see Table 7). At the end of the semester, Skylar again considered all of the process-oriented statements effective, while selecting only 6 of 10 product statements effective, moving her closer to process orientation of writing instruction and closer to the orientation of Dr. Sheridan (see Table 8).
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Skylar’s responses to the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey told only part of the story. Her responses during the 3 in-depth case study interviews reveal further details about her belief development.

Table 7.
Initial Writing Instruction Orientation Designations of Case Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rater 1</th>
<th>Rater 2</th>
<th>Rater 3</th>
<th>Consensus</th>
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<tr>
<td>Skylar</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Consensus orientation based upon numerical ratings and written explanations given by preservice teachers. *Initial case study data revealed Natasha’s initial writing orientation to be eclectic.

*Responding to students’ novel ideas.* Over the course of the semester, Skylar faced several situations designed to reveal the development of her beliefs about writing and writing instruction. By responding to the situations at the beginning and end of the semester, specific changes in her thinking were revealed that indicate her developing understanding of writing and writing instruction related to responding to students’ novel ideas, responding to student questions, and teaching organizing in writing.
Table 8.

Final Writing Instruction Orientation Designations of Case Study Participants

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<td>Samantha</td>
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Skylar responded to a student writing sample (see Figure 7). In her initial case study interview, all of Skylar’s comments focused on transcription errors. “I don’t think he’s real sure about sentences. Like he doesn’t hear the vowel in friend. You can tell he’s sounding it out. pic-nic, things like that.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) She included words and phrases in her response, such as sounding it out, missing vowel, spelling, incomplete sentences, and where the vowels go. At the end of the semester, the focus of Skylar’s comments shifted from transcription errors to content and structure. “It all stays on the same frame point, the picnic. She has some sentence structure problems, and some spelling, but as far as getting her main idea across, I can understand where she is trying to go with the paper.” (transcripts 12/16/2004)

Skylar’s comments at the beginning and end of the semester indicate that she sees her role as a writing teacher to be one of an editor, making sure that everyone knows the rules. “I think the best thing to do would be to go line by line with him.” (transcripts,
9/8/2004) In both interviews, Skylar proposed to address the quotation problem that Jessie is experiencing with the entire class because Jessie “probably isn’t the only student that writes like this.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) By the end of the semester, she indicated a shift in the manner in which she would address the topic with the class by suggesting that she might conduct a “mini-lesson on it and showing them different ways they could introduce characters into the story.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) The “line by line” strategy was missing in her end of semester interview, possibly due to the shift in focus from transcription errors to content and structure.

When confronted with the task of evaluating Jessie’s writing during her initial interview, Skylar “[felt] sorry for him [Jessie] as a third grade writer.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) She wouldn’t grade it “because if this is a paper he really put effort in she would tell him to go back and re-do it.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) She felt the grade she would give the paper would be too bad and “it would hurt his confidence.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004)
9/8/2004) She did finally give in to her hesitancy and commit to giving the paper a “D” because he did try. In contrast to these beginning of semester comments, Skylar’s evaluation of Jessie’s work at the end of the semester differed greatly. Skylar did not hesitate in her final interview to give the paper a grade. “I would give it a B so that he knew there were still some grammar things to work on, but the idea was good.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Responding to student questions. In this portion of the interview, Skylar was asked how she would respond to a second grade student question (see Figure 8). Skylar’s responses in both the initial and final case study interview were nearly identical. In both cases, she indicated that she would ask the student to “read the sentence out loud using both of the words” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) or “have the student look at both words and say it to themselves aloud and read it.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) In both interviews, Skylar found this task troubling, saying the sentence with each verb in it several times to herself before attempting to give what she thought was the correct answer. She thought that singular and plural might have something to do with it, but neither of her responses to the student included instruction as to the correct usage of singular and plural verbs. Her response to the student relied on a say it to yourself/sound right strategy.

A second grade student asks you whether to use “is” or “are” in the following sentence:

None of the books _____ in the library.

Figure 8. Second grade student question utilized during the initial and final case study interviews.
Teaching organizing in writing. The final task presented to Skylar asked her to respond to a paper from a 4th grade student (see Figure 9). Skylar’s response to this piece of writing during her initial interview focused on the lack of “flow.” Further discussion revealed that she was referring to lack of organization when one sentence isn’t connected to the previous sentence. While the discussion alluded to the idea of organization, she did not use the vocabulary to describe it in that way.

Make the sentences flow or connect more together…Like dolphins are really not fish. The next sentence doesn’t really go together. Dolphins are really not fish. Dolphins breathe in air. This person needs to know how to connect the sentences more. I would actually want to sit down personally and go line by line and try to create a structure for the paper. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

In this case, Skylar appears to use the word “flow” to refer to the organization of the piece or the sentence fluency.

In her final interview, Skylar referred to the problems with this same piece of writing in this way,

She is going on the same flow…In the introduction is fine but the supporting facts are kind of out of whack. The structure is kind of off, but she knows what she is talking about. I think she has her facts down. You know, she doesn’t have a lot of spelling errors or anything like that. It’s just that the structure of the writing is kind of off. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)
Skylar’s use of “flow” at the beginning of the semester seemed to refer to the organization of the piece or the sentence fluency; her comments regarding “flow” at the end of the semester seemed to refer only to the organization of the piece. Skylar did not comment on the paragraphing in the paper, and she only commented about the spelling errors as an afterthought in her final interview. This is in contrast to her response to Jessie’s story when she held a very narrow view of Jessie’s writing proficiency by judging it based upon the spelling errors and improper sentence construction.

**Overall belief development.** Overall, Skylar did exhibit some development in her beliefs about writing and writing instruction. Her responses on the Writing Instruction...
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Orientation Survey indicated that she became more critical of the product-oriented teacher behaviors at the end of the semester, indicating that she developed a more process-oriented approach to writing and writing instruction. Her interviews also revealed some belief development. In her final interview, she used words such as mini-lesson, organization, and structure, indicating that she is beginning to develop her ability to talk about her emerging process-oriented beliefs. The growth she experienced in her ability to utilize vocabulary associated with the craft of writing is limited, however. Her use of the word “flow” at the beginning and end of the semester and use of phrases such as “out of wack” at the end of the semester are examples of words and phrases that reveal that her grasp of author’s craft language is limited.

Significant Episodes in Belief Development

In her mid-semester case study interview, Skylar identified no significant episodes in the writing methods course that profoundly impacted her understanding of teaching writing. She indicated that “[Dr. Sheridan] doesn’t give us a lot of work. I feel like it’s repetitive, like stuff I already know.” (transcripts, 10/18/2004) At the time of the mid-semester interview, the only assignments that Skylar had completed were the weekly reading and corresponding quizzes. Regardless, by mid-semester, Skylar did not independently identify any part of the course that had made an impact on her belief development.

When prompted about specific classroom routines, Skylar articulated the purpose of three specific classroom practices and assignments in a manner that mirrored Dr. Sheridan’s thinking: read alouds, modeling of shared writing, and in-class writing time. According to Skylar, the reason Dr. Sheridan frequently read aloud was
just to incorporate books in lessons. You can read a story about such and such, so I mean I think that’s how all the professors want to get it into your head. Okay you need to incorporate reading into every lesson some way or another.

(transcripts, 10/18/2004)

Skylar believed Dr. Sheridan’s frequent modeling of shared writing during class was good because I’m a visual kind of person. You need to show me what you want me to do. It is better to show me than to tell me because I want to see exactly how you want it done. That’s how I feel. It is so much better. I think it is so much better to do it that way. I have a better understanding. I’m like oh okay that’s how you want it done. (transcripts, 10/18/2004)

Her interpretation of the amount of time Dr. Sheridan dedicated to allowing the preservice teachers to write each week was aligned with Dr. Sheridan’s purposes, including Dr. Sheridan’s non-curricular purpose of allowing time to complete the children’s book in class for those students who procrastinate.

[She lets us write in class each week] because she knows we won’t do it at home. I think she really wants to emphasize that writing is important in her class. It’s not just about learning the techniques. It’s actually doing it. That’s what I like. I would set aside time for doing that. Because if you tell them to go home and do it, 9 times out of 10 it’s not going to happen. After you teach a lesson, the creative juices are flowing right now because they have learned something new. Oh, I can write a story about such and such. Since I know what it is now. She has read us a book. I feel like hey, I can write a story just like that or something like that. They get more creative once they do it in class. They have no choice to
do it once they are sitting there. They have no choice but to do it. I know when they get home, it’s not going to happen. I don’t even do it now. When I get home tonight, I’m not going to do any homework. Three hours of TV for me tonight. (transcripts, 10/18/2004)

Midway through the semester, Skylar presented a hopeful view of the semester when she commented that, “I really do like [Dr. Sheridan]. I think that if I do have a problem I could sit down with her and say, ‘hey I need help with this and this and this.’ I think I would be more involved in the class once we start making the book.” (transcripts, 10/18/2004)

During the final case study interview, Skylar’s attitude toward her belief development changed. Just before the final case study interview, Skylar learned that she received a C+ for her work in Dr. Sheridan’s course. As I left Dr. Sheridan’s office after our final interview, Dr. Sheridan revealed that Skylar contacted her via e-mail and requested a conference to review her grades. (field notes, 1/20/2005) According to Dr. Sheridan, Skylar had no idea why she received a grade of a C+ and wanted to meet to discuss her performance. Skylar’s knowledge of her final course grade may have impacted her perception of her work throughout the semester and changed the tone of her final interview. The tone in her mid-semester case study interview was hopeful despite the fact that she had completed little work at that point and therefore had not gained much from the class. Skylar’s demeanor during the final case study interview was reserved and almost defiant when she spoke about the course assignments and routines.

I didn’t walk out of there like WOW I really learned a lot. I didn’t feel that way because everything was group. It was nice that everything was group wise, I
mean yeah, I got a couple of good ideas that I will probably refer back to my book, but as far as comparing to other classes, …the only thing I did that was hands on was making the children’s book. That I actually felt like I was doing something. But as far as the whole class experience, it wasn’t nothing Wow! I’m probably going to forget everything we did in that class. I was expecting a lot more, learning a lot more in that class. But I don’t think I did. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

When probed, Skylar admitted that she thought the “children’s book was the only thing” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) that impacted her understanding of teaching writing. Even while admitting that she learned that “it [writing] is harder than you think,” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) Skylar’s word choice when talking about what she learned by writing a children’s book was qualified,

I guess for us to get a better understanding of children’s understanding. Because we really had to go down to their level and actually write something they would understand instead of writing on our college level. We had to write on a child’s level. I really just got my idea from personal experience and then you know my class. You know in the kindergarten class, all they talked about were these cartoon characters and Dora, and my buddy is coming home with me this weekend and we are going to have a sleepover. My kids loved my story when I read it to them. They didn’t believe that I did it. That’s neat. Everybody wanted to touch on it and stuff. They didn’t believe that I did it. They did not believe me when I said I did it myself at home. “[Skylar] you didn’t do that.” I was like, “yes I did.” But it felt good to show them like look this is something that I did
that I am sharing with you. I like they all created their own books after that.

(transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Skylar produced mixed messages regarding the impact the children’s book assignment had on her belief development. Beginning with “I guess” as a way to downplay the impact the assignment might have had and ending with “it felt good” as a way to reveal a sense of pride in having not only written a children’s book, but also shared it with her students captures the discrepant feelings she shared. Skylar put “a whole week[’s]” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) worth of work into completing her children’s book and when she shared her children’s book in the writing methods class, she introduced it by saying, “I read this to my class [of kindergarteners]. They didn’t believe I made it.” (field notes, 11/15/2004) The reserved message from Skylar was that the children’s book might have been the only thing that made a difference in her understanding of teaching writing. Later in the final case study interview, Skylar returned to her reserved opinion regarding the impact of her work on the children’s book by stating, “I don’t really understand the necessary point of us making a children’s book. Didn’t really get it.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) Skylar indicated that the children’s book project may have been the only thing that impacted her beliefs; her understanding of the rationale for the assignment aligned with Dr. Sheridan’s intent; she put a significant amount of effort into producing a quality children’s and shared the final product with the children in the class where she interned; yet she sandwiched any positive impact the experience may have had on her beliefs with statements that downplayed the assignment’s importance. Skylar’s statements, when taken in combination with her actions indicate that the assignment may have had a larger impact on her development
than she was willing to share. The children’s book assignment, a semester long writing project that required her to take an idea through the entire writing process, did not lessen her overall apprehension about writing.

Just as had occurred in discussions about the children’s book assignment at the end of the semester, Skylar required some prompting in order to discuss the impact of the shared writing assignment on her belief development. She indicated in her mid-semester case study interview that she felt the shared writing assignment might impact her belief development when she got to do it. By the end of the semester, Skylar required encouragement to discuss her experiences regarding the shared writing assignments.

Teaching writing isn’t easy. Not easy at all…I realized that even if we do a shared writing or guided writing activity, there is still going to be those students who don’t understand. [When I did the shared writing in kindergarten] some students still didn’t have a clue to what was going on. You had some students who were spelling out words for me. They were telling me how to spell. Then others were just like. I had one girl who put up her hand who was like I don’t know what’s going on. I was like Wow! I have to figure out a way for everyone to understand. So, I learned that this is not going to be easy. I was like wow! What else am I supposed to do? Like I was stuck in a pickle, cause I thought I was doing it the easiest way possible and I still had students who didn’t understand. What do I do now? (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Skylar was animated in her conversation about the shared writing experience with her kindergarten children. After realizing how difficult shared writing was, Skylar discussed the experience with her supervising teacher. “I did it twice because I did it first
by myself, then she [supervising teacher] did one after me to help me improve on it and then I did it again. Then for my intern teacher to be like I’m going to do one tomorrow and then I’ll show you how I do it. Then you can do one the next day and you can put two and two together.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Throughout the semester, Skylar expressed doubt that kindergartners could be taught to write. “Kindergarten, they aren’t writing. Well, we try to do a little spelling. You know writing letters, writing numbers. We try to do a little spelling as much as possible. The only writing they do is writing letters.” (transcripts, 10/18/2004) Skylar’s beliefs regarding emergent writing surfaced again in class during a discussion of the shared writing assignment.

Skylar: I’m [interning in] kindergarten. They are just learning letters. How can they even do this?

Dr. Sheridan: They can speak and you do all the writing.

Skylar: But it’s a management problem.

Dr. Sheridan: You can just write three sentences or so. What is your strategy?

Skylar: They’re doing everything, mostly letters.

Dr. Sheridan: So, pick an animal with that letter and write 3 sentences.

(field notes, 10/25/2004)

Again in her final interview, Skylar reflected on her initial feelings about the shared writing assignment, “How am I going to do this with kindergarten? I was like how am I going to do this with them?” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) In reference to her second shared writing experience in her kindergarten class, she shared, “I think the last time I did it I was successful at it. But to feel comfortable doing it with such a young group, I would
want more practice.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) Despite the resistance on Skylar’s part that the shared writing experience had an impact on her belief development, she was persistent in completing the assignment and her perception of emergent writers did evolve over the course of her work on this assignment.

When asked how she will respond to a principal interviewing her for a job who wants to know what her philosophy of writing instruction is, Skylar did not include any of the course assignments or routines in her answer.

My philosophy of teaching writing is that every child has the ability to write and I will go to every measure to make sure that each child leaves the classroom with the understanding of how to make a structured sentence, how to do a free write, expository writing, narrative writing. That I will be that teacher that lays out lessons for each category and make sure that each student has a full understanding by the end of the year and probably expand on different ways that I would do it. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Skylar’s response includes some important ideas about the nature of learning. It lacks any specificity regarding writing instruction. She chose language such as category instead of genre indicating a novice level of awareness of the language of the author’s craft.

Natasha

Natasha wore blue jeans, a t-shirt and a blue sweatshirt that she left unzipped. She wore her brown shoulder length hair in a ponytail and carried her backpack over her shoulder as she entered the room on the second day of class. She immediately saw a group of girls she recognized and sat next to them. The bond that held this group of girls
together throughout the entire semester was their common experience in the writing methods course and a second course that they all had together during this same semester. Natasha is a 24-year-old Latina female who, in the fall of 2004, was taking the writing methods course as a non-degree seeking student. Her official admittance into the College of Education began in the spring 2005.

I selected Natasha as a case study participant because she possessed moderately apprehensive feelings about her own writing and a product orientation toward writing instruction at the onset of this study. I based the determination that she held a product orientation toward writing instruction upon consensus from the raters that her low agreement to process oriented statements, 2 of 5, and the moderate agreement with product oriented teacher behaviors, 5 of 10, placed her in this range. Throughout Natasha’s initial case study interview, evidence surfaced that indicated her actual writing instruction orientation fell in the eclectic range rather than product. For the remainder of this discussion, I considered Natasha a moderately apprehensive writer who held an eclectic orientation toward writing instruction.

*Family Background: “I come from a Hispanic family.”*

Natasha was born and raised in the same town in which the University is located. She has a rich cultural heritage. Spanish was her first language, but she is currently not very fluent in it. “My parents both speak English. My mother speaks better Spanish than my father. My mother can do both, like she will go back and forth. She’ll throw out Spanish when I’m in trouble.” (transcripts 10/18/2004) “But with my grandmother, Spanish. She speaks Spanish to me. If I can answer her back, I’ll speak it; if not, I’ll
answer her in English. (both laugh) Depends on the mood.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

Natasha is a third generation American on her mother’s side of the family.

My mom was born and raised here [United States]. My mom is second generation. My mother’s parents were born and raised here [United States], but their parents came over from Cuba….My mom graduated from high school. That was the extent of her education. She started out as a travel agent and worked her way up to be a trainer in the travel agency. She worked for Eastern for years. Then they laid her off when they cut back. Then she worked as a travel agent for a while. Right now she is working as an assistant to the manager of a medical company, which is called CVI. (transcripts 9/8/2004)

Natasha is a second generation American on her father’s side.

My father was born and raised in Tampa. He graduated from USF with a BA, Business Administration. He’s retired but he used to be a general manager for Federal Express. He now works part time at our family bakery. He’s a baker now. (both laugh) He’s an all around kind of guy. My grandfather on my dad’s side comes from Cuba. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

“I have a younger brother who is also in college. He is a sophomore in college. He is going for law.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) When Natasha graduates from college, she will be the second person in her family to do so.

Educational History: “I was figuring out what I wanted to do.”

Natasha characterized her educational history as transient for many reasons.

In elementary school, I bounced around a lot. I went to a lot of private and public schools. Mainly because we moved around in Tampa a lot, so I was in different
districts each time we moved. And then right into 5th and 6th grade, I didn’t like the teacher. We had a conflict, so I moved. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

The organizational patterns of the public schools in Natasha’s area dictated her school changes in middle school and high school. “I went there [Grandy High School] for three years. The way that it worked out, I went to Brody Middle School before and that was a 8th and 9th grade center. Then 10th, 11th and 12th I was at Grandy. I graduated from Grandy.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

Despite the fact that Natasha wanted to be a teacher from a young age, her family discouraged her from pursuing a career in education. Consequently, she completed a course of study in high school that allowed her to work as a Certified Nurses Assistant (CNA).

Then I thought, well, I’ll become a nurse. So, I started out as a nurse. Then it totally wasn’t what I was looking for. I was in the hospital working as a CNA. I didn’t like it at all. So, I went back to what I thought would make me happy. What I thought would make me happy. (emphasis on I)” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

After leaving her position as a CNA, Natasha worked as a receptionist for the Public Water Company.

I actually worked there before I started back in school, so that was my full time job as a receptionist there. I was figuring out what I wanted to do and coming to the conclusion that yeah, teaching is what I want to do. Then when I went to HCC, I worked there full time and went to school part time in the evenings. Then I stopped, I graduated HCC and went to FSU for a semester. I quit there. Now I’m back as a temporary part time. (transcripts 10/18/2004)
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*Learning to Write:* “She [the teacher] would focus more on having perfect handwriting than writing itself.”

Natasha shared many memories of learning to write throughout her school career. All but one of those memories centered around correct handwriting and focus on grammar. One memory she shared from 6th grade described a teacher who stressed handwriting.

She was very strict on the handwriting. So, she would focus more on having perfect handwriting than writing itself. I didn’t like her at all. She was very much a stickler for the rules. It just turned me off completely. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

Later in the interview, she revisited her experience in 6th grade,

It really wasn’t done with grammar or content, it was more of the handwriting, which I didn’t like because I was like tell me what I’m doing that I need help with. I know my r’s don’t have that point. I know my a’s don’t have that little loop. Just give me a focus. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

In contrast, her 5th grade teacher acted more as a writing coach.

In 5th grade though, I had a wonderful teacher. She gave us a project to do. Like a poetry project that we had to do. We had to write our own poems and collect poems from our favorite authors. We put them together in a book. She helped us with our writing. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

I do remember that we would conference with her a lot which was kind of weird because I thought that was something you do recently, you know what I mean like it just came about instead of way back then. (both laugh) I remember talking with
her, sitting down and having little conferences and like okay this is what we’ve done and um she said I had a spacing problem. (transcripts, 10/18/2004)

Natasha took regular English courses in high school until her senior year. “I took senior English that was required to graduate. Plus I took English on the college level that would transfer over from the community college. I took English 1 & 2 that way.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) Other than a bad experience with a physical education teacher teaching English, she did not have any memories of writing in high school.

Natasha experienced varied philosophies while learning to write. One extreme being exposure to teachers who emphasized correct formation of letters; the other extreme being exposure to a teacher who acted as a coach and allowed opportunities to publish student writing.

**Writing Apprehension:** “I was never a big fan of writing.”

At the beginning of the semester, Natasha’s score of 52 on a scale of 20-100 on the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) placed her in the moderately apprehensive category. She claims that she loves reading, but “was never a big fan of writing.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) Most of her talk about her writing habits indicated that she does use writing often in her life. She makes a distinction between her feelings about writing for school and her feelings about writing for herself.

I keep a journal for my own thoughts on line. Kind of like my own private thing. Sometimes I go back and re-read the things I’m saying. If I’m not thinking about ‘this has to be perfect and this has to be this that and the other,’ some of the stuff that comes out is, you know, good. Wow! I can’t believe I did that. I think it is more of the anxiety of ‘this has to be perfect.’ I don’t want to sound like an idiot.
So, that’s what I think trips me up a little bit. I need to just let go and write and then go back and touch up a little bit. It’s there, I just need to follow that. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

She holds disparate feelings regarding writing for personal reasons and writing for school. “I’ve been doing poems. I do a journal every once and awhile. I make lists all the time. I am a list person. I have 65 lists going on at the same time.” (transcripts 12/15/2004) However, writing papers for school is a chore for Natasha, “I don’t like writing papers, just 5, 6, 7, 8 page papers. You know because I’m jumbled, I don’t know where to start and finish. What to put in the middle?” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) Natasha’s purposeful use of writing in her personal life is not indicative of her confidence in her writing ability. In fact, her lack of confidence in her own writing skills created a high level of anxiety just showing up for a class with writing in the title.

Well at first, I was not so much nervous, but kind of like anxious. Because, like I said, I didn’t think I was a very good writer. I think it was just the actual subject that was going to be taught and how to teach it. I know that I wasn’t a very big fan of writing. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

Natasha’s writing apprehension score changed little over the course of the semester. Despite the fact that she wrote during the writing methods course and published an original piece of her own writing in a children’s book format, her writing apprehension score of 56 at the end of the semester revealed that she was only slightly less apprehensive toward her own writing abilities.
Natasha’s Writing Process: “With writing it’s mostly right then and there.”

Natasha’s writing process differs as the purpose of the writing changes. When writing for herself, her ideas seem to flow freely.

With writing it’s mostly right then and there. I don’t like plan out anything. It just kind of like what comes out springs…I kind of write to where I come to a point where I can’t then I look at what I am doing. And see what I can take out and put in and fix. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

When she writes a research paper or when the audience is someone other than herself, Natasha has less confidence in her writing skills.

With research, that is actually one of my most difficult because I like find all this information and it’s so good, it’s all good information. I’m like where do I start? Where do I begin? I do kind of pull from here and there and write around that. It is just getting to that point where I say how do I use that, how do I not. I find something really good, so how do I put it in other words. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

She is a procrastinator. “I do wait until the very last minute. I work well under pressure, I think. But I also put a lot of stress on myself. So, what I think is no good at all, usually turns out to be that’s really good.” (transcripts, 10/18/2004) Her strategy for revision under these time-pressured situations reflects the quickness of her composing process.

I can do it all in the span of 24 hours, but I just need like a break. I’m going to take a step back and see and give it to somebody and have them look at and say this may good if you put it over here or if you add a little bit onto this. Because I
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tend to throw it together with the different ideas I have, it kind of doesn’t flow as well. (transcripts, 10/18/2004)

Natasha identified two people in her life that she considered good writers. During her first case study interview, she paused when the question was asked, but identified Stacy, a former roommate, as a good writer who “is very good at elaborating and making the words fit and making you sound smarter than you are.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) Natasha commented that Stacy’s writing was “elegant. The way she could word something. It was so, like WOW! You know.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) During her final case study interview, she identified her aunt who works in advertising as a “pretty good writer.” (transcripts, 12/15/2004) Natasha’s aunt can create “a whole campaign that is witty. Like oh WOW. That would take me like an hour and a half to come up with something like that and she’s like how about that? Yeah, that’s cool.” (transcripts, 12/15/2004) She views her aunt as a good writer because she is very creative. Natasha identified both of these people as good writers because of the content of their writing, whether it was being able to elaborate or being creative in the writing process.

Answering the Research Questions

Any development of Natasha’s beliefs about writing and writing instruction, explicitly stated or inferred through interviews, occurred within the framework of her prior experiences. The preceding information on Natasha builds a description within which to understand Natasha in relation to the two research questions guiding this study: How do preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing develop while enrolled in an elementary writing methods course? and What episodes do
preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and writing instruction?

Development of Natasha’s Beliefs About Writing and Writing Instruction

Natasha’s belief development as recorded through the series of three in-depth interviews and through classroom observations differs significantly from her development revealed in the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey. Natasha completed the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey (see Appendix B) and responded to three student writing samples at the beginning and end of the semester. The following description of the development of Natasha’s beliefs about writing and writing instruction emerged from all sources of data.

Natasha’s responses on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey describe a transformation (see Appendix D). Initially, she identified 5 of 10 product-focused statements effective, while identifying only 2 of 5 process-oriented statements effective (see Table 7). Natasha’s initial responses identified her as having a product-orientation. This product orientation was negotiated between the scorers. Two of the three raters initially considered her responses eclectic; however, after discussion, the scorers agreed to rate her response as product focused because of the justifications she gave for her responses to the Writing Instruction Orientation Test and the ratio of product to process oriented statements she identified as effective. Later interview data did reveal that her initial writing instruction orientation was best described as eclectic rather than product. Throughout the analysis of data, I considered Natasha a preservice teacher with an eclectic orientation toward writing instruction. By the end of the semester, her responses reversed, marking all 5 process-oriented statements effective and only 3 of 10 product-
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 oriented statements effective (see Table 8). Her final writing orientation closely matches that of the instructor.

By responding to the situations at the beginning and end of the semester, changes in her thinking revealed her developing understanding of writing and writing instruction related to responding to students’ novel ideas, responding to student questions, and teaching organizing in writing.

*Responding to students’ novel ideas.* When asked to respond to Jessie’s writing sample (see Figure 7) during her initial case study interview, Natasha immediately composed a response that praised Jessie and focused on the content of the writing.

I would praise her because she did a very good job. “Jessie, you did a really great job! This is a really great story and I think maybe kind of elaborate like maybe what were you playing or who were you playing with?” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) Even her probing questions for Jessie focused on improving the content of Jessie’s story. “Kind of like digging a little deeper. Maybe adding a little bit more substance to it. And then telling her kind of asking her, ‘what do you think we could do to fix this a little bit? Do you think it’s perfect or do you think you could work on this a little bit more?’” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) When specifically asked about the spelling errors in the paper, Natasha again phrased her response to show that her emphasis would not be on the perfection of a draft in the initial phases of the writing process. “Not right off the bat, I think I would try to do more of the whole subject trying to get her to content more and then we would work on the spelling errors later.” (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

Natasha shared similar responses in her final case study interview regarding Jessie’s paper.
I would tell her that it is a very good paragraph. Very well written. But ask her what are other things we would do on a picnic? Or what kind of puppy? Do you think? Once I get the details from her then help her put them into the paragraph. [I would] tell her I think about the spelling and stuff like that, but I really wouldn’t put a lot of emphasis on that because I definitely don’t want her to feel like that’s the only major part. I would tell her that, yeah, there are some technical errors, but we can work on that. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

In both interviews, Natasha focused first on the content of the writing, then on the technical aspects of the writing. This is contrary to the response that would be expected from a preservice teacher whose initial responses on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey indicated a product orientation. Her comments do, however, match her process orientation revealed at the end of the semester. Natasha’s responses revealed no change in the way she would respond to Jessie’s novel ideas indicating no development in her beliefs related to this specific task, both times encouraging Jessie to elaborate on the ideas.

Natasha’s responses during the initial case study interview portrayed her role as a teacher when working with Jessie as one who focused on the good in Jessie’s writing so that Jessie would feel proud of her accomplishment. She included phrases, such as “praise her,” “really great job,” and “something she could be proud of in the end,” (transcripts, 9/8/2004) in her comments about working with Jessie.

During the final case study interview, Natasha did not put as much emphasis on a sense of pride in the writing or how Jessie might feel about the process. Instead, during her final case study interview, her responses began by finding out what Jessie saw in her
own writing before addressing content and structural issues with the writing that she
identified. “[I would] ask her what are other things we would do on a picnic? Or what
kind of puppy?” (transcripts, 12/15/2004) When specifically asked about if or how she
would handle the spelling errors, Natasha responded, “I would have her look over and see
which ones she thinks, like I’m sure that she realizes there were a few spelling errors.
Ask her to pick out the ones that she thinks are wrong.” (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

Despite the fact that Natasha’s focus in both case study interviews was on the
content of the writing, her method of working with Jessie evolved over the course of the
semester from primarily being concerned about Jessie’s self-esteem and acting as a
cheerleader to letting Jessie’s existing knowledge guide her revision conversations and
coaching Jessie through the revision. Natasha’s conception of her role as a coach in the
writing process reveals an emerging process orientation toward writing instruction.

*Responding to student questions.* Natasha was asked how she would respond to a
2nd grade student’s question (see Figure 8). Natasha’s responses in both the initial and
final case study interview were nearly identical. Initially, Natasha responded to the
student by asking,

> What sounds better?…None of the books is in the library or none of the books are
in the library and see what he says. And if it’s is, I’d be like okay well then why
would you say that. Letting him answer his own questions, but pointing him in
the right direction. (transcripts, 9/8/2004)

As she did in Jessie’s example, Natasha solicited information from the student
regarding what is already known before providing information. In her final interview,
Natasha phrased the question slightly differently,
I would ask them okay first if we put is in the sentence. I would have them say it and then I’d have them say it with are. Then ask them which one sounds better. Then if they say is, then I’d ask them why does that sound better to you?

(transcripts, 12/15/2004)

Natasha referred to this “Does it sound like something you know you’d say in conversation?” (transcripts, 12/15/2004) strategy as one that she relies upon when she is writing.

Natasha’s response to this student question remained consistent over the course of the semester. Missing from Natasha’s response in this situation was reference to any grammatical rule justifying the use of is or are. She did not attempt to move beyond the “does it sound right” strategy. Natasha’s responses to the student question do not reveal a change in her beliefs regarding responding to student questions.

Teaching organizing in writing. The final task presented to Natasha asked her to respond to a paper from a fourth grade student (see Figure 9). During her initial case study interview, Natasha used phrases such as “making sure it flows,” “make it sound a little better,” “at some points it kind of breaks,” and “jumping from one subject to another” to refer to the organizational difficulties evident in the student writing sample. Her responses revealed her inexperience with the language of the author’s craft. She recognized the lack of organization, but lacked the vocabulary to name organization as the issue.

When prompted to comment about the organization of the dolphin essay during her final case study interview, Natasha did use words such as first and next. Natasha immediately talked about the organization of the paper.
They do have a lot of information about dolphins and stuff like that. It is kind of… the organization might be more in some spots than in others. I would ask them what they want to talk about in the first paragraph. What is it about the dolphins that you want to explain first of all? Then second and see what they can fit into the paragraph to make it sound a little better, to give it a little more umph. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

While this response shows the development of Natasha’s understanding of student writing, her new understanding is limited. When asked to elaborate on “umph,” Natasha responded, “Just a little more you know like instead of saying dolphins are really not fish, explain why. What are their differences? Then point out one difference in that one paragraph.” (transcripts, 12/15/2004) Natasha used the word “umph” to refer to the need to include more details and organization. This response lacks specificity in the use of authors’ craft vocabulary and indicates that Natasha may be in the early stages of acquiring author’s craft language necessary to speak about her emerging beliefs.

*Overall belief development.* At the end of the semester, Natasha identified more process-oriented and fewer product-oriented teacher behaviors as effective on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, indicating that she moved toward a more process-oriented approach to writing and writing instruction. Her development as judged through her responses to three student writing samples can be characterized as developing a limited awareness of the language of the author’s craft. She did not consistently use author’s craft language when responding to student writing or when speaking about her experiences in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course. She also showed development in
the role of the teacher from cheerleader to coach. This development is consistent with
developing process-oriented beliefs about writing and writing instruction.

*Significant Episodes in Natasha's Belief Development*

Natasha’s responses to the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975)
showed her to be moderately apprehensive about her own writing. During her in-depth
interviews, Natasha identified discrepancies in the apprehension she feels toward her
personal writing and the apprehension she feels toward her writing for school. She is
apprehensive about her school writing; she is not apprehensive about writing for her own
personal reasons. Therefore, it is not surprising that upon entering the writing methods
course Natasha was extremely anxious about her participation – this was school writing.
“It [the writing methods course] was one of [my] most anxious classes.” (transcripts,
12/15/2004) Natasha’s anxiety about the course and a simulated timed writing activity
given by Dr. Sheridan during the first class meeting almost scared Natasha into dropping
the course. “She just confirmed my belief before we even get started. I’m dropping it as
soon as I get out of here without even waiting until the end of class. I’m going at break.”
(transcripts, 12/15/2004) Instead of hiding behind her anxiety, Natasha challenged
herself to get the most out of the course she could.

I think the more you personally don’t like something the more that you don’t have
a good grasp on. You practice and practice it. You get better or the better off you
are. If you are weak in one area, do that the most. Then you will see how good
you really are. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

She described the effort she put into preparing for the writing methods course as
significant.
It was pretty high up there because I wanted to do the most that I can, get the most out of it because I didn’t want to come out of it feeling even more anxious than I did when I walked into it. I think the effort helped make me feel better in the end. It was kind of like I was doing this because I had to work on this. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

With that in mind, Natasha identified three significant episodes in the writing methods course that she felt impacted her understanding of writing and writing instruction: the shared writing experience, the narrative and expository group activities conducted in class, and the children’s book project. The day of her mid-semester case study interview, Natasha completed her in-class shared writing. When asked to talk about things she had been thinking about in class, she jumped right into discussing the shared writing experience.

The shared writing that I did in class today was very stressful for me last night for me and the night before, the couple nights. I was not [in class] because of the hurricane. I was not in town, so I kind of got stuck with generalization. Not my favorite, but we’ll deal with it. At first I thought no big deal, I’ve got this. Then I really looked into it and thought I have no idea. It was kind of like for me, I was like oh, what are you going to do, sit down, focus…It’s like okay. What am I going to do? (transcripts, 10/18/2004)

By the end of the semester, Natasha’s comfort level in conducting shared writing lessons with children dramatically improved. “I feel comfortable, a little bit better than I did before with shared writing and getting [the children’s] ideas.” (transcripts,
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12/15/2004) She attributes this comfort level to having the opportunity to apply what she learned in class during her shared writing experience with children in a real-life situation. Just the fact that I did it once. It wasn’t the best in the world, but I didn’t think it was going to be. It was actually better than I thought it was going to be. I had a group of little kids from my Sunday school. They were pretty good, better than I thought they were going to be, not mostly behavior wise, but with the idea they came up with. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

Specifically, Natasha learned that the shared writing strategy can be used with children of all ages. She conducted her shared writing lesson with a group of kindergarten children at her church. While she felt anxious, she gained an appreciation for the capabilities of young writers. Before conducting the shared writing lesson with her group of kindergartners, Natasha did not think she would be able to get the children to participate and sustain the activity.

I was very surprised that [Dr. Sheridan] said you could do it with kindergarten. I was like yeah right, they’re not. I mean I know that I had to do most of the writing and the work, but they gave me the ideas and they told me this is what I want. Oh, put this in and oh don’t forget this. They knew what they wanted, but they knew I was writing for them. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

Surprisingly, Natasha did not include shared writing in her philosophy of writing instruction, her response to a principal about how she will teach writing, or in her perceived three big ideas from the writing methods course. This left some doubt as to the impact these activities truly had on her belief development.
Natasha also identified the narrative and expository group activities conducted during class as significant episodes in her belief development.

The different styles. That was completely new to me. I mean I’ve seen it before but I didn’t know. Comparison and contrast, problem solving and stuff like that, but I didn’t know that that fell under that type of writing. I just didn’t know. That was kind of interesting to me. The different types and different graphic organizers. For me to see that there are other options for me out there. That was kind of cool. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

Natasha discussed the in-class narrative and expository group activities in both her mid-semester and final case study interviews. Despite the importance she placed on these activities in her belief development, the language she used when talking about the experience revealed a novice level of understanding of writing and teaching writing. For example, after a semester in the writing methods course, she referred to genres as styles, despite the use of the word genre both in the text, *Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K- 6* (2004) by Gail Tompkins, and during Dr. Sheridan’s in-class discussions. The terms comparison and contrast and problem-solving appear in *Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6* and arose during in-class activities on October 11, 2004. Natasha’s group shared information related to the problem and solution expository text structure during the October 11, 2004, class meeting. Her application of the language of author’s craft is inconsistent even within the same general topic area of expository writing.

When asked how she would reply to a principal asking about how she planned to teach writing, Natasha replied, “Well, I would tell them that I want to incorporate a lot of
different activities so that it would get them engaged in the subject and not just something they have to do, a chore.” (transcripts, 12/15/2004) In this comment Natasha may be alluding to a connection between the impact the narrative and expository group activities had on her belief development and how that belief will impact her teaching of writing in the future. Again, however, Natasha did not draw upon the author’s craft language that she encountered in the writing methods course to discuss her beliefs.

Natasha identified the children’s book project as a significant episode in her belief development. During her mid-semester case study interview, Natasha quickly identified the children’s book project as important “because of the creative outlet.” (transcripts, 10/18/2004) In class, Dr. Sheridan gave preservice teachers time to write their children’s book each week. While Natasha felt the project as a whole impacted her developing understanding of writing and teaching writing, she did not completely understand Dr. Sheridan’s purpose in making the assignment nor did she fully appreciate the time allotted in class to write.

Well, at first I wasn’t too keen on it because I wasn’t too happy with my book. But, it’s like I get stressed out because in the 15 minutes if I don’t finish something or produce something I kind of feel like…Now I’m letting go. The pressure’s been lifted now because I do have a main idea now and I do have a story. So now it’s kind of like okay I don’t have to. (transcripts, 10/18/2004)

During her end of semester case study interview, Natasha again identified the children’s book as a significant event; however, she had yet to gain a full understanding of the purpose of the assignment.
Just so that we could have something to work on during our writing time, an end product that [I] can say this is something I actually made. If you are writing just to write, it’s like why, why would you do it? If your writing has an end product, then you can say this is what I wrote and then have people look at it and go WOW! I think that gives you a little more ownership that you want to do the best you possibly can.. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)

Natasha’s feeling that Dr. Sheridan gave the children’s book assignment so that there would be something to work on in class sounds like Natasha felt the project was a busy work project. The remainder of her comment shows that this may not have been the case. While Dr. Sheridan did dedicate 10-15 minutes during more than half of the course meetings, Natasha did not think that Dr. Sheridan had emphasized the writing very much. “It wasn’t a lot of time I mean collectively, yeah, it was a good portion of time. But, I think that because she didn’t give us that much time at once, it probably wasn’t emphasized very much.” (transcripts, 12/15/2004) When asked to identify three big ideas learned from the course, publishing and celebrating student writing did not make Natasha’s list. She did include these ideas in her response to a principal regarding how she will teach writing.

Having them do projects like when they write, it is to produce a product. It’s not just to write and have it graded and then turn it back and throw it away. It’s for a portfolio of their writing work throughout the grade or a newspaper that is done every month or something like that. Something that they can have and be proud of. Something that they can say I had a part in this and that’s my writing. Good for me! I did that. (transcripts, 12/15/2004)
The children’s book project and corresponding writing time did impact Natasha’s developing beliefs about writing and writing instruction.

Natasha’s identification of the shared writing activities, narrative and expository group activities, and the children’s book project as significant events in her belief development are consistent with her growth toward a process-oriented approach to writing and writing instruction.

Samantha

Samantha entered the room on the second day of class followed closely by two fellow students enrolled in the writing methods course. They chatted among themselves about work required for another class they had together. She wore her sandy brown hair pulled back in a ponytail at the base of her neck and wore typical college attire of jeans and a t-shirt. Samantha is a 21-year-old Caucasian female. She was classified as a junior in the College of Education, despite the fact that was completing her fourth year in college at the time this study occurred. Difficulties in transferring credits from her junior college experiences created a situation in which she had to complete several pre-requisites before entering the College of Education.

I based my selection of Samantha as a case study participant upon her moderate level of apprehension about her own writing and her process orientation toward writing instruction at the onset of this study. All data sources used in my study confirmed her moderately apprehensive feelings about her own writing and her process-orientation toward writing.
Family Background: “We’ve been all over the globe.”

Samantha is part of a family of five that can claim that all three children were born in a different state.

We were a military family. I was born in Oklahoma. My middle brother was born in California, and my oldest brother was born in New Mexico. After Oklahoma, we moved to Germany, then to Virginia, then to Florida. So, we’ve been all over the globe. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Both of her parents are retired from long careers in the Air Force now, but while Samantha was growing up, the military was part of her everyday life. Samantha’s mother held several different positions in the military.

She [Samantha’s mother] started out as radio maintenance. Then when she got pregnant, she decided it just really wasn’t that interesting. She was always into computers, so when she was pregnant with me, she went to tech school in Mississippi. That’s where she learned how to program. She used to write computer programs, like war games. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Her father began his military career as an aerial photographer during the Vietnam War.

He was a photographer, so he got into aerial photography, and then when he got back from Vietnam he retired, and then a couple of years out he decided he really liked military life. So, he went back and they decided to put him in as an air traffic controller. That’s what he did for about 10 years, and then he wanted a switch. So, he went for computer maintenance, and that’s where he was for the last 6 years. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)
Both of her parents currently work overseas in the computer field. “Right now they work for the government-independent contractors for the government, overseas in the Middle East working for the government setting up computer systems networks.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004) “My oldest brother is a construction worker in Roswell, New Mexico-where the aliens are. My older brother just graduated from the Air Force Academy in Colorado, and now he is stationed at Warner Robins Air Force Base in Georgia.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004) Samantha’s family is well educated and well traveled.

**Educational History:** “I had some really, really good teachers in the 4th grade that helped me a lot.”

The military background of Samantha’s family created a situation that forced Samantha and her brothers to attend many schools in the United States and Germany. Florida is the longest I have ever been anywhere. We lived in Oklahoma for 6 years. Then when we went to Germany, I went to 1st grade when I was 5 ‘cause my parents didn’t want me to have a babysitter all the time and I could already read and write, so they put me in school. Then when we moved from Germany to Virginia, I started the 5th grade. Then when we moved from Virginia to Florida, I started the 8th grade and this is my 4th year in college. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Samantha began her education in a bilingual educational setting, learning German and English. “I started in school in Germany. I was five and I started on the American base. We were learning English, but we were simultaneously learning German. I could speak English, but I was speaking German as well.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004) She can no longer speak German fluently, but she can understand what she hears.
Samantha first began thinking about a career in education in her later elementary school years when she encountered an exceptional group of teachers who helped her “turn the corner.”

I remember that specifically because when I was younger, I was one of the bad students. I wasn’t stupid. I was actually further ahead than I should have been, but that [moving ahead a grade] would have put me two years younger than everybody and my mom said no. So, I could do everything, but I would act out. I wouldn’t do my homework just because I didn’t feel like it, and I wouldn’t pay attention in class just because it was something I already knew. So, I got Cs up until the 4th grade. I had some really, really good teachers in the 4th grade who helped me a lot. They put me on a schedule where if I brought my homework, I would get a signature and if I didn’t, they wouldn’t. I had to have a certain number of signatures for the day. If I missed one, that was 30 minutes in “jail” at my house where I would sit in a room and do homework for no credit on top of my already assigned homework for credit.

I also had anger issues. I don’t know where they came from, but they were there. If I was acting out in class, I wouldn’t get a signature. I remember one night I spent like 3 hours in jail doing crossword puzzles and things like that that they assigned that I knew I wasn’t going to get credit for but I knew if I didn’t do them I would be in there longer. So, that is what turned me around. All of the stuff that they were giving me that wasn’t for credit was the advanced stuff. So, it was stuff that was new to me but no one else in class was learning it, so I felt special. After that, I actually started getting interested in school. That’s when I
decided that I wanted to teach. Since then, it has been reinforced with the types of teachers I have had minus the AP English teacher in high school and a few others that just didn’t care. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

While this intervention may sound harsh, Samantha did not remember it that way. She recalled this school year as pivotal in her educational history and the reason she is studying to be a teacher today.

*Learning to Write: “Oh, I want to do that!”*

Samantha was highly motivated to learn to write when she was young. She remembers her very early writing experiences with fondness.

When I was little I learned to read and write at the same time as my older brother. We are only 18 or 19 months apart. When I was 3, he was about 5 1/2, he came home and was learning to read and write simultaneously. Of course as the younger sibling, you want do anything that the older one is doing, especially at that age. He came home with his workbooks that were teaching reading and writing at the same time. I said oh, “I want to do that.” My mom went and got me the same workbook. My parents were teaching us both at home as well as I was going to a Christian Pre-K/K. They were reinforcing it at home as well. I started K when I was 4. That is when the writing really took hold, my mom has told me. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

In elementary, middle, and high school Samantha’s teachers taught and encouraged the use of the 5-paragraph essay format.

I remember them describing [the 5-paragraph essay format] as a hamburger. The introduction is the top bun. The three paragraphs in the middle are the meat, the
cheese, and the lettuce. The conclusion is the last bun. I remember them always making like that. Even drawing a hamburger.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

In high school, she attended honors English classes that primarily focused on reading from various genres. For example, during her freshman year in honors English, That was the year we studied Shakespeare and spelling. Yeah, we had a special spelling notebook. We did all these exercises. We identified parts of speech and things like that, which was really hard for me because I don’t know what a noun is and all that stuff. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Her writing in these courses was primarily “reports, research papers. Not a lot of free writing.” (transcripts, 9/2004)

Samantha experienced many teachers who emphasized formulaic writing such as the 5-paragraph essay and prompt writing.

In 10th grade I was in honors English with Ms. Fullum. Every week she would give us a writing prompt and a little booklet and we would write. She graded it and gave it back to us every week. It wasn’t a grade that went into the grade book. It was like constructive criticism to help us get ready [for the writing test]. (transcripts, 10/19/2004)

Writing assessment for Samantha was varied.

I think it[writing assessment] changed from year to year and from teacher to teacher. Some years it was like if the teacher wanted you to do exactly what she wanted, she would tell you I want you to do the 5-paragraph essay. The three supporting sentences and all that kind of stuff. Then other years it was just kind of like whatever you could create as long as it flowed and was grammatically
correct, they really didn’t care. I think it just depended on the teacher.

(transcripts, 10/19/2004)

The types of writing instruction and assessment that Samantha experienced were dependent upon the teacher’s philosophy.

*Writing Apprehension: “I think I used to like writing.”*

At the beginning of the semester, Samantha’s score of 59 on a scale of 20-100 on the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) placed her in the moderately apprehensive category. Her apprehension was the lowest of the case study participants at the beginning of the semester, and her comments about her own writing abilities indicate that her initial apprehension score may have been higher if not for her perceived lack of knowledge regarding grammatical rules.

I don’t really remember learning the parts of speech. I can’t imagine that any of it took hold because I don’t remember any of it now. I only remember what a noun is because my college English professor told me. I am just now learning what an adjective and a verb are today in class. I can put a sentence together. I can make it sound as good as anybody else’s, but I can’t tell you how I did it. It is an unconscious process. I’m not good with the commas and the prepositions and all that kind of stuff. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

When Samantha was younger, she enjoyed writing.

I think I used to like writing when I was little. When I was in 5th grade, I did a lot of creative writing. I was in some club where we put together some sort of book. We wrote little stories, and we put together a little literary magazine. In 9th grade, I took a creative writing course as one of my electives and that was
interesting. We wrote plays and stuff. It depends on what type of writing.

(transcripts, 12/16/2004)

One incident that may have diminished Samantha’s enjoyment of writing occurred in high school.

Every single day we had a journal entry that had to be 4 pages long, our stream of consciousness. She would just say a sentence and we would just have to let our mind wander and write whatever would come out of our brain. I don’t get Cs and I was getting barely a C in that class. I was like I want out. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Her negative feelings about this teacher and this assignment surfaced in two separate interviews, both times with obvious emotion attached.

Samantha discovered a newfound enjoyment in writing poetry over the course of the semester. Because of the assignment to create a children’s book, Samantha worked to create an original piece of publishable writing. While searching for a topic, a friend encouraged her to try poetry.

This semester I discovered my love for poetry. That is coming easier, so it’s making it easier for me to write. My friend Dan has always been really good at poetry. We were sitting around one day and talking about the poems he’s written in the past. He said, “You know they’re not that hard. You should really try it.” Then when we got the assignment to do the children’s book, at first I just wrote a story about a girl and her favorite dress. But then I didn’t really think it was very good enough, so then I don’t know why, two rhyming lines just came into my
head and I said, “Oh, how fun!” and I just ran with it. It didn’t all come out at once, it never does. It is getting easier. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Writing does play an important part in Samantha’s life despite the fact that she believes she has lost her enthusiasm for the subject.

I do keep a journal. It’s not the traditional diary. It is a collection of thoughts or something I just need to get out at that time. A lot of it is quotes or facts or things that I find interesting that apply to my life. I carry it to a lot of the places that I go just because a lot of the things I write down I can throw out in conversation.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Her father, the only person in her family she considers a writer, engages in similar writing habits.

He is always jotting down stuff. He’s got like 3-4 little notebooks in his pocket at all times. I don’t even think they are words. They’re mostly, he likes to think of himself as an entrepreneur, so he’s always in the garage building things. He’s always got measurements written down in his pocket or descriptions of certain things he wants to build or drawing something he sees in a store that he’d like to replicate. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Of her own writing ability, she knows she is intelligent and can communicate; however, she has some doubts in her ability to communicate in written form because of insecurities related to her grammatical knowledge.

You know even though I feel as though I’m an intelligent person and I can write and speak, and I can convey my ideas, I don’t know the parts of speech. I can’t
dissect a sentence and writing is one of those things where it is completely based on your ideas. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Samantha traces this deficiency all the way back to her schooling in Germany.

I can write and I am confident in my ability to write. I am much more confident in my ability when it comes to research papers, things that I can look up. Stuff that I have to pull out of my brain—it comes out a little bit harder.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Currently, she primarily writes papers, research reports, and lesson plans for school.

By the end of the semester, Samantha’s writing apprehension score of 64 indicated that she was slightly less apprehensive about her own writing abilities.

Samantha’s Writing Process: “I just write and revise as I go.”

Samantha performs composing and revision processes simultaneously as she writes.

I find as a writer that I don’t do the traditional rough draft as we talk about in class. I don’t write and then revise. I just write and revise as I go, and I cannot write with just a blank piece of paper in front of me. I have to have a computer screen in front of me where I can constantly be moving things around. It just works best for me. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

The computer has impacted her writing process, and she feels that by composing in this way, it helps her get her ideas out.

It seems to come more natural when I edit my work as I’m writing because I know what I’m what I’m thinking at that moment. I know how I say it in my head. That’s where I think I should put a comma. Most of the time it’s wrong.
Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development

(both laugh) It gets me by. It gets me an A on the paper. That’s all that matters at this point. I may have to eventually learn it, but… (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Samantha’s perceived lack of grammatical understanding impacts her composing process.

I’m a bad college student for doing this. But, most of the time when I’m done with a paper, I just do spell check and I’m done. I don’t really go over it again. I tend to think I’m doing the editing throughout and rearranging sentences and stuff like that. As far as the grammar and stuff, I don’t really feel like I’m really qualified enough to go back and say, “Is this right?” (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Samantha identified her former roommate as a good writer. She viewed her as a good writer because, “she has an extended vocabulary, which is always good when you are writing. She just always got good ideas when she’s writing…Hers really, more than anyone else I’ve seen, it just pours out of her. She is very contemplative.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004). Samantha also valued her roommate as a good writer because she was always willing to review her work. “I definitely see her as a good writer because she can help me and I’ve read her stuff and I don’t know much about grammar, but it looks correct and sounds very intelligent.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004) By emphasizing that her roommate was “very well rounded as a writer” (transcripts, 9/20/2004), Samantha revealed that she values the content of the writing and works to improve what she has to say.

Answering the Research Questions

Any development of Samantha’s beliefs about writing and writing instruction, explicitly stated or inferred through interviews or observations, occurred within the
Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development

framework of her prior experiences. The preceding information on Samantha builds a
description within which to understand Samantha in relation to the two research questions
guiding this study: How do preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of
writing develop while enrolled in an elementary writing methods course? and What
episodes do preservice teachers, who are enrolled in an elementary writing methods
course, view as significant in helping them negotiate their beliefs about writing and
writing instruction?

Development of Samantha’s Beliefs About Writing and Writing Instruction

Completing the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey (see Appendix B),
responding to three student writing samples at the beginning and end of the semester, and
answering questions included during the in-depth interviews allowed the development of
Samantha’s beliefs about writing and writing instruction to emerge. Samantha’s
responses on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey changed little over the course of
the semester (see Table 7 and Table 8). She identified all of the process-oriented
statements as effective teacher practices at the beginning and end of the semester. She
identified 3 of 10 product-oriented statements as effective at the beginning of the
semester; this moved to two by the end of the semester. Because of the perceived
process-orientation of the instructor, it is reasonable to think that a preservice teacher
who enters a course with beliefs similar to that of the instructor would show such a
pattern of responses.

Over the course of the semester, Samantha faced several performance tasks
designed to reveal the development of her beliefs about writing and writing instruction.
By responding to the situations at the beginning and end of the semester, changes in her
thinking were revealed that indicate her developing understanding of writing and writing instruction related to responding to students’ novel ideas, responding to student questions, and teaching organizing in writing.

**Responding to students’ novel ideas.** When asked to respond to Jessie’s writing sample (see Figure 7) during her initial case study interview, Samantha initially tried to escape commenting on Jessie’s writing claiming, “I can’t really judge if Jessie is on level because I don’t really know that much about what level he should be at.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004) With encouragement, she said, “He’s got his sentences down; he’s got his ideas down which is good. Mostly what he needs to work on is mechanics and spelling. It is good that he stayed on topic and it flows nicely except for this one part at the end.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004) Her comments, with the exception of “got his ideas down” focus on the mechanical aspects of writing, areas that Samantha has admitted feeling unprepared to address. Her comments also lack specificity of author’s craft language. For example, her use of the phrase “flows nicely” seems to refer to sentence fluency or organization.

In her end of semester case study interview, Samantha’s comments reflect that she has acquired some understanding of author’s craft language. When shown the same sample from Jessie (see Figure 7), she commented without hesitation and her comments focused on the structure of the writing, “He has a beginning, middle, and end to the story. He’s got that down, which is good.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) She also suggests buddy editing to help Jessie with the grammatical and spelling errors in the paper. “I would go back and say, “Do you think you made any spelling mistakes?” If not, then possibly move to buddy edit.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) In addition to using author’s
craft language in her comment, this statement indicates that Samantha not only has a process-oriented approach, but is already thinking about how it will look in her classroom while she is working with students.

Samantha did not suggest that she would sit with Jessie and fix all of the errors in the paper. In both the initial and final case study interviews, she described them as “minor grammatical mistakes.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) Samantha’s responses portrayed her role as a teacher when working with Jessie as one who would inform Jessie of the punctuation rule. At the beginning of the semester, she gave detailed instructions in the use of quotation marks and commas,

I would say that a [period at the end of] a sentence signifies the end of a thought. And so that if you want somebody to pause and show them that the words following are their own words, I would say that is when you use a comma and the little quotation marks. Quotation marks show that it is what somebody is saying. I would just tell him that even though he was on the right track with the period in this case, this time the comma would be better used. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

By the end of the semester, she was more succinct, but consistent in her intent to inform, “I would say, well, when somebody’s speaking, we put quotes around them. Before we do the quotes, we always put a comma, which in this case would make it sound like the person is talking.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

For Samantha, the development of her beliefs related to responding to the student’s novel ideas may not have been significant, but her ability to communicate using the language of author’s craft did evolve. The manner in which she portrayed her role as
teacher did not change over the course of the semester and provided contrary information
in regards to Samantha’s process-oriented beliefs.

Responding to student questions. I asked Samantha how she would respond to a
second grade student question (see Figure 8). Samantha gave similar answers in the
initial and final case study interviews. Just as she did the previous example, Samantha’s
first response to the student in both interviews was to explain the rule necessary to
answer the question.

I would say that since you were talking about more than one book, you would use
the word are. Are is used when whatever article you are talking about is plural.
So in this sentence, the whole subject of the sentence is books. So, I’d say books
is plural because you have more that one book you have a whole library full of
books. Since books is plural you would use the word are. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

She would change her approach if the question were asked by an older student. In this
case, if the question had been asked by a sixth grader, Samantha would not give as much

Samantha gave this same response at the beginning and end of the semester as well.

When dealing with questions from younger children, Samantha’s responses
indicate that she would provide information. When the child is older, she would try to
allow the child to arrive at the answer on his/her own. Because her responses to this task
were nearly identical at the beginning and end of the semester, no evidence exists that her
beliefs about working with the child who asks questions about writing tasks evolved over
the course of the semester. Also interesting in her responses to this performance task is
the fact that, despite her highly process-oriented approach to teaching writing, she
preferred to give the rule. These two incidents provide contradictory information about Samantha’s belief development regarding responding to students’ questions.

*Teaching organizing in writing.* The final task presented to Samantha asked her to respond to the paper from a fourth grade student (see Figure 9). In her initial case study interview, Samantha listed several issues evident in the 4th grade paper, both good and bad.

I would say that you know, very good about staying on topic. He seems to have picked out a lot of good facts from what he read. The spelling issues can be dealt with. He seems to be constructing it well with a traditional introductory paragraph that dolphins are not fish and giving the reasons and then listing where dolphins are found and listing some interesting facts he found. (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

Her recognition of the introductory paragraph is evidence that she is relying on her own previous experience in learning to write when she was taught the 5-paragraph essay, but the overall comment lacks specificity in the use of author’s craft language. Because she didn’t think the paper was that bad, she would have him revise in an “editing group with other students who have come to that point in their writing.” (transcripts, 9/20/2004)

This comment reinforces her process-orientation toward writing instruction.

In the final case study interview, Samantha showed some evidence of acquiring the vocabulary of the author’s craft when she specifically mentioned the organization of the paper.

Retained a lot of facts, well I wouldn’t say facts, but interesting bits of information to the student that they put into the paper, which was the assignment,
so they did well. It definitely has organization: beginning, middle, and end. Just some minor errors. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

As in her initial case study interview, Samantha views the errors in the paper as minor and rather than pick apart the entire paper, she again recommended buddy revising. “I would put [the revisions] in the context of buddy revising. Because the mistakes are minor, I think the student could benefit from it being a peer edit.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Samantha’s belief development regarding teaching organization is minimal. This is to be expected because her comments at the beginning of the semester reflected her process-orientation toward writing instruction. There was little room for Samantha’s beliefs to develop further toward those of the instructor because she began the semester already holding many of those views. Her application of specific author’s craft language, such as organization, beginning, middle, and end, is consistent with her process-oriented beliefs about writing and writing instruction.

*Overall belief development.* Samantha began the semester with a process orientation toward writing and writing instruction similar the orientation of the instructor. The instructional routines and assignments that Samantha participated in over the course of the semester strengthened her process orientation toward writing and writing instruction. Samantha spoke directly about the importance of the writing process in writing instruction several times in her final case study interview. Regarding her philosophy of writing instruction, Samantha said, “I say mostly the grading is not going to be on just the product. It is also the process and the progress.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) She also commented,
Writing portfolios will probably be a big part of it [my writing instruction]. Just to show in a week’s time the progress that a student has made following just a few lessons on different aspects that we expect in their writing, such as capitalization, indentation, stuff like that. Then use buddy editing. Group students who are on similar levels or one that is slightly higher than the other so that they can help each other but still feel like they are helping the other and not feel that one’s really benefiting and the other’s below par. I would say that writing workshop. Writing process is very important. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

These comments confirm the results of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey that show that her process orientation became stronger over the course of the semester.

*Significant Episodes in Samantha’s Belief Development*

While Samantha’s belief development showed little change over the course of the semester, her process orientation did strengthen. Samantha identified two significant episodes in the writing methods course that impacted her understanding of writing and teaching writing: the shared writing experiences and the children’s book.

Samantha experienced a high level of frustration while completing the in-class shared writing experience. Shortly after Samantha began her shared writing lesson to teach tapping prior knowledge to her classmates, Dr. Sheridan approached to observe. When Samantha thought she was finished with the lesson and began to sit down, Dr. Sheridan questioned why she was sitting down when no writing had been produced. Dr. Sheridan proceeded to clarify what Samantha needed to do to complete the assignment.

Dr. Sheridan: No, tapping prior knowledge to what?

Samantha: To write, but I don’t know.
Dr. Sheridan: Tap prior knowledge to write.

Samantha: But Amelia is doing that.

Dr. Sheridan: You are by yourself. So now show how that prior knowledge is used to write.

Samantha: I don’t understand. You’re making me nervous. I don’t know what I am supposed to start. (Dr. Sheridan left.) She freaked me out. (fieldnotes, 10/11/2004)

Samantha went on to complete a shared writing based upon the work she did while tapping prior knowledge, but was obviously upset by the entire interaction. During her mid-semester case study interview, she identified this shared writing experience as one that impacted her understanding of writing and writing instruction. Upon further examination during this same interview, Samantha’s significant learning from the experience was far from Dr. Sheridan’s intended goals. “I think that assignment in particular helped me understand the students’ point of view when they are up in front of people, especially the teacher, because she was sitting right there.” (transcripts, 10/19/2004) Samantha’s significant learning from her encounter during her shared writing lesson had little to do with learning how to conduct a shared writing lesson and more to do with gaining empathy for students engaged in the learning process.

The frustration that Samantha experienced during the assignment had not diminished by the end of the semester.

We thought all of us were going to be doing our strategy. Like I had tapping prior knowledge. So I thought I was just supposed to get up there and help my student tap their prior knowledge and sit down. I don’t think she clearly explained that
after we tapped the prior knowledge we were going to be actually writing a piece
from that. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Despite her frustration, Samantha again identified the shared writing experience as
important in her belief development at the end of the semester. Samantha also
experienced difficulty completing a shared writing lesson with a group of 4th grade
students.

I made some poor choices. I did generalizing in my 4th grade class. I used Magic
School Bus Inside the Human Body. I didn’t really take into account how long it
would take to read that book, and there were all those little side notes the kids
wanted to read. It kept getting me off track. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

The events were memorable; however, when asked to communicate her
philosophy of writing instruction and to identify three big ideas gained from the writing
methods course, she did not include shared writing.

Samantha also identified the children’s book assignment and associated in-class
writing time as significant in her development and tied it to two very important outcomes.
Samantha thought the children’s book and writing time “emphasized the point that we
need to be writing every day.” (transcripts, 12/16/2004) She also credits this assignment
with helping her discover herself in a new type of writing.

The book writing is helping me because I am tapping the poet in me. I think it is
helping me because like I said it is showing me that all types of writing are in you
somewhere. You just have to find it. I was getting frustrated with the narrative.
Switching to poetry really kind of opened up a whole different mind set for me.

So, I think that will help because if I have a student in my class who is getting
frustrated, I can say, “Why don’t you try writing your story like this?”

(transcripts, 10/19/2004)

Her feelings about her discovery of poetry were just as strong at the end of the semester. Since I finished my poem like the third day we were doing writing, the rest of it was like playing around and discovering what I like to write. I credit her [Dr. Sheridan] for my discovery of my poetry talent, I guess, or love of poetry. I don’t think it would have happened if I hadn’t been forced to write even after I completed the text for the assignment. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

These outcomes are significant, but Samantha did not mention the importance of writing everyday in her philosophy of writing instruction or the three big ideas she learned from the semester.

Although Samantha did not identify either of the significant episodes in her philosophy of writing instruction, the description she did give was consistent with her process-orientation to writing and writing instruction.

I’m not going to put a lot of emphasis on grammatics. It will be taught, but it’s not going to be the major emphasis of my lessons everyday. I will not do DOL because it doesn’t create any sort of viable product. I say mostly in the grading is not going to be on just the product. It is also the process and the progress. (transcripts, 12/16/2004)

Cross Case Analysis

I selected Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha as case study participants because they represented different combinations of writing apprehension and writing instruction orientations. The resulting data revealed that the selection criteria allowed the
identification of three very distinct cases producing differing degrees of belief
development and perceptions of significant episodes.

The case study participants came from different ethnic backgrounds and
educational histories. Skylar, an African American student, was born and raised in the
same city where the study took place. Natasha, a Latina student, is a second/third
generation American who was also born and raised in the same city where the study took
place. Samantha, a Caucasian student, moved often with her military family during her
school years. Skylar and Samantha are the closest to traditional college students, having
attended college right after high school but transferring from one college to another.
Natasha is the only case study participant to try another career before turning to
education.

Initial data indicated that all three case study participants held moderately
apprehensive feelings about their own writing. Initial interview data collected caused the
adjustment of those determinations (see Table 9). I initially selected Skylar to represent
the moderately apprehensive writers who held an eclectic-orientation to writing
instruction. Interview data revealed that she had highly apprehensive feelings about her
own writing. I selected Natasha as a moderately apprehensive writer who held a product
orientation toward writing instruction. Initial interview data confirmed her moderate
writing apprehension, but revealed that she held an eclectic-orientation toward writing
instruction. I selected Samantha to represent moderately apprehensive writers who held a
Table 9.
Initial Writing Apprehension Level and Writing Instruction Orientation Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Participant</th>
<th>Writing Apprehension Level</th>
<th>Writing Instruction Orientation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skylar</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Initial writing apprehension levels based upon responses to the Writing Apprehension Test. Initial writing instruction orientations based upon responses to the Writing Orientation Survey. Adjustments were made to the initial levels and designations of case study participants only and were made based upon information provided by case study participants during the initial case study interview.

Memories of learning to write for Skylar, Natasha, Samantha, and even Dr. Sheridan centered primarily on product-oriented practices. Skylar did recall making books in elementary school, which could be considered a process-oriented teacher behavior; and Natasha recalled one teacher who acted as a coach while she wrote. Samantha, the only case study participant to hold process-oriented beliefs at the
beginning of the semester, did not recall any process-oriented teacher behaviors during her school career.

**Belief Development**

The first research question I asked addressed the development of preservice teachers’ beliefs while learning to teach writing in a writing methods course. All three of the case study participants’ belief development moved toward the process-orientation of the professor of the writing methods course in which they were enrolled (see Table 9). Skylar and Natasha both held eclectic views of writing instruction at the beginning of the semester. Skylar’s initial views of writing and writing instruction were categorized as eclectic because she identified 13 of 15 teacher behaviors as effective. Natasha, on the other hand, identified only five product-oriented and three process-oriented teacher behaviors as effective. The two case study participants received an eclectic-orientation designation for different reasons. Regardless of the reason for their designation, both Skylar and Natasha’s beliefs, recorded on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey and confirmed through interviews, held emerging process-oriented views of writing instruction at the end of the semester.

Samantha’s process-oriented views of writing and writing instruction strengthened over the course of the semester. By the end of the semester, she identified two product-oriented and all five process-oriented statements as effective teacher behaviors. Samantha’s final case study interview confirmed this trend.

**Significant Episodes**

The second question I asked sought to identify any significant episodes that contributed to the development of the preservice teachers’ beliefs (see Table 10). In
other words, if a development in the preservice teachers’ beliefs is revealed, around which significant episodes will the preservice teachers new beliefs be centered (see Figure 1).

Table 10.
Belief Development and Significant Episodes of Case Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Participant</th>
<th>Belief Development</th>
<th>Significant Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning of Semester</td>
<td>End of Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skylar</td>
<td>Eclectic</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>Eclectic</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha identified the children’s book assignment as a significant episode in their belief development. Skylar believed that the children’s book project was the only assignment or routine that made an impact on her belief development. By completing the children’s book, Skylar learned that writing is harder than she thought, thus giving her a better understanding of writing from a child’s point of
While Skylar gained a sense of empathy by completing the project, Dr. Sheridan did not specifically state this as a purpose for the assignment. Natasha discussed the children’s book project in two separate interviews. Despite her indication that the children’s book project was important to her belief development, she did not fully understand Dr. Sheridan’s purposes for giving the assignment. Natasha felt that the purpose of the assignment was to help her experience a sense of pride in producing a written children’s book, which does match Dr. Sheridan’s goals. She also felt as though the assignment was given to provide everyone something to do during writing time, a time filler. Natasha did not mention the importance of celebrating the written product in her philosophy of writing instruction. Samantha realized that one of Dr. Sheridan’s purposes for assigning the children’s book and allotting so much time to in-class writing time was to emphasize the importance of writing everyday. Like Natasha, Samantha did not mention the importance of writing every day in her philosophy of writing instruction. Skylar, on the other hand, did indicate that she wants her future students to create their own books and to free write every day.

Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha identified the shared writing assignments as significant in their belief development. Skylar did not explicitly identify any significant episodes in her belief development; however, her actions and comments did allude to the importance of the shared writing. After completing her shared writing in class, Skylar completed not one, but two shared writings with the kindergarten children in her internship classroom. She sought specific guidance from her supervising teacher before conducting the second shared writing. The fact that she worked to improve her shared writing experience suggests that she did benefit from the experience. She included
statements in her philosophy of writing instruction regarding the belief that all children have the ability to write that showed how much her beliefs about young writers developed. Throughout the entire first half of the semester, Skylar expressed doubt that shared writing could be conducted with kindergartners who were just learning their letters.

Natasha expressed a newfound comfort level in conducting shared writing lessons. She attributed this to the two shared writing experiences she had over the course of the semester. Samantha experienced frustration during both of the shared writing lessons she conducted. During her in-class shared writing, with Dr. Sheridan watching, she attempted to conduct a shared writing lesson that tapped prior knowledge. In doing so, she stopped the lesson after she elicited ideas from the group and did not plan to proceed in composing a piece of writing. When Dr. Sheridan stepped in to encourage her to continue, Samantha’s frustration became evident. She also experienced frustration when she conducted her shared writing lesson in her internship classroom. She selected a book to begin her lesson that took almost 20 minutes to read which made her shared writing lesson last almost an hour. Despite, or perhaps because of, the frustration she experienced, Samantha identified the shared writing experiences in two separate interviews.

Natasha also identified the narrative and expository group activities as significant episodes in her belief development. By participating in these two group activities, she learned about the genres of writing. In her final case study interview, she referred to the genres as styles, showing that she still lacked some of the language of author’s craft.
The issue of using the language of writing to talk about writing emerged in all three case studies. Whether it was to talk about events that occurred in the writing methods course or to talk about student writing, Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha needed to use author’s craft language to discuss what was occurring throughout this study. They found themselves inconsistently applying specific language of author’s craft to describe their thinking.

At the beginning of the semester, Skylar used the term “flow” when talking about the dolphin story. In later discussions about this same piece of writing, she used terms such as “structure” and “doesn’t fit” which suggests she was referring to the organization of the paper. By the end of the semester, Skylar again used the word “flow” when discussing the same piece of writing to refer to the same organizational issues. Skylar’s use of words such as “flow” and “structure” instead of “organization” indicate she does not have a firm grasp of author’s craft language and is limited in her ability to talk the talk of a writing teacher by the end of the semester. An example of her inconsistent application of author’s craft language at the end of the semester appears in her response about Jessie’s writing sample. She indicates that Jessie’s writing “stays on the same frame point” in response to one question; in response to the next question, she indicated that she would “have a mini-lesson” on punctuating character speech.

Natasha also used the word “flow” when referring to the dolphin story at the beginning of the semester. As she elaborated on this paper, she used terms such as “make it sound better” and “has some breaks” to indicate the organizational difficulties existing in the dolphin paper. At the end of the semester, Natasha was able to identify the
organizational problems in the dolphin paper and was able to use author’s craft language to talk about it. She indicated that it could be “organized in spots.” In this instance, Natasha utilized the talk of a writing teacher to discuss the dolphin story. Overall, Natasha did not apply the talk of a process-oriented writing teacher consistently in her end of semester case study interview. She is still developing her ability to utilize the language of author’s craft.

Samantha initially used the term “flow” when talking about Jessie’s paper. She felt that the paper “flowed nicely except at the end” and that Jessie could use some mini-lessons on quotation marks and punctuation marks. These follow-up comments do not clarify Samantha’s intent of the word “flow” when referring to Jessie’s writing. By the end of the semester, Samantha noted that Jessie’s paper had a beginning, middle, and end rather than saying it flowed. Use of the term organization to describe the characteristics of Jessie’s writing would have indicated a fuller grasp of author’s craft language. This example shows that Samantha developed in her ability to talk the talk of a writing teacher. Overall, Samantha applied the language of a process-oriented writing teacher much more consistently than Skylar and Natasha at the end of semester.

The three case study participants exhibited varying levels of specificity in their development of author’s craft language. Consequently, each case study participant was able to speak about her developing beliefs with varying degrees of accuracy and clarity. Skylar showed little evidence that she had grown in her ability to utilize the language of writing to talk the talk of a writing teacher by the end of the semester. While her writing orientation did move toward a process-oriented view of writing instruction, she is still developing in her ability to utilize author’s language to talk about her beliefs. In some
instances, Natasha showed an increasing ability to speak about student writing using the language of author’s craft. As Natasha’s writing orientation moved toward a process-orientation of writing instruction, she showed some ability to talk the talk of a process-oriented writing teacher.

Samantha grew in her ability to speak with clarity and specificity about student writing and her evolving beliefs about writing and writing instruction. Not only did her process-orientation to writing instruction strengthen over the course of the semester, she chose words such as “writing process” and “student portfolio” to capture her evolving beliefs and “buddy editing” and “organization” when talking about student writing. Samantha demonstrated the strongest grasp of author’s craft language in her final interview and used the talk of writing teachers to communicate her strengthening process-oriented views of writing instruction.

Summary

Dr. Sheridan’s process-oriented views about writing instruction observed in the writing methods course influenced the course assignments and routines established in the course. She provided in-class writing time on a consistent basis so that her students could write on topics of their choice and work toward the publication of a children’s book. She provided time for students to conference with each other and share their completed children’s book with the class. From the textbook selected to the content of her lectures, Dr. Sheridan’s process-oriented views impacted every aspect of the course.

The result was an overall shift in writing instruction orientation of the preservice teachers in the class over the course of the semester. The end-of-semester Writing Instruction Orientation Survey showed that 6 preservice teachers shifted their orientation
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toward a process-oriented approach to writing instruction, and three preservice teachers shifted from process to an eclectic-orientation to writing instruction. By the end of the semester, the number of preservice teachers holding process-oriented views of writing instruction increased from 8 to 12. Results from the case study participants confirmed this trend. The writing orientation of two of the case study participants, Skylar and Natasha, evolved from eclectic to process-oriented. Samantha’s process oriented views strengthened over the course of the semester.

Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha identified the in-class writing time and children’s book as significant episodes in their belief development. The in-class writing time and children’s book assignment are closely linked to the process-oriented approach to teaching writing. All three case study participants identified the shared writing assignment as a significant episode in their belief development. Data from case study interviews suggested that this assignment impacted the participants’ views of children’s ability to write. Specifically Natasha and Skylar came to realize that kindergarten students are writers and can benefit from writing instruction. Skylar’s successive experiences in conducting shared writing lessons with kindergarten students provided instances that allowed her to work through the dissonance existing between her views of kindergarten writers and those of Dr. Sheridan. Samantha experienced cognitive dissonance in both of her shared writing experiences, making the event memorable for her. Her dissonance derived from the difference between her perception of shared writing developed while observing Dr. Sheridan model shared writing and the complete process that Dr. Sheridan expected to be enacted during class. By the end of her shared writing experiences, her understanding of shared writing shifted to more closely resemble
the expectations Dr. Sheridan had for shared writing. Natasha also felt that the narrative and expository group activities impacted her belief development. She did use these terms accurately in her final interview when discussing writing instruction.

Finally, the three case study participants varied in the degree to which they were able to talk about their evolving beliefs about writing and writing instruction. At the end of the semester, Skylar showed limited improvement in her ability to talk the talk of a writing teacher when speaking about student writing or her beliefs about writing instruction. Natasha and Samantha’s ability to talk about their evolving beliefs about writing and writing instruction showed considerable development throughout the semester. In initial interviews, they used terms such as “make it sound better” and “flow” to talk about student writing. By the end of the semester, they were using terms such as “organization” and “buddy editing.” Samantha showed the greatest change in her ability to talk the talk of a writing teacher. She included phrases such as “writing process” and “student portfolio” when talking about her philosophy of writing instruction at the end of the semester. Her use of author’s craft language grew in specificity and clarity.

In this chapter I described in detail the writing methods course constructed by Dr. Sheridan and her preservice students. By purposefully selecting case study participants with varied orientations toward writing instruction, the case study descriptions in this chapter provided a chance for readers to examine the multiple realities that existed in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course. These descriptions allowed me to answer the two research questions and begin to consider implications of practice that I discuss in chapter five.
Chapter Five
Discussion

The aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress.

Joseph Joubert

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my study was to investigate the nature of belief development in preservice teachers as they learned to teach writing in an elementary writing methods course and to identify any significant episodes contributing to that belief development. I begin this chapter with a short summary of my study’s purpose, literature review, research questions, and research procedures. I follow this with a discussion of the study’s results and their intersection with the current literature. I conclude this chapter and dissertation with implications for practice and recommendations for further research.

SUMMARY

The importance of understanding the preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing is underscored by the growing attention being paid to writing assessment. In March, 2005, The Scholastic Aptitude Test added a writing component signifying a formal elevation of the importance of writing in our daily lives. The National Commission on Writing’s statement that “writing today is not a frill for the few, but an essential skill for the many,” (2003, p. 11) serves as a call to arms and adds significance
to the fact that children in elementary school must have teachers who are prepared to teach writing.

Teacher education programs charged with preparing future writing teachers face a daunting task of producing the next generation of writing teachers. Preservice teachers bring with them prior beliefs about teaching writing formed during an apprenticeship of observation that impacts participation in situations designed to facilitate learning to teach writing (Lorie, 2002). The behavioral dimension of a belief construct links prior beliefs to motivation and emphasizes the important role that prior beliefs play in preservice teachers’ belief development (Pajares, 2003; Rokeach, 1968). Beliefs about teaching writing are a special subset of a preservice teacher’s overall belief development. Because many preservice teachers either were not afforded the benefit of writing instruction (Napoli, 2001) or experienced writing instruction during a time that was more likely to be characterized by teaching practices that differ from the orientation of the teacher education program (Kennedy, 1998), their beliefs may differ from those of the professor of the writing methods in which they are enrolled.

Previous researchers documented the challenges in attempting to alter preservice teachers’ beliefs (Bird, Anderson, Sullivan, & Swidler, 1993). In the specific case of preparing preservice teachers to teach writing, researchers have reported moderate success in impacting beliefs in the short term (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Mahurt, 1998; Shrofel, 1991; Street, 1999; Watson & Lacina, 2002). When faced with real-life situations of field experiences (Street, 1999) and the first year of teaching (Grossman et al., 2000), the lasting impact of any belief development comes into doubt. Relationship issues and early career curriculum pressures tend to squelch the degree to which
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preservice teachers act upon emerging beliefs. Grossman et al. (2000) provided a rationale for teacher educators to strive to impact prior beliefs because they may likely serve as the gold standard against which practices are judged against two or three years into a teaching career.

The need to develop preservice teachers who are prepared to teach writing and the hope that this preparation can impact teacher belief development in the long-term provided a sound rationale for the importance of examining preservice teachers’ experiences as they learn to teach writing. In this qualitative inquiry, I sought to examine the belief development of three preservice teachers who began the semester with varied orientations toward writing instruction. Specifically, I sought to add to the limited body of knowledge regarding the preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing.

Previous studies examining the belief development of preservice teachers while they learn to teach writing relied primarily upon self-reported data. In this study I attempted to build upon the previous research by bringing a set of eyes into the writing methods course that remained uninvolved in the instructional planning and delivery of the course to examine belief development. It is also important to note that while most studies conducted in writing methods course were conducted as intentional course designs, my study did not attempt to intervene in Dr. Sheridan’s instructional plan.

FINDING MEANING IN THE INDIVIDUAL CASE

“Researchers reach new meanings about cases through direct interpretation of the individual instance.” (Stake, 1995) My first commitment in this inquiry has been to understand each individual case to bring understanding to the larger issue of the
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preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing (Stake, 1995). For this reason, I begin
a discussion of my results by focusing on finding meaning in each case.

Learning from Skylar

Skylar’s experiences in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course demonstrate that
potential exists for highly apprehensive writers to move toward the instructional
orientation of the professor. Skylar began the semester as a highly apprehensive writer.
While Skylar participated in in-class writing time consistently throughout the semester
and created a children’s book, her apprehension toward writing increased slightly. Dr.
Sheridan admitted that the purpose of the in-class writing time and production of a
children’s book was not to improve the writing skills of the preservice teachers, so
perhaps it is not surprising that her apprehension did not lessen as a result of the writing
she did. However, in comparison to her classmates, Skylar was one of only two
preservice teachers indicating a higher level of apprehension about their writing as
measured by the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) at the end of the
semester.

Skylar’s past experiences learning to write included a combination of product-
oriented and process-oriented experiences in many different educational settings. When
faced with descriptions of teachers’ writing instructional practices at the beginning of the
semester, she identified practices from both orientations as effective. Her apprenticeship
of observation (Lortie, 2002) had a strong impact on her initial beliefs regarding writing
instruction. Dr. Sheridan’s process-orientation and the process-orientation of the course
did create a situation that allowed Skylar to move toward a more process-orientation
toward writing instruction by the end of the semester. This confirmed Zeichner and
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Tabachnick’s (1981) findings that preservice teachers tend to adopt the beliefs presented during their college experience.

Regarding the specific preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing, writing methods courses reportedly do impact preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire 1990; Mahurt, 1998; Napoli, 2001; Shrofel, 1991; Street, 1999; & Watson & Lacina, 2002) to some degree. Skylar’s experience confirms these findings as well. Skylar’s experiences demonstrate that her high level of writing apprehension in relation to other preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s course did not interfere with her short-term belief development toward the orientation of the professor.

While Skylar did become more discriminating in her ability to identify process-oriented teacher behaviors, the degree to which she utilized language that accompanies a process-oriented approach was limited. By the end of the semester, Skylar’s development reached a stage of being able to identify effective process-oriented teacher practices. If her beliefs continue to develop toward a process-orientation of writing instruction, she may further develop in her ability to talk the talk of a process-oriented writing teacher.

Skylar’s case revealed details about the impact that grading can have on the preservice teachers’ perceptions of experiences in preservice teacher education. After Skylar learned that her grade in Dr. Sheridan’s course was lower than she expected, her feelings shifted from feeling hopeful that she would benefit from participation in the writing methods course to stating that she did not gain anything at all from the course. Her feelings of shock and disappointment regarding her grade manifested itself in a high level of reluctance to speak about the events of the semester during our end of semester
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interview. By probing Skylar, I discovered that several episodes did impact her belief development; however, her reluctance to freely admit to that fact is telling and caused me to question the lasting impact the episodes will have on her beliefs about writing and writing instruction.

Skylar’s experiences also highlight the importance of field-based experiences with respect to the belief development of preservice teachers. She enrolled in an internship course the same semester that she participated in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course. Her experiences of working with the kindergarten writers in her internship classroom while enrolled in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course affirm Florio-Ruane & Lensmire (1990) and Shrofel (1991) findings that field-based experiences directly linked to the writing methods courses can create circumstances that allow preservice teachers to break from their initial views of writing instruction. Skylar’s internship classroom proved to be the context that allowed her to work through the dissonance that existed between her expectations of kindergarten writers and those of Dr. Sheridan. As she faced her kindergarten writers during her first shared writing experience, she examined her beliefs that kindergartners are not writers. By the end of her work with the shared writing lessons, Skylar believed that every child has the ability to learn how to write. While the field experience and the writing methods course were not intentionally designed to occur concurrently, Skylar’s experience gives reason to consider the relationship between course assignments directly linked to application in the field.
Learning From Natasha

Natasha’s experiences in the writing methods course demonstrate preservice teachers’ prior beliefs and writing apprehension can act as a motivation to actively participate in a writing methods course. Natasha experienced situational writing apprehension. She reported writing for personal reasons without reserve; however, in educational situations she shared a lack of confidence in her ability to complete the assignment. Natasha’s apprehension about participating in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course is more in line with the apprehension she feels toward her academic writing skills. Many factors contributed to Natasha’s initial eclectic orientation including her varied experiences while learning to write during her apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 2002) and her level of apprehension. She recalled far more incidents of product-oriented instruction; however, she also described process-oriented instruction that she received, such as when her teacher had a writing conference with her, in detail as positive episodes while learning to write.

Natasha took the high level of apprehension she felt about taking the writing methods course as a motivation to learn as much as she could from Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course rather than using it as an excuse to withdraw from full participation in the course assignments and routines. Pajares (2003) suggested that a strong sense of confidence built on positive prior experiences result in the likelihood that the preservice teacher will expend a higher level of energy to work through the difficulty. Natasha’s experiences make a case for the exact opposite condition to also be possible, that is she put great effort into her course assignments in spite of, or perhaps because of, her initial apprehension. Based upon the amount of effort Natasha expended while participating in
the writing methods course, her growth toward the process-orientation of Dr. Sheridan and the writing methods course is not surprising. Her experiences in the writing methods course created a situation that caused her to identify teacher behaviors that closely match the orientation of the instructor. She did not, however, experience the same degree of growth in her ability to communicate her beliefs about writing instruction.

Learning from Samantha

Samantha’s experiences during the writing methods course show that preservice teachers who hold beliefs similar to the instructor of the course in which they are enrolled can experience growth while participating in a writing methods course. Samantha began the semester holding a process-orientation toward writing instruction. She identified all of the process-oriented teacher behaviors on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey as effective while at the same time indicating that nearly all of the product-oriented statements were not effective. Over the course of the semester, her ability to talk about writing utilizing the language of a process-oriented writing teacher developed significantly. While there was not much room for her beliefs to move further toward the orientation of the instructor because she already held those beliefs, by the end of the semester she was better able to talk using language that matched her beliefs about writing and writing instruction.

Samantha’s experience also demonstrates that dissonant moments can develop from preservice teachers’ emerging understandings of the content being presented or skills being learned. Samantha’s early understanding of how to conduct a shared writing lesson grew from her reading for class and from observing Dr. Sheridan while she modeled shared writing lessons. While enacting her emerging understanding of how to
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conduct a shared writing lesson, she came face to face with the gaps in her understanding. Although she initially experienced frustration, in the end, Samantha reported a better understanding of how to conduct a shared writing lesson. Samantha’s initial foray into conducting a shared writing lesson is a reminder that not all learning comes in the form of successes. Learning can come from reflection upon frustration, and consequently, significance can be attached to episodes that are initial successes or initial frustrations. A portion of Samantha’s confrontation of her emerging understanding occurred when she applied her learning from the university classroom in the real world of a classroom during her shared writing assignment, making another argument for course assignments that are directly linked to field experiences (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Shrofel, 1991).

CROSS-CASE ISSUES

My first obligation in this inquiry was to understand the experiences of Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha. They were purposefully selected to maximize what I could learn from them as representatives of the preservice teachers enrolled in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course. Therefore, the nature of my study may be characterized as an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995).

With that task completed, I return to the nature of the questions guiding my inquiry and considered Skylar’s, Natasha’s, and Samantha’s experiences as they related to the larger issues of belief development and identification of significant episodes. In this respect, Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha served as instrumental case studies that will begin to help us understand the experience of learning to teach writing in an undergraduate writing methods course (Stake, 1995).
Understanding the experiences of Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha led me to consider issues related to belief development of preservice teachers as they learn to teach writing and to reconsider my understanding of dissonant moments and their relationship to the significant episodes in belief development.

Belief Development Toward the Orientation of the Instructor

Teacher education programs tend to have a relatively weak influence on preservice teacher learning; however, when changes occur, they tend to move toward the orientation of the program (Kennedy, 1998; Minor et al., 2001). The experiences of Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha confirm that the influence of the professor’s orientation tends to influence their belief development toward the orientation of the professor of the writing methods course in which they are enrolled. The beliefs of 12 of 16 preservice teachers participating in this study either moved toward the process-orientation of the instructor or maintained their process-orientation toward writing instruction. Based upon this evidence, the writing methods course allowed their beliefs to develop toward the orientation of the professor, at least in the short term. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) and Street (1999) suggest that this impact may diminish when preservice teachers are presented with the realities of teaching during their internship and first years of teaching.

Grossman et al. (2000) suggest that the foundation gained during the writing methods course is not lost during those first years of teaching and in the subsequent years. According to Grossman et al. (2000) their preparation and the beliefs that developed while learning to teach writing in a writing methods course serve as a screen through which novice teachers modify their instruction after their first year. They return to the beliefs developed during the teacher preparation program. If Skylar, Natasha, and
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Samantha do face situations during their internship and/or their first years of teaching that cause their initial belief development to be “washed away,” they may return to those process-oriented beliefs in the later years of their teaching career.

Dissonant Moments and Significant Episodes

Before I began this inquiry, my research into the nature of beliefs and cognitive dissonance prepared me for the possibility that I would witness or uncover incidents of cognitive dissonance or times when new learning confronted existing preconceived notions causing a shift and that those moments would be transparent in my investigation, something equivalent to lightning striking. My research experiences during this study caused me to re-examine my conception of a dissonant moment and my idea of when dissonance might occur. In cases where a person is faced with two elements that do not “fit,” or are dissonant (Festinger, 1957), three resolutions exist: abandoning the original position and adopting a new one; strengthening of the original position; or integration of the two positions (Shrofel, 1991). One additional outcome is possible: the person could ignore the new event or information and retain the original position. The dissonance left unacknowledged in this case persists (Festinger, 1957).

Skylar’s and Samantha’s experiences caused me to reconsider my idea of a dissonant moment. While all of my case study participants were either more able to identify process-oriented teacher behaviors or less likely to identify product-oriented teacher behaviors as effective at the end of the semester, I identified only two instances that I considered dissonant moments in the belief development of my case study participants. My narrow conception of moment and episode led me to look for moments in time rather than thinking about working through the dissonance as a process. When I
freed myself to consider moments of dissonance in a broader sense, observing Skylar
work through her conceptions of kindergarten writers became an obvious process of
working to lessen the dissonance between her conception of kindergarten writers as “just
learning letters” and Dr. Sheridan’s conception of kindergarten writers as writers who can
benefit from writing instruction.

Skylar grappled with an idea and drew new conclusions about the idea in the end.
Her initial views about kindergarten writers grew from her experiences in school that did
not involve writing at those young ages. Skylar indicated in class and in her mid-
semester interview that conducting a shared writing lesson with kindergartners would be
impossible. The negotiation of her new image of kindergarten writers involved a
conversation in class with Dr. Sheridan, conducting one not-so-successful shared writing
in the kindergarten class where she interned, follow-up conversations and observation of
her supervising teacher, and conducting a second shared writing with the kindergarten
writers. At the end of the semester, Skylar felt as though she had a new appreciation of
kindergarten writers, but that she still had work to do in this area. The amount of work
that Skylar put into completing the shared writing assignment went well above Dr.
Sheridan’s expectations.

I also gained a new understanding of dissonance related to the relative stability of
a belief. Based upon my initial review of literature, I looked for dissonance to occur
when a long-standing belief was challenged by new events or new information. That is
because the terms dissonance and consonance refer to issues of cognition or things a
person knows about him or herself, about his behavior, and about his surroundings
(Festinger, 1957). Based upon this definition, I considered long-standing beliefs to be
stable ideas firmly centered within the belief system of an individual. Through my observations and interviews with Samantha over the course of the semester, I suggest that dissonance may also occur when developing ideas are faced with new contradictory or practical information.

Samantha began to formulate beliefs about the process of conducting a shared writing lesson through her reading and by observing Dr. Sheridan’s modeling of shared writing lessons in class. During Samantha’s first shared writing lesson in class, Dr. Sheridan provided additional information that conflicted with her developing understanding of shared writing causing dissonance that was observed in the form of verbal frustration on Samantha’s part. By the time she conducted the shared writing lesson with children, Samantha was better prepared to conduct the shared writing lesson, but confronted practical issues that again caused frustration. In her end of semester interview, Samantha spoke confidently about shared writing and attributed some of her learning in the writing methods course to this significant episode. Over the course of the semester, Samantha integrated her original cognitions about shared writing with the new information from Dr. Sheridan and the practical information gained from events in her internship.

I could argue that all of the significant episodes identified by the three case study participants facilitated growth in beliefs thus creating cognitive dissonance that lead to belief development; however, I categorized only these two as series of events as dissonant events.
METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

In the course of enacting my research plan, three methodological issues emerged. While analyzing the preservice teachers’ responses on the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, questions arose related to the instrument itself. The act of analyzing transcripts from the initial and final case study interviews caused me to question the utility of including a question that addressed content not specifically attended to in the writing methods course. The final issue discussed in this section addresses the definition of eclectic, which I came to see differently over the course of my data analysis.

Utility of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

I developed the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey specifically for use in this study to collect information on the preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction for use in the selection of case study participants with varying initial beliefs about writing instruction. Classroom teachers, preservice teachers, and other professionals with some level of experience in teaching writing reviewed the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey prior to its use in my study. Gaining consensus on the process or product designation of each statement proved challenging. While I felt confident in the process/product designation for each teacher behavior by the time I utilized the instrument with the preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s course, the final ratio of process-oriented to product-oriented statements was 5:10. I believe that this instrument has the potential to provide useful information to teacher educators and should continue to be refined. Specifically, the ratio of process to product statements should be addressed before use in further research studies.
“Responding to Student Questions” Task

The second student situation posed to the case study participants asked them to respond to a student question drawing upon grammatical knowledge. Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha gave nearly identical responses to the “Responding to Student Questions” task in the initial and final case study interviews. The grammatical content of the second grade student question used in the in-depth interviews (see Figure 8) did not match the content of the writing methods course. Improving the writing skills of the preservice teachers in the writing methods course was not a goal of the course, nor did any systematic grammar instruction occur at any time during the semester. Based on this fact, the similarity in Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha’s responses from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester might have been anticipated. From a methodological perspective, this question did not provide data that revealed belief development and did not match the content of Dr. Sheridan’s course. In future studies, I would remove this question from the series of case study interviews unless I using in it in conjunction with a course that did provide systematic instruction to improve the writing skills of preservice teachers or that emphasized ways to respond to student questions.

Defining Eclectic

Two portraits of a preservice teacher holding an eclectic orientation toward writing instruction emerged during the analysis of the results from the administration of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey. The first characterization of eclectic can be found in Skylar’s initial responses. Her eclectic orientation toward writing instruction derived from her tendency to consider nearly all of the teacher behaviors as effective. She identified 13 of 15 teacher behaviors as effective, indicating that her prior
experiences did not combine to create a clear tendency toward one orientation. In this case, eclectic can be defined as the inability to discriminate between effective product-oriented and effective process-oriented teacher behaviors, and preservice teachers would identify all or nearly all of the teacher behaviors as effective. This characterization of eclectic, possibly born from Skylar’s inexperience, is contrary to the definition of eclectic that portrays the tendency to “select the best from diverse sources.” (Webster’s II New College Dictionary, 2001) Skylar’s act of identifying nearly all of the teacher behaviors as effective may be more of an indication of beliefs that she does not have rather than beliefs that she does identify.

Another characterization of an eclectic-orientation toward writing instruction is exemplified in the case of Angel 18 (see Appendix K). At the beginning of the semester, this preservice teacher identified 60% of the product-oriented statements as effective teacher behaviors and 80% of the process-oriented statements as effective teacher behaviors. This portrait of an eclectic-orientation toward writing instruction was far more common in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course and more in line with my original conception of eclectic. Angel 18’s response is closer to the intent of the term eclectic in that she demonstrated some ability to discriminate among process-oriented and product-oriented teacher behaviors. It is more likely that Angel 18 may have selected the “best from diverse sources.” (Webster’s II New College Dictionary, 2001) In both of these cases, an eclectic orientation toward writing instruction indicates no real preference toward product or process orientation of writing instruction, but for very different reasons.
In future manifestations of the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, the eclectic orientation should be scrutinized carefully. Response patterns such as Skylar’s may require a different designation in order to communicate the distinctions between non-discriminating pattern of responses and the response such as Angel 18 that indicate the possibility of the application of some selection criteria. The term ambivalence might be considered to describe a non-discriminating pattern of response such as Skylar’s. Including both patterns of response in the same eclectic orientation designation does not communicate effectively the nature of the two patterns of responses.

INCIDENTAL NOTICINGS

In addition to answering the research questions that guided my study, I noticed several interesting trends in the comments of the case study participants that could impact the belief development of preservice teachers while learning to teach writing that did not directly answer my research questions. I noticed trends in the development of the preservice teachers’ professional language and trends in the preservice teachers’ composing processes. Based upon my observations in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course and my interviews with Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha, I also came to question the impact that modeling can play in a writing methods course and the role that writing apprehension can play in the development of a writing teacher.

Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha all grew to varying degrees in their ability to use the language of author’s craft over the course of the semester. The degree to which they used appropriate author’s craft language to talk about student writing and their emerging beliefs varied. Skylar and Natasha began the semester with an eclectic-orientation toward writing instruction and ended the semester with an emerging process-orientation
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toward writing instruction that was more closely in line with their professor’s orientation. Their use of appropriate author’s craft language was limited and inconsistent. They occasionally used specific and accurate vocabulary that matched their emerging process-orientation toward writing instruction.

Samantha began the semester with a process-orientation toward writing instruction. At this stage in her development, she already identified process-oriented teacher behaviors as effective almost exclusively. By the end of the semester, her application of author’s craft language that matched her process-oriented beliefs increased significantly. While there is no way to know if her understanding of such phrases as “buddy editing” is developed enough to fully enact the practice successfully in the classroom, the fact that she consistently used specific and accurate vocabulary that closely matched her process-oriented beliefs is noticeable.

In the process of belief development, recognizing teacher practices that match emerging beliefs may be an initial step in realizing new understandings. Gaining the appropriate vocabulary to be able to speak specifically and accurately about those beliefs may be another stage in belief development. The experiences of Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha suggest the possibility of a developmental progression in the growth of professional language.

The fact that Samantha began the semester already recognizing effective process-oriented teacher behaviors seemed to allow her to focus more energy on acquiring author’s craft language that mirrored her emerging beliefs. Jordan (1989) suggested one reason that supports this observation, “Apprenticeship mode is good for learning how to do something, the didactic mode for learning how to talk about doing something.” (p. 225
Theoretically, Samantha’s apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 2002) would have provided her with a concept of how to teach writing that contained elements of a process-orientation toward writing instruction. The routines and assignments in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course would have served as the didactic mode of learning from which Samantha learned how to talk about writing instruction in a manner that matched her beliefs. In reality, Samantha reported few memories from her apprenticeship that fit the concept of process-oriented writing instruction. I am left wondering how Samantha came to hold strong process-oriented beliefs about writing instruction at the beginning of the semester. Regardless of the source, Samantha did hold process-oriented beliefs about writing instruction at the beginning of the semester and her ability to communicate in a manner that matched her beliefs developed significantly.

I would like to continue along this line of thinking that distinguishes between the type of learning that occurs during an apprenticeship and the type of learning that may occur during a more didactic phase of learning. Skylar’s and Natasha’s stories of their experiences learning to write during their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 2002) contained memories of product-oriented writing instruction and some memories of process-oriented instruction. Their apprenticeship experiences did support the development of their initial eclectic orientation of writing instruction. Initially, Skylar and Natasha had not acquired process-oriented beliefs about writing instruction. When faced with a more didactic mode of learning in Dr. Sheridan’s writing methods course that might have supported their learning to talk about process-oriented beliefs being presented, they did not fully develop their ability to use the language of a process-oriented writing teacher perhaps because they did not yet hold those beliefs. For Skylar
and Natasha, some of the learning experiences supported by Dr. Sheridan during the writing methods course may have served as apprenticeship-type learning experiences and furthered their recognition of how to implement process-oriented beliefs. I include in these experiences the modeling of the shared writing lessons and the application of a shared writing lesson with a group of children.

Learning to become a legitimate participant in any community involves learning how to talk and be silent in the manner of full participants (Jordan, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). As Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha work to become a member of the teaching profession, they will become familiar with the repertoire of language that is associated with education as one way to mark their membership in the community of practice (Wenger, 1998). That repertoire includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted (Wenger, 1998). Similarly, Gee (1996) discusses discourses in this way, “Discourses are ways of displaying membership in a particular social group or social network, people who associate with each other around a common set of interests, goals, and activities” (p. 128). While Gee is referring to Discourse with a big “D” that encompasses much more than language and Wenger’s notion of repertoire refers to much more than language, my study addresses only one part of the Discourse or repertoire of being a teacher, the language. Learning the language of a community as a marker of membership is an important evolution in becoming a member.

One element of strong professionalism is the articulative dimension (Barone, Berliner, Blanchard, Casanova, & McGowan, 1996). A strong professional educator should be able to articulate, or profess, positions concerning the wisdom of educational
practice. “The profession of that dearly held, carefully considered nexus of beliefs constitutes the articulation of an educational identity, the creation of a professional self.” (Barone et al., 1996, p. 1111) In so much as Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha hope to enter the field of teaching, they also must develop their ability to articulate what they hold to be beneficial and effective within their chosen field. For this reason, the ability to talk the talk of a process-oriented writing teacher, the orientation of their beliefs at the end of the semester, is a significant finding in my study.

The true test of belief development would be to observe Skylar, Natasha, and Samantha as they enter their internship and first years of teaching to discover if being able to talk the talk of a process-oriented writing teacher translates into being able to walk the walk of a process-oriented writing teacher. Such observations would strengthen the conceptual link between beliefs and action.

I also noticed the tremendous impact the computer has on the composing processes of preservice teachers. Skylar’s comment that she just “types, types, types” when she writes on the computer is indicative of the composing processes of all three case study participants. Revision is rarely conducted on pieces of writing completed as course requirements. If revision or editing occurs, it tends to occur as the writing develops and is completed by an outside reviewer, someone viewed by the preservice teacher as a good writer. All three case study participants indicated that they don’t write much right now because they do so much required writing in their overloaded school schedule. Teacher educators should be aware that preservice teachers might tend to submit drafts of their work rather than work that has been revised or edited thoroughly.
Also of interest, but not directly related to my research questions was the perception on the part of some of the preservice teachers that modeling by Dr. Sheridan was less than effective. Dr. Sheridan placed great emphasis on and hope in the amount of modeling she did both in respect to the shared writing and the read alouds. Some preservice teachers commented that the read alouds were a waste of time, while others enjoyed learning about new children’s books that are available. The misconception regarding modeling could also be seen in the preservice teachers’ level of participation during Dr. Sheridan’s modeling of shared writing, which often bordered on minimal. Some preservice teachers raised a hand to volunteer something, but more often, Dr. Sheridan had to beg volunteers to provide input into her modeling experiences. Because Dr. Sheridan placed such hope in her modeling of the shared writing lessons specifically, the flow of these lessons was disappointing.

I also noted that Dr. Sheridan did not intend for the in-class writing time and creation of a children’s book to impact the writing skills or writing apprehension levels of the preservice teachers. Dr. Sheridan is a writer in her personal and professional life. This fact surfaced when she shared her own brainstorming and when she shared her own writing with the preservice teachers. However, by her own admission, she never specifically identified the improvement of the writing produced by the preservice teachers or a lessening of writing apprehension levels as a goal of the writing methods course.

Two of the three preservice teachers experienced a very slight decrease in the level of apprehension they feel about their own writing. Samantha even credited Dr. Sheridan with her newfound love of poetry. However, the general writing apprehension
level of the group of preservice teachers in Dr. Sheridan’s class did not significantly change over the course of the semester. I classify Samantha’s experience as a welcome surprise among the intentional instructional goals listed in the course syllabi. This incidental noticing could be more significant than it may seem on the surface when the notion of the Peter Effect (Applegate and Applegate, 2004) is reviewed. The idea is that you cannot give what you do not have. Preservice teachers who do not have an enthusiasm for writing can struggle to spark enthusiasm for writing in their students. If assignments such as the in-class writing and creation of a children’s book can lessen the writing apprehension levels of preservice teachers even minimally, the likelihood that the Peter Effect will impact another generation of writing teachers also decreases. It would seem that Samantha may be better prepared to spark an enthusiasm for writing when she becomes a teacher because she can now share an enthusiasm that she does have. I am left wondering what type of learning experiences would be necessary for an instructor with a passion for writing, such as Dr. Sheridan, to pass that enthusiasm on to preservice teachers learning to teach writing. The Peter Effect suggests that this could be a worthy goal of any teacher education program.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

Preparing preservice teachers to teach writing is an important and relevant area of study. Understanding the experiences of preservice teachers with varied orientations toward writing instruction can provide teacher educators with information to guide the development of future writing methods courses. In this section, I present my recommendations for the development of future writing methods courses.
The varied experiences of the three preservice teachers in my study confirm the fact that multiple realities will exist in any writing methods course. The value of having strategies such as the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) and the Writing Instruction Orientation Survey available for teacher educators lies in the ability of an instructor to gather information on initial writing apprehension levels and orientations toward writing instruction. Understanding the initial combinations of these factors, teacher educators can be better prepared to facilitate learning in learning situations with preservice teachers and be prepared to provide support at times when preservice teachers may struggle to balance existing beliefs with emerging beliefs. Making the development of beliefs the center aim of instruction means that initial beliefs must be acknowledged, valued, and challenged.

This change in focus of instruction in a writing methods course could lead to a change in the type of support preservice teachers require during their learning process. Increasing the awareness of teacher educators to the existence of dissonant incidents and the role that they play in the belief development may allow teacher educators to purposefully create situations in which dissonance occurs and to provide sufficient support to assist preservice teachers to work through the discrepancies between their existing beliefs and their emerging beliefs. In order to accomplish the goal of facilitating belief development toward the orientation of the instructor, teacher educators should create situations in which the existing beliefs of preservice teachers are brought to the forefront of instruction rather than allowing them to sit in the background like the wallpaper in grandma’s kitchen—hardly noticed.
The findings of Florio-Ruane & Lensmire (1990) and Shrofel (1991) and the experiences of Skylar and Samantha suggest a third implication for practice: teacher educators should consider the intentional connection between field experiences and writing methods courses as an important strategy that can impact the beliefs of preservice teachers. Dr. Sheridan modeled shared writing lessons during class; the preservice teachers conducted a shared writing lesson in class; and the preservice teachers conducted a shared writing lesson with children. This series of instructional steps illustrates one possible format for creating learning experiences that intentionally call for preservice teachers to apply a desired instructional practice in a field experience. The benefit in this type of intentional field experience exists in the teacher educator’s availability to debrief the learning experiences within the context of the course they are assigned. This type of intentional field experience with direct ties to the application of intended learning from a writing methods course could be one way of putting preservice teachers in positions that cause dissonance between their existing conceptions of children as writers and of writing instruction and their emerging beliefs. By being connected to a methods course, support can be provided immediately at the time of need when experiences occur that can lead to belief development.

The development of a preservice teacher’s ability to talk the talk of a writing teacher should also be a primary aim of a writing methods course. A preservice teacher who can talk about writing instruction in a manner that matches the orientation of the instructor is likely a preservice teacher who can also recognize effective teacher behaviors to coincide with that talk. Teacher educators should provide time within the writing methods course for preservice teachers to gain experience in applying author’s
craft language in professional conversations just as time is provided to engage in the actual teacher behaviors.

The development of preservice teachers’ professional language should become an aim of teacher education programs in all subject areas. The two phases of development I observed in my case study participants while learning to teach writing suggests that teacher education programs first facilitate learning experiences centered on helping preservice teachers identify effective teacher behaviors that match the orientation of the instructor. When preservice teachers are able to identify the teacher behaviors, the development of the accompanying professional language that corresponds to that orientation should be developed.

Teacher educators should consider refining modeling to incorporate a think aloud strategy into the modeled behavior or to include a debriefing session immediately following the modeled strategy. It is not safe to assume that preservice teachers who are balancing heavy course loads, part time or full time jobs, and other outside distractions will think about the modeled experience on a metacognitive level and make the modeled behavior part of their belief system. To increase the likelihood that modeled experiences translate into learning about effective teacher behaviors, instructional behaviors and rationale must be made transparent for the preservice teachers. This would be the equivalent to Keene and Zimmerman’s (1997) think aloud protocol to accompany modeling reading strategies. Keene and Zimmerman suggest that teachers model their own thinking process related to specific reading strategies, thus making the thinking involved in the reading behavior transparent and visible to children. Children gradually take responsibility for applying the strategy themselves. Applied to teacher education,
teacher educators should consider modeling the teacher behavior and the thinking that accompanies the teacher behavior, essentially thinking aloud while modeling. Gradually, the preservice teachers might take responsibility for the thinking themselves. In this way, modeling could truly serve to scaffold the preservice teachers belief development toward the orientation of the instructor. Teacher educators might also consider incorporating debriefing sessions immediately following a modeled behavior into their instructional routine. During a debriefing session, issues related to purpose and decision-making should be addressed. Both the think aloud protocol and the debriefing session might support preservice teachers’ thinking as they come to understand a teacher behavior at a metacognitive level thus increasing the likelihood that the behavior becomes a part of the preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The most obvious area for future research derives from findings reported by Grossman et al. (2000). Grossman et al. found that the new teachers in their study did initially rely on curricular materials as a source of instructional guidance during their first year of teaching; however, they also found that the teachers held onto the ideas introduced in the language arts methods course and used them to critique practices they adopted during their first year of teaching. Consequently, while Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) may be correct in reporting that influences made by teacher education programs are “washed out” when preservice teachers begin teaching during their internship and their first years of teaching, evidence exists that they also hold on to the beliefs developed in teacher education programs and justifies the work of teacher educators attempting to impact the beliefs of preservice teachers.
Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development

One area for future research deriving from this study is the longitudinal study of preservice teacher belief development. It is one thing to say that preservice teachers’ beliefs developed in the course of a one semester writing methods course, but quite another thing to say that teaching practice was impacted. Longitudinal data would help build a long-term understanding of the development of beliefs about writing and writing instruction.

Further research is also necessary to refine the content and process of determining the writing instruction orientation of preservice teachers. Identifying teacher behaviors that a general group of teacher educators agree are product-oriented and process-oriented has proven to be a challenge thus far. The collection of additional statements will strengthen the content of the existing statements and improve the identification of initial orientations and judgments regarding development of beliefs. The availability of a reliable and easy to administer instrument that identifies initial beliefs about writing instruction may encourage teacher educators to allow beliefs and belief development to play a more central role in the preparation of preservice teachers to teach writing.

My study attempted to identify significant episodes in the belief development of preservice teachers while they learned to teach writing. The results of this study show that preservice teachers do attach relevance to the assignments they complete, and that in some cases these assignments allow preservice teachers to work through dissonance that results when they face information that doesn’t “fit with” emerging understandings or deeply held beliefs. For this reason, the further interrogation of significant episodes is an area that should be pursued in future research. Specifically, identifying the characteristics of significant episodes across multiple settings might lead to the
development of a set of criteria or common characteristics of course assignments or routines that can guide teacher educators in the development of course assignments and routines that will likely impact the beliefs of preservice teachers.

The impact of grading on Skylar’s perceptions of the writing methods course opens an additional area for future consideration. What are the long-term implications of course grades on belief development and, more importantly, the current and future implementation of emerging beliefs? Future inquiry into grading practices and their role in belief development will provide teacher educators with information to inform grading policies. On a more immediate scale, teacher educators will benefit from a better understanding of how their own grading practices impact belief development and long-term impact of instruction. The argument is not to give everyone an “A,” rather to examine grading practices to find ways to bring teaching and assessment together in the learning process instead of maintaining grading as a separate entity to be reported at the end of a semester.

Finally, the experiences of the three case study participants underscore the need to examine the ability of preservice teachers to apply the language of author’s craft when examining student writing or talking about their emerging beliefs about writing. The ability to talk about student writing and their beliefs about writing instruction is an indicator of knowledge of subject matter and is a dimension of the level of professionalism of a writing teacher. Teachers are expected to be able to speak the language of the subject matter they teach and will need to be able to draw upon author’s craft language as they teach writing in their elementary classrooms. The ability of preservice teachers to talk the talk of a writing teacher is an area that warrants further
investigation. The combination of research on language development with research on communities of practice come together to create an exciting area for future research on preservice teachers acquisition of professional discourse as a marker of membership in a community of practice.
References


http://www.ncate.org/standards/programstds.htm


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Preservice Teachers’ Belief Development


Appendices
Appendix A
Study Design Flowchart

What: Gain Access
Who: Professor and Writing Methods Course
How: Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, Writing Apprehension Test

What: Selection of Case Study Participants
Who: Case Study Participants
How: Stratified Purposeful Sampling

What: Initial Case Study Interview
Who: Case Study Participants
How: Semi-structured Interviews

What: Collection of Work Samples
Who: Case Study Participants
How: Semi-structured Interviews

What: Mid-Semester Case Study Interview
Who: Case Study Participants
How: Semi-structured Interviews

What: Collection of Work Samples
Who: Case Study Participants
How: Semi-structured Interviews

What: Final Case Study Interview
Who: Case Study Participants
How: Semi-structured Interviews

What: Post Survey
Who: All Preservice Teachers in Writing Methods Course
How: Writing Instruction Orientation Survey, Writing Apprehension Test
Appendix B
The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

Name: ___________________________________________  Date: __________

Dear Student,

On the following pages you will find descriptions of two elementary teachers’ writing practices. While you read each description, think about practices in which the teacher engages that you believe to be effective practices. The effective writing practices should be practices you can most likely see yourself doing when you are a teacher. The less effective practices should be practices you will most likely not engage in when you are a teacher.

Read the entire description. After you have finished reading, indicate in the space below each part of the description

1. Those practices you believe to be effective by circling effective or not effective.
2. After you make that decision, explain your reasons in the space provided underneath each statement. If you need more space to write, continue on the back of the paper.

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey!
Karen S. Kelley
Appendix B: (Continued)
The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

Teacher #1

Ms. Joel teaches third grade. Every day, Ms. Joel begins with a practice known as daily oral language. She writes two sentences filled with grammatical errors on the board. Working independently, students copy the sentences on their paper and make all corrections to the sentence. After most students have completed copying the sentence and making corrections, Ms. Joel corrects the sentences on the board and her students copy any corrections they missed to their paper. The following sentence might appear as a daily oral language sentence, “my sisters cames to disney world with my dad and me”.

1. Effective       Not Effective
Explain:  

Next, Ms. Joel moves into her daily writing block that typically lasts 45-60 minutes. Her writing instruction is organized around studies of various genres of writing such as narrative, expository, poetry, etc. Each day she begins her writing time with a 10-15 minute mini-lesson on topics that address the genre being studied and the needs of the students. During some of her mini-lessons, she teaches grammar in a planned sequence. Other mini-lessons address writing skills necessary to improve students’ organization, focus, use of supporting details and other strategies important to improve the students’ understanding of the craft of writing. For example, during a genre study on narrative writing, Ms. Joel reads a narrative book that includes many examples of descriptive writing. After reading the book, the class creates list of descriptive words found in the book. Ms. Joel wants to focus on adjectives as descriptive words and provides the definition of an adjective. She discusses with her students that some of the descriptive words are adjectives. Ms. Joel and the students work together to underline all of the adjectives on the class list of descriptive words. Because Ms. Joel wants her students to apply this skill in their writing, she finishes the mini-lesson by asking the students to re-read their draft of narrative writing and underline all of the adjectives they find.

2. Effective       Not Effective
Explain:  

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Appendix B: (Continued)
The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

This lesson will be continued the next day by having the students underline two important nouns in their writing. Students will participate in a round robin brainstorming session in their small groups. Each group member will announce one of their nouns and allow group members to offer adjectives that could be used to describe that noun. After each group member has had a chance to list several ideas, individual students will work to revise their writing to include the adjectives suggested or find some of their own to include. Ms. Joel will continue this focus on descriptive language for several days. Students have 20 – 25 minutes of individual writing time after the mini-lesson to work on their narrative writing.

3. Effective       Not Effective
Explain:

During their individual writing time, students revise and edit their writing. Students participate in peer conferences and teacher led conferences. In revision conferences, students use a peer conference format modeled by Ms. Joel. The author asks the listener to respond to a specific question about the writing. The author reads their writing. Next, the listener responds first by stating what was heard in the piece, then to the question posed by the author. In editing conferences, students use a checklist modeled by Ms. Joel to assist the partner in finding grammatical errors. During her conferences, Ms. Joel keeps records of the topics addressed in the conference so that she is sure to meet with each student and to refer to in future conferences. Before submitting a piece of writing to be graded, at least two peer conferences and one teacher conference are conducted.

4. Effective       Not Effective
Explain:
Appendix B: (Continued)
The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Not Effective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Every piece of writing completed by the students is turned in, graded for correctness by Ms. Joel, returned to the student, and taken home.</td>
<td>Explain:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Each Monday she begins with a new list of 15 spelling words that come from the spelling book. Throughout the week, Ms. Joel’s students complete assignments such as practicing the words by writing them 10 times each, writing the words in sentences, and looking the words up in a dictionary.</td>
<td>Explain:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ms. Joel emphasizes the correct formation of letters in bi-weekly handwriting lessons.</td>
<td>Explain:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix B: (Continued)
The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

**Teacher #2**

Ms. Stevens teaches third grade. She plans daily lessons for her students that help the students learn rules of grammar. Her grammar lessons follow the sequence suggested by the English textbook. She believes that her students must be able to write in complete sentences before they can start writing narrative and expository writing pieces. Her instruction places significant emphasis on avoiding typical grammatical errors. A typical grammar lesson begins with the introduction of the topic, subject/verb agreement, for example. She then discusses examples and assigns exercises for practice, both from the English textbook.

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<tr>
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<th>Effective</th>
<th>Not Effective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Explain:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In order to assess student learning, Ms. Stevens gives the test from the textbook at the end of each chapter.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Not Effective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Explain:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students in Ms. Stevens’ class also complete weekly writing assignments. They write 3 days per week-Monday, Wednesday, Friday of every week. Ms. Stevens begins the week with a writing prompt so that all students will have an idea to write about. All of the students write about the same topic for the rest of the week. On Monday, students plan for their writing using a graphic organizer provided by Ms. Stevens. On Wednesday, students write a story based upon the planning they during the previous lesson.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Not Effective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Explain:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: (Continued)
The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

Ms. Stevens collects all students’ writing at the end of class on Wednesday. She edits the writing, correcting spelling and punctuation, and returns it to the students on Friday. The students then make a final copy and turn it into Ms. Stevens to be graded.

11. Effective       Not Effective  
Explain:  

Ms. Stevens collects students’ writing and places them in individual portfolios. She uses this collection of student writing when determining student progress in the area of writing each quarter.

12. Effective       Not Effective  
Explain:  

Every Friday, Ms. Stevens allows several students to share their final drafts with the entire class and celebrate successes in their writing.

13. Effective       Not Effective  
Explain:  

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Appendix B: (Continued)
The Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

| Each student in Ms. Stevens’ class has an individual spelling list comprised of 5 misspelled words from his/her own writing. Students’ work with spelling partners throughout the week participating in hands on spelling centers designed to help the students focus on the unique features of each word. |
|---|---|
| 14. Effective Not Effective |
| Explain: |

| At the end of the week, spelling partners give each other their individual spelling test, which Ms. Stevens grades. |
|---|---|
| 15. Effective Not Effective |
| Explain: |
Appendix C
Writing Instruction Orientation Survey Analysis Form

Column 1. Item. Numbers correspond to descriptions in survey.
Column 2. Effective. Circle the PST response.
Column 3. Description. Does the explanation confirm or contradict the effectiveness level indicated in Column 2? When the
description contradicts the effectiveness rating, put a △ around E or NE indicating the change.
Column 4. Orientation. Based upon the PST effectiveness rating and the explanation given, does this response correspond to a
product focus or process focus.
Column 5. Notes. Record any notes you would like to remember for discussion purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Product</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Confirms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Process</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Confirms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Process</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Confirms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Process</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Confirms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Product</td>
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<td>Confirms</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Product</td>
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<td>8. Product</td>
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<td>9. Product</td>
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<td>10. Product</td>
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<td>Confirms</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Product</td>
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<td>12. Process</td>
<td>E</td>
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<td>13. Process</td>
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<td>Confirms</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Product</td>
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<td>Confirms</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Product</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Confirms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response Summary: Product _____%  Process _____%

Beliefs about writing instruction appear to be PRODUCT ECLECTIC PROCESS ORIENTED.
Appendix D
Analysis of Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

Beginning of the Semester Writing Instruction Orientation Results

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<th>Rater</th>
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Note.  <sup>a</sup> Preservice teachers selected as case study participants.  <sup>b</sup> One response left blank in completion of survey.
Appendix D: (Continued)
Analysis of Writing Instruction Orientation Survey

End of Semester Writing Orientation Survey Results

<table>
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Note. \(^a\) Preservice teachers selected as case study participants.
Appendix E
Writing Apprehension Test (WAT)

Directions: Below are eighteen statements that people sometimes make about themselves. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. While some of the statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible. Please indicate whether or not you believe each statement applies to you by marking whether you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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_____1. I avoid writing.
_____2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.
_____3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.
_____4. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.
_____5. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.
_____6. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.
_____7. I like to write my ideas down.
_____8. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.
_____9. I like to have my friends read what I have written.
_____10. I’m nervous about writing.
_____11. People seem to enjoy what I write.
_____12. I enjoy writing.
_____13. I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas.
_____14. Writing is a lot of fun.
_____15. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.
_____16. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.
_____17. It’s easy for me to write good compositions.
_____18. I don’t think I write as well as most other people do.
_____19. I don’t like my compositions to be evaluated.
_____20. I’m no good at writing.
Appendix E: (Continued)
Writing Apprehension Test (WAT)

Scoring: To determine your score on the WAT, complete the following steps:
Step 1. Add scores for items 1, 4, 5, 10, 13, 18, 19, and 20
Step 2. Add the scores for items 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17
Step 3. Complete the following formula:
\[ WAT = 48 - \text{Total from Step 1} + \text{Total from Step 2} \]
Your score should be between 20 and 100. If your score is below 20 or above 100, you have
made a mistake in computing the score.

Source:
Daly, J. A., & Miller, M. D. (1975). The empirical development of an instrument to
### Appendix F
#### Analysis of Writing Apprehension Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
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<td>Angel 18</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td>78</td>
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</table>

Note. Lower apprehension scores indicate higher apprehension levels. Writing apprehension scores derived from the Writing Apprehension Test (Daly & Miller, 1975) can range from 20-100. “H” represents scores ranging from 20-49 indicating a high level of apprehension. “M” represents scores ranging from 50-73 indicating a moderate level of apprehension. “L” represents scores ranging from 74-100 indicating a low level of apprehension. *Preservice teachers selected as case study participants.*
Appendix G
Professor Interview Guide
Adapted from Kennedy, 1999; Kennedy, Ball, & McDiarmid, 1993

Professor Interview Guide

Personal History and Orientation
Tell me a little bit about yourself…
   How old are you?
   Family background?
      Father’s background, including education
      Mother’s background, including education
   Where did you spend the majority of your pre-college life
      (especially elementary school)?
   What type of English courses did you take while in high school?
   What is your favorite school subject?
   Where did you attend college…all of them?

Views About the Nature of Writing
What do you remember about learning to write in elementary school?
What about high school level? What do you remember about writing in high school?
Do you know anyone whom you consider to be good at writing? Who is it? Why do you consider them to be good at writing?
Is there anything about writing that you especially enjoy? Is there something you especially dislike?
In your own life, what kinds of writing do you do, and where?
What is your philosophy of writing and writing instruction?

Organizing the Curriculum
You have quite a bit of experience teaching the writing methods course. What do you feel is the most important thing your preservice teachers should learn by taking your course?
How is the course organized?
What are the assignments/projects the preservice teachers will complete this semester? Why?
Which assignment/project do you anticipate will have the most impact on the preservice teachers’ beliefs about writing?
Appendix H
Initial Case Study Interview Guide
Adapted from Kennedy, 1999; Kennedy, Ball, & McDiarmid, 1993

Initial Interview

**Personal History and Orientation**
Tell me a little bit about yourself…
  How old are you?
  Family background?
    Father’s background, including education
    Mother’s background, including education
  Where did you spend the majority of your pre-college life (especially elementary school)?
  What type of English courses did you take while in high school?
  What point are you at in your college career?
  When did you first start thinking about you might want to teach? Why are you interested in teaching?
  What is your favorite school subject?
  What is/will be your favorite school subject to teach? least favorite?

**Views About the Nature of Writing**
What do you remember about learning to write in elementary school?
What about high school level? What do you remember about writing in high school?
Do you know anyone whom you consider to be good at writing? Who is it?
Why do you consider them to be good at writing?
Is there anything about writing that you especially enjoy? Is there something you especially dislike?
In your own life, what kinds of writing do you do, and where?

**Organizing the Curriculum**
Imagine a grade level that you would like to teach. When you meet with the principal, what would you say about things you’d be trying to accomplish in writing with your ___ grade students?
  Probe: If the person refers to “the process approach” in writing, or other fashionable terms, probe for what they mean by such terms. If the person says s/he doesn’t know enough about the school curriculum for that grade, ask if there are any important ideas that come to mind around that grade.
  Why are these the most important things to accomplish?
In teaching writing to ___ graders, what kinds of writing would you work on? Are there any types of writing you would not work on with ___ graders? Why?

**Responding to Students**
Quotation Marks – Jessie’s story (see Appendix I)
Pronoun/Verb Agreement – “None of the books ____ in the library.” A second grade student asks you whether to use “is” or “are” in this sentence. How would you respond and why?
Teaching Organization – Dolphin story (see Appendix J)
Appendix I
Jessie’s Story, Third Grade
For use with Initial Interview and Final Interview
Kennedy, 1998, 1999

One day my friend Mary asked me, "Do you want to have a picnic?" When we got there we started playing. At the picnic people said, "Where's your puppy? He is at home?"
We went home happy.
My mother said, "I'm glad you had a picnic."
Dolphins are really not fish. Other fish have gill to breath in air and blow out again. Dolphins are like other big, big water animals they eat other small water animals. The ocean is the only place that Dolphins can live.

The reason that the Dolphins can only live in the ocean is because the Dolphins have to live in salt water. Dolphins are somewhat related to sharks and whales. There are only one kind of Dolphins. There are very few places that have Dolphins. Matter of fact there are only two places that have Dolphins. The two places that have Dolphins are the coast of Maine and Alaska are the only two places that have Dolphins. The Dolphins can weigh up to three tons. In 1963 a man was killed by a Dolphin. The Dolphins name was Julie. The way they tell is the marking on the Dolphins tale.
Mid-Semester Interview

**Personal History and Orientation**
Welcome back!
Let’s start with your plans for teaching.
What level would ideally like to teach? Why?
What type of school do you see yourself working in? Why?
What are your career plans?

**Views About the Nature of Writing**
Is there anything about writing that you especially enjoy? Is there something you especially dislike?
In your own life, what kinds of writing do you do, and where?

**Experiences This Semester**
You have been in the writing methods class now for half of a semester, approximately 7 weeks.
I’m interested in hearing about what you have been thinking about and doing.
Have their been any assignments or activities that have made an impact on you and/or your thinking about writing and/or writing instruction?
What about your teaching of writing?
    Probes: Where were you? When did this happen? Why/How was it important? What difference did it make to you?

**Review of Work Samples**
Let’s look at some of the things you have done thus far this semester. Tell me about this.
Why were asked to complete this assignment/project?
How much effort did you put into completing it?
Final Interview

Personal History and Orientation
Welcome back!
I’d like to start by talking briefly about your writing habits. Do you write? Why? When?
Do you have family members who are writers?
What role did writing play in your early development? Do you remember writing before you went to school?

Views About the Nature of Writing
Do you know anyone whom you consider to be good at writing? Who is it? Why do you consider them to be good at writing?
Is there anything about writing that you especially enjoy? Is there something you especially dislike?

Responding to Students
Quotation Marks – Jessie’s story (Appendix I)
Pronoun/Verb Agreement – “None of the books _____ in the library.” A second grade student asks you whether to use “is” or “are” in this sentence. How would you respond and why?
Teaching Organization – Dolphin story (Appendix J)

Experiences This Semester
You have been in the writing methods class now for an entire semester, approximately 15 weeks.
I’m interested in hearing about what you have been thinking about and doing since the last time we were together.
Have there been any assignments or activities that have made an impact on you and/or your thinking about writing and/or writing instruction?
What about your teaching of writing?
Probes: Where were you? When did this happen? Why/How was it important? What difference did it make to you?

Review of Work Samples
Let’s look at some of the things you have done thus far this semester. Tell me about this.
Why were asked to complete this assignment/project?
How much effort did you put into completing it?
Appendix M
Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 Course Syllabus

1. LAE 4314
2. Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, Grades K-6

3. Professor:
Dr. Sheridan
Office:    Office Hours:
Phone:    Email:
Fax:    Website:

4. Course Prerequisites: none

5. Course Description:
The purpose of this course is for students to understand children’s writing development and to design and implement instructional strategies for teaching composition in an integrated Language Arts curriculum.

6. Course Goals and Objectives:
a. Describe children’s writing development including the use of oral language and visual expression. (AP#7)

b. Identify the developmental acquisition of listening, speaking, and writing for children who are L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) English language learners. (AP#7 and ESOL #8)

c. Select, design, and evaluate instructional methods and materials relevant to the teaching of writing to students with diverse backgrounds, languages, and needs. (AP#5 and ESOL #6)

d. Apply instructional strategies for integrating writing across the curriculum.

e. Select appropriate and authentic methods for evaluating children’s development in writing. (AP#1 and AP#10)

f. Identify and evaluate current local, state, and national expectations for writing achievement and instruction. (AP#1)

g. Describe the role of the teacher in implementing the integrated Language Arts curriculum which includes Modeled, Shared, Interactive, Guided, and Independent writing. (AP#10 and AP#11)

h. Apply technology to develop students’ higher order thinking skills and creativity and to increase productivity in composition. (AP#12; NETS I.B and II.C and III.B and V.C)
Appendix M: (Continued)
Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 Course Syllabus

7. Content Outcomes:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Course Content</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<td>Introduction to the course</td>
<td>Teaching Case</td>
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<td>Theory and research base for writing instruction and writing development for L1 and L2 learners</td>
<td>*Writing Time (In Class) &amp; Book Illustration Session</td>
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<td>8/30</td>
<td>Writing Development</td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 1, p. 3</td>
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<td>Writing, oral language, listening, and visual expression</td>
<td>Pinnell and Fountas Ch. 15, p. 191</td>
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<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>Dyson Article</td>
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<td>Modeled, Shared, Interactive, Guided and Independent Writing</td>
<td>*Writing Time (In Class)</td>
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<td>Labor Day</td>
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<td>9/13</td>
<td>Strategies and Skills for Writing</td>
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<td>Thomason &amp; York, p. 27-34</td>
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<td>Skim over Pinnell and Fountas Ch. 13, p. 149</td>
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</table>

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Appendix M: (Continued)
Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 Course Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reading Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/18</td>
<td><strong>Genre Study: Poetry Writing</strong></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 12, p. 380&lt;br&gt;Visit <a href="http://www.poets.org">www.poets.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Structures and Strategies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bring in a book of poetry for children</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Writing Time:</strong> Writing Folder Due &amp; Review Children’s Book Rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No Quiz</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Writing Time:</strong> Book Making Demo &amp; Children’s Book Ideas Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td><strong>Genre Study: Journals, Letter Writing, Description, Biographies</strong></td>
<td>Jigsaw Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 (Tompkins)&lt;br&gt;<strong>No Quiz</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Writing Time:</strong> Book Making Demo &amp; Children’s Book Ideas Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Children’s Book Ideas Due</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Children’s Book Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/1</td>
<td><strong>Writing Tools: Spelling Workshop and Word Study</strong></td>
<td>Pinnell and Fountas Ch. 14, p. 168&lt;br&gt;<strong>Children’s Book Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Shared Writing with Children Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Writing Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8</td>
<td><strong>Classroom Observation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflection Form Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15</td>
<td><strong>Children’s Book Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Children’s Books Due</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Writing Folders Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Writing Tools: Computers, and Handwriting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Children’s Books Due</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Writing Folders Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/22</td>
<td><strong>Assessment:</strong> Developing Rubrics, Informal Methods, and Portfolios</td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 5, p. 150&lt;br&gt;Pinnell and Fountas Ch. 10, p. 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/29</td>
<td><strong>Assessment:</strong> Local, State, and National Expectations (Standards), Report Cards</td>
<td>Thomason &amp; York p. 59-75&lt;br&gt;Narrative and Expository Review: Mini-lessons using children’s writing&lt;br&gt;ESOL competency checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/4-12/10</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
<td><strong>Date and Location TBA</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Evaluation of Student Outcomes:

**Course Assignments:**

*Individual Assignments- Complete all of the following assignments individually.*

**These are not collaborative assignments.**

1. **Shared Writing** (15%)

You will conduct 2 shared writings.

First, you will form a group with other members of the class. You will conduct a shared writing in class and ask your group to complete an evaluation form (in course packet) regarding your ability to direct a shared writing. The writing strategy that you will teach will be assigned to you. (5%)

Then, you will use this feedback to improve your instruction when you conduct a shared writing with a small group of children (at least one student in the group must be an ESL student). You may work with students of any age. The writing strategy will be assigned to you. Video or audiotape yourself during the entire shared writing. Then analyze your instruction and complete a written self-assessment (in course packet). Shared writing will be discussed and modeled in class. (10%)
Appendix M: (Continued)
Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 Course Syllabus

2. Writing Time (10% writing folder) (20% children’s book)
During class, you will receive weekly writing time. “Writing Time” is similar to a workshop atmosphere in that you will work on various writing projects at your own pace. During writing time you may also be asked to complete other assigned writings from various genres. You will also continue some of your writing projects at home. All of your writing efforts need to be recorded on the writing log (in course packet). Keep the log and all of your writing in a folder, and bring it to class each day. (You need a paper folder with pockets that is separate from other folders for the course.) You will also participate in different types of writing conferences. By mid-semester, you will select one piece of writing to publish in a book for children. The books may be realistic stories, fantasy stories, poetry collections or non-fiction texts. ABC books, counting books, or story innovations are not appropriate for this assignment because they do not reveal enough of your writing. Your text should be about 250 words, but there is no page limit or word limit. We will practice constructing the cover, pages, and binding in class. You will assemble the writing and illustrations on your own. Then, you will read your book to the class. All books should be typed and bound.

Book Making Materials: 1. colored contact paper, contact paper with a design, or cloth, 2. large pieces of construction paper for the inside pages, 3. colored dental floss, 4. large sewing needles, 5. rubber cement or cloth glue, 6. a cereal box or cardboard cut to the size and shape of your book, 7. scissors, 8. masking tape or other heavy tape, 9. ruler.

3. Classroom Observation (5%)
Towards the end of the semester, I will arrange for the class to conduct focused observations of writing teachers. After each observation, you will complete a written reflection of what you have learned.

4. Quizzes (20%)
Weekly quizzes will be given. They will cover the readings, class discussions, activities, and assignments. Quizzes will not be “made up” for any reason.

5. Final Exam (15%)
A comprehensive exam will be given during finals week. It will cover the readings, class discussions, activities, and assignments. The final will not be “made up” unless there is a documented emergency and arrangements are made prior to the final. In addition, the “late assignment” policy will apply.

6. Weekly Assignments (15%)
ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. PROMPTNESS IS EXPECTED AND REQUIRED. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND PREPARATION FOR CLASS ARE ESSENTIAL. ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN ON TIME. There are many legitimate reasons for absences, tardies, and late work (e.g., family emergencies, illness, car trouble, etc.). If you miss class, arrive late, or leave early, I will assume that your reasons are legitimate. Therefore, I do not “excuse” absences, tardies, or late work for any reason.
Appendix M: (Continued)
Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 Course Syllabus

Consistent and complete attendance is necessary to learn all of the information covered in the course and to observe modeled instructional strategies. Your presence is necessary for your development as a literacy teacher. Subsequently, you may have one absence and one tardy without penalty. All additional absences or tardies (for any reason) will lower your grade on weekly, in-class assignments according to the following breakdown.

*EACH ABSENCE (for any reason) will lower your weekly-assignment grade by 5 points because you will miss writing activities and modeled instructional strategies (see weekly schedule), and other course activities.
*EACH TARDY (for any reason) will lower your weekly-assignment grade by 1 point because you will miss Mini-lesson demonstrations, class activities or writing time. Any tardy over 30 minutes is considered an absence.

All of your work must be submitted by the beginning of class on the day it is due. Any late work for any reason will be penalized. There are no “free” late work credits.

*EACH LATE ASSIGNMENT (for any reason) will lower your GRADE ON THE ASSIGNMENT by a letter grade for each day that it is late. If you must turn in a late assignment, I will not accept it more than one week past its original due date.
*EACH TIME YOU DEMONSTRATE A LACK OF PARTICIPATION IN CLASS OR LACK OF PREPARATION FOR CLASS (for any reason) your grade will be lowered by 2 points.

9. Grading Criteria:
   **Assessment of Assignments:**
   Your learning in this course will be assessed and evaluated in different ways. I try to use and model a variety of assessment strategies that you can also use in the elementary classroom. When you complete some assignments, I will make specific comments about the accuracy, quality, and format of your work. READ YOUR SYLLABUS CAREFULLY. Read my comments carefully. For other assignments, you will receive a complete outline of the criteria. When you complete these assignments, you will receive a complete written evaluation and a corresponding letter grade. When you complete your quizzes and final exam, you will receive a percentage grade and a letter grade.

   Standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation are required on all written assignments. Mistakes will be marked and you will be expected to correct your mistakes. Excessive or consistent errors will lower your grade. Reread your writing. All assignments must be typed.
Appendix M: (Continued)
Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 Course Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared Writing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Participation points for in-class demo, checklist evaluations, letter grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Book</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Rubric evaluation, letter grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Folder</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Self evaluation, participation points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Reflection</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reflective evaluation, participation points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Participation points, percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Percentage/ letter grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Percentage/ letter grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Final Grades:
Your letter grade for the course will be determined in several ways. I will assess and evaluate your learning processes and products throughout the semester. The following guidelines will be used to determine your grade.

A Consistent and thoughtful participation in all class discussions and activities.
92-100 Excellent quality and serious thought put into all assignments. Evidence that all assignments were read carefully and thoughtfully discussed.

B Effort to participate in most class discussions and activities. Extra effort and above average quality in class assignments and projects. Evidence that reading was completed and contemplated.
82-91

C Occasional participation in class discussions and activities. Assignments and projects adequately completed. Evidence that reading was completed.
72-81

D/F Lack of participation in class discussions. Assignments incomplete and/or poorly done. Lack of evidence that reading was completed.
62-71 D 61 and Below= F
97-100 A+ 90-91 B+ 80-81 C+ 70-71 D+
94-96 A 86-89 B 76-79 C 66-69 D
92-93 A- 82-85 B- 72-75 C- 62-65 D-

10. Textbooks and Readings:
Young Children, 45 (2), 50-57.
Appendix M: (Continued)
Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 Course Syllabus


**ADA Statement:** Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with the Office of Student Disabilities Services in order to receive special accommodations and services. Please notify the instructor during the first week of classes if a reasonable accommodation for a disability is needed for this course. A letter from the USF Disability Services Office must accompany this request.

**USF Policy on Religious Observances:** All students have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices and beliefs. Students are expected to notify the instructor in writing by the second class if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination, in accordance with this policy.

**Plagiarism:** *The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service which allows instructors to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. I reserve the right to 1) request that assignments be submitted to me as electronic files and 2) electronically submit assignments to Turnitin.com. Assignments are compared automatically with a huge database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how a student’s paper was plagiarized. For more information, go to www.turnitin.com and http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0304/adadap.htm#plagiarism.*

**ESOL & Florida Accomplished Practices (FAP) Requirements** (for ESOL-infused courses and other courses where assignments need to be collected by students to complete their portfolios): Please note certain assignments are marked (e.g., AP4 and 8, and/or ESOL22) or (*) and should be saved once graded, as appropriate documentation for one or more of the Florida Accomplished Practices/ESOL Performance Standards.


### Appendix N

**Teaching Writing in the Elementary School, K-6 Revised Course Syllabus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Course Content</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/27</td>
<td><strong>Writing Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 2, p. 42 &lt;br&gt;Mini-Lessons, Writing Conferences, Independent Writing&lt;br&gt;<strong>Genre Study: Narrative Writing</strong> Structures and Strategies&lt;br&gt;<em>Writing Time: Shared Writing Demo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/4</td>
<td><strong>Genre Study: Narrative Writing</strong></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 11, p. 340 &lt;br&gt;Thomason &amp; York, p. 35-39&lt;br&gt;Narrative Mini-lessons Due&lt;br&gt;<em>Writing Time: Shared Writing Demo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td><strong>Genre Study: Expository Writing</strong></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 10, p. 304 &lt;br&gt;Thomason &amp; York, p. 40-43&lt;br&gt;In-class Shared Writing Due&lt;br&gt;<em>Writing Time</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/18</td>
<td><strong>Genre Study: Expository Writing</strong></td>
<td>Expository Mini-lessons Due &lt;br&gt;In-class Shared Writing Due&lt;br&gt;<em>Writing Time</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td><strong>Genre Study: Poetry Writing</strong></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 12, p. 380 &lt;br&gt;Visit <a href="http://www.poets.org">www.poets.org</a>&lt;br&gt;Bring in a book of poetry for children&lt;br&gt;<em>Writing Time: Writing Folder Due</em>&lt;br&gt;&amp; Review Children’s Book Rubric&lt;br&gt;Book Idea Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/1</td>
<td><strong>Writing Tools: Spelling Workshop and Word Study</strong></td>
<td>Pinnell and Fountas Ch. 14, p. 168&lt;br&gt;Shared Writing with Children Due&lt;br&gt;<em>Writing Time: Book Making Demo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8</td>
<td><strong>Classroom Observation</strong></td>
<td>Reflection Form Due &lt;br&gt;Jigsaw Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 (Tompkins) &lt;br&gt;No Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15</td>
<td><strong>Children’s Book Writing</strong></td>
<td>Children’s Books Due &lt;br&gt;Writing Folders Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/22</td>
<td><strong>Assessment: Developing Rubrics, Informal Methods, and Portfolios</strong></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 5, p. 150 &lt;br&gt;Pinnell and Fountas Ch. 10, p. 104</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td><strong>Assessment: Local, State, and National Expectations (Standards), Report Cards</strong></td>
<td>Thomason &amp; York p. 59-75&lt;br&gt;Narrative and Expository Review: Mini-lessons using children’s writing&lt;br&gt;ESOL competency checklist</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/4-12/10</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
<td>Date and Location TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix O
Samantha’s Shared Writing Documents

Shared Writing Evaluation Form

Name: Samantha | Grade Level: 4 | Number of Students: 5

1. On which writing strategy or skill did you focus? Generalizing

2. List your strengths and areas to improve for the following areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involving Students</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Areas to Improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>answered students quest., picked a good book</td>
<td>limit questions if possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Audience Awareness</td>
<td>told the kids we were going to write a report on what we learned</td>
<td>maybe tell kids who would read our report yes that’s the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the Writing</td>
<td>did a good job of letting everyone get involved. also kids were very excited to share a sentence they thought of</td>
<td>pick a better medium what do words we circled mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Writing</td>
<td>- Did a good job of rewriting sentences already written - Gave kids a choice of whether we should just stop or add a few more (get them involved)</td>
<td>pick a shorter book shorten the lesson. use chart paper next time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies or Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>tone of voice need to speak in a voice that treats them as babies, make lesson more clear before I start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Management</td>
<td>did a good job transitioning from questions back to the story</td>
<td>limit questions some kids lost attention when book wasn’t turned to them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation continues on the next page:
Appendix O: (Continued)
Samantha’s Shared Writing Documents

3. Provide a step-by-step account of the Shared Writing Experience:
   - told them what we would be doing
   - read the book
   - asked kids to name parts of the body
   - wrote the shared writing

4. How did you plan to adapt instruction for diverse learners?
   - pointed to pictures in the book
   - related story to their lives

5. Using the appropriate guidelines from the Tompkins book, assess the quality of the written product that was created.

   **Narrative**

   Goal 1: Analyze the four ways authors develop characters in stories and how students use these methods in their stories.
   - I didn’t do this because I was doing generalizing.

   Goal 2: Analyze the ways authors develop setting in stories and how students use setting in their stories.
   - Again, it didn’t come up because of the generalizing.

   Goal 3: Analyze how authors develop plot in stories and how students use plot in their stories.
   - Again, didn’t come up.
Appendix O: (Continued)
Samantha’s Shared Writing Documents

**Shared Writing Evaluation Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Areas to Improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interesting Story, Magic School Bus</td>
<td>Might have been a little too long for their attention spans (even in a small group).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with enthusiasm</td>
<td>Accuracy of information—“veins” vs. “arteries.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book had great pictures</td>
<td>Practice readers to the group w/ pictures facing them. They were losing interest just listening at times. Had their interest when they could see the illustrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of inflection in reading &amp; examples given</td>
<td>Sometimes “too much” info. in answers to their questions—“overkill.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart paper probably would have been a better choice. They couldn’t see what you were writing on paper. You did a good job reading it aloud to them. Got a lot of info from them which was very positive. Would have been good for them to see the words or get closer.</td>
<td>Sometimes “baby” tone—practice more adult-like tone w/students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked about ending, it was good to give them a choice. Did a good job handling many questions/comments.</td>
<td>Hard to limit # of comments—tried to balance. Learned additional transitional phrases in order to move on sometimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Let’s get back to the story.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera on helped (student awareness)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions &amp; comments handled well, moved them along.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*16/27/04 almost an hour*
Written from:
The Magic School Bus: Inside the Human Body
by Joanna Cole & Bruce Degen

- esophagus
- heart
- brain
- spine
- nerves
- kidney
  - blood cells
  - white blood cells
- lungs
- nose
- stomach
- muscles
- bones
- liver
- small intestine
- large intestine
- platelet
The Human Body

Today we learned about the human body. We learned of different parts of the body. We learned that the brain helps you move and sends messages to all parts of the body. We learned that the spine helps hold your body up. We learned that the lungs are not one big bag, there are small bags that can be seen by a microscope. The lungs are what makes you breathe. The heart helps pump in old blood and out new blood. The heart also makes you live. The white blood cells eat germs. The platelets control how much blood comes out of your body. Platelets are also what makes a scab, and underneath a scab, new skin is forming. The esophagus transfers food from your mouth to your stomach. We also learned that the platelets are what stops up a cut. The liver helps filter out the drinks you drink. Nerves help you feel, and the most nerves you have are in your hands and fingers. You have more nerves in some parts than others. The stomach digests food by using the acid you have, to help the food go down the small intestine better. The stomach holds chewed up food. The kidneys help the liver. We learned that sometimes when your stomach doesn’t like some food, it gets rid of it by throwing up. What makes you sneeze is the hairs in your nose feel dirt, and you take in a big breath and then you sneeze. The muscles help keep the tubes in your throat in place. The muscles help you move. Also, some muscles are connected to bones. Your red blood cells are shaped like donuts. When blood cells first get oxygen, they are bright red. When your blood cells are running out of air, they get dark red. This is what we learned about the human body today.
Appendix P
Skylar’s Children’s Book

Cover Page

Title Page
Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book

Page 1

Page 2
Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book

That night I forgot to make my invitations. In the morning I was getting ready for school and realized the invitations weren’t ready. I guess I will just have to tell everyone in school. I got dressed and headed out for the bus.

Sara, Jessica, Stacey, and Crystal were all in my class so I told them about my sleepover right away. Pam and Joann were in the class next door so I waited for lunchtime to spread the news to them.
Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book

By the end of the day the whole school was buzzing about my party. Everyone wanted to come but I had to explain to them that there was a limit to the number of guests I could invite. I wanted only my closest friends to come but I didn’t tell anyone that.

Saturday came and I was ready for my sleepover. Before everyone started to arrive my grandmamma gave me my first sleeping bag and it was Dora the Explorer and matching pajamas.
Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book

One by one all of my invited guest started to arrive and they all came with big gifts. I decided to stand at the door and greet everyone as they were walking in. I was also checking out the size of the gift boxes to see what I got.
Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book

First we went swimming and had a chicken fight in the pool then played Marco Polo. After swimming we stuffed our faces with burgers, hotdogs, and cake. When our tummies were full I opened all of my gifts.
Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book

By eight o’clock it was time to put on our pajamas and watch movies. Joann had an idea of playing dress up, so we each went into my closet and grab a costume. I was a ballerina and Crystal was a princess. After dress up we played candy land and I won.
Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book

When we were finished playing Candy Land the popcorn was popped and we were ready to watch movies and fall asleep.
Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book

The next morning we woke up to hot buttermilk pancakes, bacon and OJ. After breakfast we all cleaned up and played outside till my friends went home one by one.

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Appendix P: (Continued)
Skylar’s Children’s Book
About the Author

Karen Kelley received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Illinois in 1988 and her Master of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of South Florida in 1995. She taught 2nd grade and intermediate multiage 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade for 10 years in eastern Pasco County, Florida. She then worked as an Assistant Principal for five years before leaving to complete her doctoral work at the University of South Florida in 2003.

Ms. Kelley remained active in the Tampa Bay Area Writing Project throughout her doctoral program and served as the Co-Director from 2001 – 2005. Ms. Kelley published an article in the Florida Reading Quarterly, *Children Writing Under the Influence of Children’s Literature*, and a chapter in *Process Drama: An Educational Tool for Developing Multiple Literacies*, “I’m a lot like her.”: *Entering the World of Others Through Process Drama*. Ms. Kelley has also made numerous presentations as local, state, and national conferences. Upon completion of her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction in 2005, Ms. Kelley began her university career at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.